

Preface

Dear Readers,

In the second half of 2012 a number of major projects, activities and challenges aroused the interest of the public opinion, both in Poland and abroad. Attention of security experts and institutions in the country was attracted to the National Security Strategic Review (NSSR). In the autumn a classified report elaborated by the NSSR Committee was submitted by the Head of the National Security Bureau (BBN) to the President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski, followed by results of the Review which were accepted unanimously by the National Security Council on 8 November. In December, BBN published a mini-report comprising main conclusions and recommendations of the NSSR, anticipating in a way a white paper on the security of Poland, which will be made public in early 2013. At the same time, the Bureau launched discussion forums targeted at various audiences: journalists, MPs, NGOs, etc.

Earlier, in September, the Security Council held discussions on missile defence, an issue which features prominently on the European and Polish agenda in a number of contexts: strategic and political, alliance, air defence, financial etc. In October the President launched the process of reducing Polish military involvement in Afghanistan, with troops being phased-out towards the end of 2014. Moreover, he signed the Act on ratification of the Ottawa Convention (the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) which brings Poland closer to the membership in this disarmament-cum-humanitarian agreement. All these issues have been monitored in the BBN Weekly (www.bbn.gov.pl).

The National Security Bureau actively promotes an amendment process of the 2003 European Security Strategy and in this context it specifically supports activities pursued by the Weimar Triangle (1 January 2013 will mark the start of a 6-month long combat duty of the Weimar Battle Group, to which Poland is a framework state), whereas October saw the launch of cooperation between Visegrad Group institutions (BBN's counterparts) dealing with security-related issues. In late August the Polish Military Contingent "Orlik 4" concluded its subsequent contribution to the NATO-led "Air Policing" mission aimed at protecting skies over the allied Baltic states. Energy issues are still drawing the attention of experts (and others as well), especially due to expectations concerning shale gas. The completion and opening of the Russian Nord Stream gas pipeline poses a renewed challenge for Poland's energy security. Among important developments one should also mention Poland's accession to the European Space Agency; this sector offers significant

benefits both for developing the economy and science in Poland as well as security (technology, cooperation). All the developments referred to above do not exhaust the list of activities pursued by Poland in the area of the security policy during the latter half of 2012.

In parallel to events on its national level, Polish security policy is not indifferent to processes and facts unfolding on the international arena. The financial crisis sweeping across Europe has a significant impact on the national development and security interests of Poland. Dramatic developments in the Middle East are deepening the frustration of both interested states of the region and the western powers in their attempts to settle the problems (civil war and humanitarian drama in Syria; the Russian factor in resolving the conflict; tensions in Syrian–Turkish relations and their impact on allied relations; the conflict between Israel and Hamas ending in a fragile ceasefire agreement; granting to the Palestinian Autonomy the non-member observer status in the UN). The international community and the new Obama administration in particular are facing serious decisions, which might help ease the tensions and overcome deadlocks having a negative impact upon the international atmosphere. In the Far East concern is mounting owing to the assertiveness of China, which strives to create *faits accomplis* vis-à-vis its neighbours in North-East Asia and South-East Asia.

This issue of the Quarterly is broadly dedicated to the above-mentioned National Security Strategic Review, which was conducted between December 2010 and September 2012. Prior to the coming publication of the white paper on national security, the Head of BBN reviews conclusions and recommendations submitted by the NSSR taskforces, stressing the groundbreaking character of the Review as regards its scale and comprehensive nature. Also analysts at BBN present, based on the results of work done at the Bureau, the NSSR findings and conclusions in select thematic fields of military and non-military security. In the near future these findings are expected to form the basis for the next National Security Strategy as well as provide inspiration for legislative initiatives in building a Polish integrated security system. The closing text in this section discusses organizational aspects underlying the preparation of the Review, which although elaborated with utmost diligence, had to face up to complicated reality, which not always corresponded with the blueprint. The experience gathered should contribute to a more efficient organization of similar projects in the future.

As regards the international political and strategic dimension, the Quarterly tackles three themes concerning major powers: the USA, Russia and China, albeit taking into consideration different aspects in each case. Whereas Russia seems to be plunging into stagnation, strategically crucial changes are taking place in US

policy. In this context the chapter points to the implications of the US “strategic pivot” towards Asia and the Pacific. While in relative terms Europe is losing its significance, the Greater Middle East will continue to pose a challenge or a threat (Iran, North Korea, Syria etc.). Political calculation pairs up with the budgetary one. Due to financial constraints, including military spending, the USA is forced to rationalize its global involvement.

The scale of internal challenges and threats faced by Russia is equally vast as Russia itself. Hence, the author merely sketches the important security areas and seeks to depict their current and potential influence on the stability of the country in the foreseeable future. The author makes a correct observation when stating that lack of reforms, compared to changes instituted elsewhere, may doom Russia to crises and critical internal tensions, which would find a clear reflection in its international standing.

The problem of post-2014 Afghanistan is usually seen through the eyes of the Western coalition that maintains integrity and stability of the country. The chapter on Chinese policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan supports the thesis to the effect that *bella gerant alii*, while China fosters peaceful economic expansion. According to the author, we will not witness big changes after the ISAF mission is over. However, one should not underestimate the possibility of a conflict situation flaring up, which could involve China more strongly in stabilizing Afghanistan.

The section dedicated to the strategy concludes with a discussion of the future of North Korea. Developments in that country during the current year, following the death of the dictator, revived hopes for positive changes and the author of the text seems to share these hopes. The dictatorship, however, is steering between the Scylla of democratization (following the American or the South Korean model) and the Charybdis of reforms *à la chinoise*, with both options posing a mortal threat to the dictatorship. Thus far there have been no signs of major departure from the course set by Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il. Hence the future looks bleak – the only option left is to further keep the communist regime on the drip of external assistance and convincing it (alas, with poor success up to date) to denuclearize itself.

Finally, in the sphere of non-military security, the Quarterly offers two papers: the first describes transnational money laundering and efforts made to counteract that harmful activity, and the other analyzes Russia’s gas policy. The former characterizes the phenomenon and focuses mainly on its legal-international aspects, whereas the latter refers to the forecast gas exports to Europe and the Far East. The author points out factors which for a number of various reasons may disturb favourable economic conditions, which would have a dramatic impact on the development of Russia.

This double-numbered Quarterly, which we are presenting to the readers, is the last one published this year. Wishing you all the best in the New Year, we hope this edition will prove to be a satisfactory piece of reading.

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