

Table of content

Preface	17
<i>Zdzisław Lachowski – Editor-in-Chief</i>	

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF SECURITY

Treaty allies of the USA in the Asia-Pacific region	23
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Janusz Tomaszewski

The strategic pivot towards Asia and the Pacific, as announced by the US administration, is driven by the necessity to strengthen existing alliances with Australia, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. Each of these allies requires a separate approach by the United States, taking into account the goals and specific character of individual states. Tightening relations will allow the USA to more effectively face up to a number of problems of and challenges for the area – from the threat posed by the unpredictable North Korea through territorial claims by China to the activity of extremists in South-East Asia.

Missile defence of Israel and Japan – lessons for Poland	43
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Przemysław Pacuła

Missile defence systems are a relatively new direction in evolution of the armed forces. Israel and Japan feel directly threatened by possible missile attacks from their neighbours. Therefore, they are among the countries whose MD programmes are best advanced. The 2012 decision by the Polish president to build national capabilities in this area induces a closer look at global solutions which are already in place. Both Japan and Israel provide good role models, not only due to technical solutions applied, but also because of the benefits which MD development has brought to their defence industries.

<i>The casus of</i> Taiwan as a methodological inspiration for solving certain nationality conflicts in the former Soviet territory	57
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Ewa Mazur-Cieślik

Among the real and potential sources of conflicts in Europe, the volatile area of the former USSR torn by conflicting interests constitutes the space where antagonisms may well turn into open armed conflict. This article explores possibilities of regulating some of the frozen conflicts with a “taiwanization” method. Accordingly, the *modus vivendi* in the state which disintegrated (similar to the secession of Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China) should be arranged in such a way that decisions on the most controversial issues are postponed in time, whereas day-to-day politics is based on pragmatism and compromise. The chances for success of the proposed method have been verified by a group of experts by means of SWOT analysis.

Maritime piracy: historical continuity and change

85

Jarosław Padzik

Maritime piracy as a banditry practice, which violates the principles of free sea navigation, accompanied the rise of trading by the sea. This dirty business has threatened the foundations of international commodity exchanges for many centuries. Civilization development did not eliminate existing threats in this area, whereas the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries saw a peculiar rebirth of piracy. Therefore, the international community is in need for establishing closer co-operation as only in this way an efficient fight against maritime piracy can be waged. Limited involvement of individual states has failed to produce the expected results and indirectly contributed to further exacerbation of threats posed by ever better organized and logistically equipped groups of pirates.

ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

Functioning of the National Reserve Forces concept – an assessment

99

Czesław Juźwik, Kamil Sobczyk

The concept of the National Reserve Forces (NRF) adopted in 2008 within the framework of professionalization of the Polish Armed Forces in the years 2008–2010, which started to be implemented on July 1, 2010, has come under substantive criticism voiced by both members of the political scene and defence experts. Serious problems with reaching the assumed numbers of the NRF indicate that the service offer addressed to volunteers is still not attractive enough, both for candidates and their employees. It is also doubtful whether the Reserve Forces will be useful the way they are being currently organized. Although the very fact of introducing by the MoD adjustments aimed at improving the organization and functioning of the NRF is positive, these changes are piecemeal and slow and keep moving the formation away from its initial goal thereby reducing its operational value.

In the authors' opinion, the period of over two years of functioning of the NRF in their current format and problems encountered while applying the adopted solutions (especially when confronted with expectations regarding the Reserve Forces idea) are a good enough reason to conduct a thorough audit and verify the concept underpinning the NRF operation.

NON-MILITARY ASPECTS OF SECURITY

Security and defence of the state *versus* the competences of the Polish President and the Council of Ministers

125

Marek Surmański

Competences in the area of security and defence of the state are vested in the legislative authorities, state administration, and in other state bodies and institutions, as well as in the local self-government structures. However, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland provides that the key roles in the national security system are played by the President of the Republic of Poland and the Council of Ministers. This article briefly presents the competences vested in the two bodies mentioned hereinabove, as well as offers a synthesis of legal relations between

them. Furthermore, it comments on individual regulations defining the competences of the head of state, the government and some ministers in the area of security and defence, as well as draws conclusions from the analysis of the subject matter under discussion.

South Stream – a response to market requirements or a foreign policy tool? 141

Paweł Turowski

In late 2012, the Russian concern Gazprom announced the launch of construction of the South Stream pipeline. Transmitting Russian gas to Europe, the new pipe, running on the sea-bed of the Black Sea and through the Balkans, will reach northern Italy. The planned annual transportation capacity of 63 billion m³ of gas is not reflected in the demand for the Russian supply, neither in the EU nor in the Balkans. This may suggest that, politically, the pipeline would be instrumental in stopping the construction of the Southern Energy Corridor, supposed to take gas *inter alia* from the Caspian Sea basin, through Turkey to Europe. South Stream would also help increase pressure on Ukraine with the aim to take over shares in the “Brotherhood” gas pipeline system, which runs through Ukrainian territory. As a result, instead of developing as a large project, the Russian pipeline may turn out to be just a small-scale transportation route.

Disaster in Japan: cumulative threats *versus* systemic solutions 169

Izabela Krawczyk

The huge cataclysm which struck eastern Japan was the first recorded catastrophe in history during which all of the following phenomena occurred simultaneously: earthquake, tsunami, accident in the nuclear power plant, electricity blackout and the disruption of the logistic chain of supply suffered by the companies of key importance to the economy. Owing to the scale of the disaster, unprecedented solutions had to be applied. The actions could have been much more effective though, if the planning phase took more boldly into account dark scenarios. A thorough knowledge, disciplined society as well as previously developed mechanisms did contribute to reducing the number of victims. Nevertheless, the catastrophe revealed numerous gaps in the current disaster management system.

Authorization of transactions with Iran *versus* inter-institutional cooperation in Poland 199

Dorota Krasieńska

Events on the international arena, and in particular the exacerbating situation around the Islamic Republic of Iran connected with its nuclear programme development, have led to intensified actions by the international community. Over the past two years, the UN Security Council and the EU have adopted a series of unprecedented restrictive measures which cover trade, transportation, the oil and gas sector, as well as finances. Furthermore, close monitoring of financial transactions has been put in place, which follows operations carried out by Iranian entities and those for their benefit. For this mechanism to be effective in Poland, broad institutional cooperation is required, as well as precise definition of roles that individual bodies play in the international system of sanctions.

About the Authors 223