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European Security Management at the National Level. A Comparative Analysis of Strategies for the Development of Defence Capability in the United Kingdom and Poland

Abstract: The article presents the positions of the UK and Polish governments on the importance of European security management as a factor influencing and shaping the defence doctrine in both states. Building on the systemic nature of European security, security management concepts, as defined in UK and Poland's strategies for developing defence capabilities, have been examined using a system analysis. The assessment of the issue from the perspective of the UK and Polish governments is based on a decision-making analysis, while differences in the approach to European security are demonstrated through a comparative method. The authors have shown that the actual perception of European security as part of the global order is a factor determining the current involvement of the UK Government in the process of security management. However, the Polish government has shown interest in similar actions only to the extent these are convergent with national security.

Keywords: *security management, European security, defence capability, United Kingdom, Poland*

1. Introduction

The current dynamic political, economic, and social changes in the world naturally raise the threat to national and international security. In response to these challenges, individual

countries have developed policies, strategies, and plans that set out the framework and specific actions to improve threats' detection, prevention, and control and strengthen resilience against such threats (be it real or potential). Assumptions adopted in policy papers are conditional on individual factors, particularly the extent and type of existing or anticipated threats, availability of adequate organisational, technical, and financial resources and the ability to use them quickly and effectively. Consequently, the effective preparation of countries to identify and address threats vary, which is an indication (especially for countries with lower defence potential) to pool their resources and share experiences through bi- or multilateral cooperation. This trend is particularly evident in those parts of the world where economic integration proceeds in parallel with a political one. However, it should be noted that many countries (including those participating in several integration projects), despite their formal commitment to security at macro-regional (e.g., European) and global scales, in fact, limit their engagement to maintain a certain level of their national security. Examples of a different approach to macro-regional security management can be seen in the positions of the UK and Polish governments. The former (despite withdrawal from the European Union) remains interested in participating in projects that ensure the security of the whole of Europe (including situations that do not affect directly British interests), whereas the latter sees European security as complementary (and thus less important) for the fundamental issue, i.e., national security.

The article presents the different perception of European security management at the national level and its influence on the strategy for developing defence capabilities in the United Kingdom and Poland. Assuming that European security is based on a comprehensive system (Marszałek-Kawa & Siemiątkowski, 2020), the authors analysed how security is managed in the two countries concerned. Decision analysis has been used to assess objective conditions and expected effects of a particular management model and its importance, as shown by state authorities. Conclusions are formulated using the comparative analysis of British and Polish models. The authors have shown that the actual (not only declared) European security management efficacy necessitates subordinating national interests to a broader objective. It requires a national defence doctrine to take into account not only national interests but also the good of the entire macro-regional (European) community.

2. Conditions and Objectives of the British Strategy for the Development of Their Defence Capacity

In March 2021, the UK Government published a strategy paper *Global Britain in a competitive age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, which covered almost all areas of broader external relations (except trade policy). While identifying current threats to national and international security, the authors of the *Integrated Review* examined the most important issues of global political and economic transformation, growing competition between non-democratic and democratic states, rapid technological

advancement, relative nature of rights and responsibilities in the relationship between state and individuals, and transnational challenges (such as climate and environmental change, pandemics, terrorism). These factors influence the UK security environment and translate into direct and indirect specific risks arising from:

- 1) lability of the post-Cold War world (including the growing role of China, perceived as a systemic rival),
- 2) uneven distribution of economic powers (determining the need to focus attention on the sensitive area of the Indo-Pacific region),
- 3) disruption to economic growth and stability due to the COVID-19 pandemic,
- 4) progressing regionalisation of economic ties (as opposed to trade liberalisation supported by Great Britain),
- 5) the growing importance of middle powers (especially in the Indo-Pacific area),
- 6) weakening of democratic governance (e.g., as a result of political life digitisation, growing vulnerability of societies to misinformation, and increase in social control),
- 7) social disparities (e.g., poverty, poor education and professional qualifications), which, combined with climate and environmental trends, cause massive migration (Smura & Kot, 2021, p. 10).

In security and defence policy, China and Russia have been identified as the main threats to international security, respectively, on the global and macro-regional (European) scales. It should be noted that the UK Government sees potential Chinese and Russian actions targeting any not only democratic states as indirectly affecting UK interests (through disruption of political and economic stability), and thus demanding at least formal intervention.

While protecting its security, the United Kingdom will continue to rely on close cooperation with the US (interoperability, arms programs) and NATO, as its vital interests are located in the Euro-Atlantic area. In NATO, the United Kingdom wants to act as an ally capable of supporting defence activities on all flanks, from the far north, through the Baltic and the Black Seas, to the Mediterranean Region. In parallel, the UK wants to establish close military cooperation with France (creating a United Kingdom-French Joint Expeditionary Force) and with the Netherlands, Nordic and Baltic States (whose contingents, together with the British one, would co-establish the Joint Expeditionary Force, a force which is placed at NATO's permanent disposal). According to objectives set out in the Integrated Review, the United Kingdom (in close cooperation with the US, France, the Netherlands and Norway) also intends to provide organisational, technical, and financial support to improve the safety of marine transportation routes in the North Atlantic. The British also intend to tighten cooperation with Germany and major NATO flank states (i.e., Spain, Poland, Greece, and Turkey) within the European security management framework. In intelligence cooperation (e.g., in Europe), the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain key partners with whom the United Kingdom forms the Five Eyes Partnership (Szymański, 2021, pp. 2–3).

As extensively described in the Integrated Review, the objectives of cooperation with European countries cannot obscure the fact that the UK Government has been currently focused on the Indo-Pacific area. The United Kingdom plans not only to deepen and expand military cooperation with its traditional allies (Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore) but also with India, Japan and South Korea. The main British asset is going to be the Navy. In the far East, the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier strike group, a group of landing ships and patrol vessels and frigates are intended to provide targeted support to actions led by the US and regional allies. These objectives are part of the return to the „East of Suez” policy (Szymański, 2021, p. 3), which has so far been implemented primarily in the Middle East (as evidenced by the opening of naval bases in Bahrain and Oman), and which currently extends to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

3. Responsibility for European Security from a British Perspective

As a result of the Brexit, the imminent relaxation of British-European economic and social ties naturally affects security and foreign policy, as demonstrated by the United Kingdom’s gradual economic and political reorientation toward areas beyond Europe. Nevertheless, the Integrated Review maintains all the UK commitments to European allies (including the UK’s military presence in Poland and Estonia and increased defence spending of 2.2% GDP) (Biskup, 2021, p. 2).

Undoubtedly, the United Kingdom wants to keep its position as one of NATO’s most important members. The UK has announced its commitment to the Alliance by providing important capabilities to combat conventional and new threats. The UK also emphasises its readiness to participate in collective defence quality improvement (e.g., through the participation of British units in joint military exercises). It also intends to invest heavily to enhance its rapid response capability in cyberspace (declaring its readiness to use its infrastructure and personnel to defend the entire NATO area) and purchase modern telecommunications and intelligence satellites. One of the key tasks for the British Navy is to protect the North Atlantic area (to provide for military support transfer from the US to Europe). Additionally, the Navy forces are designed to provide a means to project its power on NATO flanks and be prepared to set aside a striking group for the Alliance to be cantered around one of the two aircraft carriers and a group of landing ships. At the same time, the Integrated Review assumes the need for major land forces reduction (from 76 thou. to 72.5 thou., which means a reduction in the armoured division of Allied Rapid Reaction Corps NATO from 3 to 2 troops), including the armoured forces (since 79 out of 227 Challenger tanks are withdrawn from service), and the withdrawal from the planned upgrade of 770 warrior tracked armoured infantry vehicles which will also be decommissioned. However, these cuts are counterbalanced by strengthening surveillance and electronic combat capability, launching targeted artillery and missile strikes, and providing air defence. The British weapons and equipment storages in Germany will be expanded to facilitate the roll-out of

troops in Europe. New special and training units will be set up to increase British troops' global presence and rapid response capability and support defence capabilities (including European ones). The Royal Air Force is expected to undergo major changes due to the planned purchase of new aircraft (including F-35) and the modernisation of currently operated machines combined with reducing their number.

At the beginning of the next decade, the UK-manufactured Tempest sixth-generation aircraft will enter the service but the overall trend is to replace crew and transport aircraft with surveillance and strike unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). British nuclear forces will continue to be the UK's contribution to NATO. Soon, the UK will replace 4 vessels with ballistic missiles with new ones. Instead of the planned reduction from 225 to 180, the number of nuclear warheads is likely to increase to 260 due to Russia and other countries' proliferation of nuclear weapons and the continued strengthening of Russian missile defence systems (Kacprzyk & Lorenz, 2021, p. 2).

As presented in the Integrated Review, the idea of developing the United Kingdom's defence capability is largely in line with similar strategies of the individual Member States and the European Union as such. While recognising the multifaceted nature of the new global approach, which implies the dispersion of existing forces and resources in a much larger area, the UK's national security structure is based on building a secure environment in the immediate vicinity of the state (Smura & Kot, 2021, p. 14). Regarding security, defence, and its broader foreign policy, the United Kingdom still sees itself as a European country whose vital interest is to maintain the best possible relationship with continental Europe (HM Government, 2021, p. 6). Therefore, the responsibility for maintaining European security is a natural consequence of the geopolitical position. It determines United Kingdom's interaction with other states (not only European) to ensure a stable situation in this part of the world, even in the case of indirect threats. As highlighted in the Integrated Review: The British "commitment to European security is unequivocal, through NATO, the Joint Expeditionary Force and strong bilateral relations. There are few more reliable and credible [European] allies around the world than the UK, with the willingness to confront serious challenges and the ability to turn the dial on international issues of consequence" (HM Government, 2021, p. 11).

4. Conditions and Objectives of the Polish Strategy for the Development of Its Defence Potential

The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland announced in May 2017 is based on the Strategic Defence Review. During the review, teams established by the Minister of National Defence analysed the national security environment, national defence management subsystem, defence planning process, operational capabilities of the armed forces, and non-military defence preparedness. However, information included in the reports developed by individual teams is classified, while conclusions and recommendations are presented in the defence concept only in general.

The authors of the Defence Concept underline that rapid changes taking place in Poland's direct and indirect security environments have been the biggest since the collapse of the USSR. They affect political relations (internal and foreign) and economic and even social ones as they imply adopting and spreading new cultural patterns. At the international level, we can see many discrepancies between the development of globalisation and national interests. They stem from the aspirations of some countries to play a significant political and economic role in the world, and these countries make efforts that challenge the international order. These aspirations often translate into territorial claims (at the expense of other countries) and attempts to change the configuration of forces at macro-regional or global levels. It often involves direct or indirect actions taken against the United States (a country perceived by the authors of the Defence Concept as the guardian of international order). Consequently, the US is forced to revise its defence policy (see an increase in the US political and military commitment in the Pacific area). Apart from states, which are natural players in the international arena, also non-state actors have had an increasing influence on the level of global security. These include corporations, NGOs, social movements, extremist groups, etc. Soon, they may even have technologies beyond the reach of state institutions. „The proliferation of new communication methods, lack of control over large data sets, reduced cost of using modern technologies (e.g., 3D printing), and military-grade learning machines are just a few of the phenomena that may pose challenges for armed forces of previously unknown nature and scale” (MON, 2017, p. 21).

The Defence Concept considers the aggressive Russian policy aimed at introducing an international order based on the “Concert of Powers” as the largest threat to Poland's security.

Russia's efforts to strengthen its global position are being pursued in violation of international law, by means of coercion and force against other countries, and by attempts to destabilise Western (including European) integration structures. In this context, Russia's disproportionate defence capability compared to emerging countries in the eastern NATO flank (including Poland) is a particular cause for concern. It is all the more important since Russia openly identifies NATO as a major threat to its security and systematically builds up its armed forces, which necessitates similar actions on the part of the United States and other NATO members. However, it does not have to lead to the direct use of military force in relations with other states, as it involves hidden attempts (below war level) to destabilise NATO countries or provoke substitute conflicts in different parts of the world to increase pressure on the Western States.

The Russian policy has its direct and indirect impact on post-Soviet countries. It applies particularly to Ukraine, parts of which have been annexed by Russia (Crimea) or remain under the control of separatist forces linked to Russia (Donetsk and Lugansk regions). The rest of the country has witnessed the frequent manifestation of social dissatisfaction fuelled by pro- and anti-Russian sentiments or embedded in an economic context. Additionally, political reforms have also been affecting the stability of Ukrainian politics, as the former

focus on powerful interest groups. Another threat for Poland is the situation in Belarus. The country has become increasingly dependent on Russia in all spheres. It also applies to national security, as demonstrated by the multifaceted and methodical deepening of cooperation between the armed forces and special services of both states. The Defence Concept also points to the negative impact of the Russian policy on political stability and security of the Southern Caucasus, an area which Russia considers its exclusive sphere of influence. The fuelling of social tensions and currently frozen conflicts in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia can be potential tools to strengthen Russia's position and divert global attention from Russia's operations in other areas (MON, 2017, p. 26).

The Defence Concept identifies a potential threat to national security resulting from a rapidly changing and fragile political situation in North Africa and the Middle East. Main problems faced by the peoples of both macro-regions, i.e., the lack of development prospects, low efficiency of public institutions, and deep national, ethnic, cultural, political, and economic divisions, have resulted in numerous social tensions and armed conflicts. These are often stimulated by external states (Russia in particular). The current situation also poses a potential threat to European countries' security, whose authorities have to deal with a massive influx of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East.

Yet another severe threat results from the activity of non-European terrorist organisations in the territory of the European Union. According to the Defence Concept: a „potential terrorist attack in Poland, a catholic country and a member of NATO and the EU, can be used by the Islamic State not only to expand their <<war against the faithless>>. They also do it to intimidate coalition members fighting the organisation” (MON, 2017, p. 29). Moreover, modern technologies are increasingly often used by such organisations. The new coding methods make tracking terrorist groups and their money transfers more difficult. Additionally, apart from conventional methods of combating terrorism, it is also extremely important to counteract terrorism by operations in cyberspace.

5. The Perception of European Security in the Polish Defence Concept

The Defence Concept has not presented European security as a value in itself, i.e., whose maintenance necessitates addressing threats to other European countries, but only as reference points in shaping and verifying national security. According to the authors of the Concept, Poland's membership in NATO and the EU remains a key national security factor. In this context, the Concept underlines the need to develop military cooperation with other NATO members in the eastern flank (Baltic States, Visegrad Group, and Romania) by organising joint exercises and setting up joint headquarters and formations and joint purchasing of military equipment. However, these are only general objectives that have not been followed by practical organisational and functional solutions. One of the few specific projects is the idea of creating a multinational corps headquarters in Krakow, similar to the Polish-German-Danish headquarters of the Multinational Corps North-East in Szczecin

(established in 1999). In this case, however, the document neither specifies which countries would participate in the project nor what objectives the headquarters would have. Furthermore, the implementation of NATO commitments to Poland's armed forces participation in stabilisation and humanitarian and military missions was subject to a proviso that could not lead to a „significant depletion of Poland's defence capability” (MON, 2017, p. 28).

Therefore, the Defence Concept is disappointing as it is very general and merely heralds some measures to improve and extend the national defence system. Moreover, it is inconsistent in its assumptions. The caution declared by the document regarding the use of Polish defence potential to ensure the security of other European countries (including NATO members) remains in flagrant contradiction with clear expectations Poland has in terms of assistance from these countries in an actual or potential threat to Poland's security. For obvious, although not explicitly stated reasons, the most convincing explanation of this attitude seems to be the awareness of severe financial constraints. These make it difficult or even impossible to provide a thorough overhaul of the national security system, including the operability of the Polish armed forces. However, it may also be interpreted as a far-reaching concentration on particular interests at the expense of common European interests. It may cause dissatisfaction among other European countries, as they would have to meet obligations that Poland has failed to fulfil.

6. Conclusions

Rapid changes in the modern world encourage individual states to pool their efforts to ensure optimal conditions for their development. These also include a high level of national security.

The efficiency of global and macro-regional security management necessitates countries to adopt a broader perspective, i.e., taking into account the security environment and ability to respond to threats to all or at least the majority of cooperating parties. It sometimes involves decisions, e.g., to adapt the national defence system to external requirements or become engaged in operations outside the country. Although such decisions may seem questionable from a national perspective, they become understandable from the macro-regional, European, and global points of view.

Despite apparent differences in a geopolitical position which determine their security environment, the United Kingdom and Poland provide similar identification and assessment of actual and potential threats to European security. At the same time, however, they present contradictory approaches to their responsibility for safety. Although after the Brexit United Kingdom's interests increasingly focus beyond Europe, the country has declared its intention to participate in shaping macro-regional security and has a detailed plan to develop and modernise the UK's defence system. Moreover, the UK policy also points to specific objectives of military cooperation with individual NATO member states. At the same time, Poland, which remains in the part of Europe most vulnerable to political and economic pressure

from Russia and has limited defence capability to oppose possible aggression, does not recognise the need to correlate or at least discuss the shaping of the national security system in line with needs and expectations of other NATO members, in particular in the eastern flank. The country considers its obligations from NATO membership feasible under certain discretionary conditions. However, it should be stressed that the management of national security understood as the decision-making cannot be detached from the broader context. It includes the macro-regional and global decision-making environment necessary to fulfil intended objectives. From this point of view of the Defence Concept, the establishment of national security as a priority juxtaposed with undermining of threats to other countries cannot lead to the recognition of national security primacy over macro-regional European security, as it constitutes an ipso facto immanent part of the latter. It was the thorough understanding of these links that prompted the authors of the Integrated Review to declare the United Kingdom's high-level commitment to the shaping of the European security system, a system which has only an indirect impact on particular British security.

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