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NATIONAL SECURITY SOCIAL BASIS OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND. ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The growth of aware citizenship and activeness in non-governmental organizations, is an unquestioned success of the recent political and economic evolution of Poland, also in national security and defense domains. In particular Polish youth is attracted most to those fields of citizen activity, and the growth of nongovernmental and paramilitary youth organizations is a clear evidence of that. Even the initial research results have proven that the activity of such non-government youth defense organizations as "Strzelec" or the Academic Legion brings positive results. It must be also mentioned that military classes in secondary schools and military training for academic students contribute to that. The experience gained from those programs is a significant component of the conception of voluntary military service for the National Reserve Forces, and the creation of the citizen-based form of defense system, parallel to the regular military service system. Such solutions are already implemented in among others Scandinavian countries, in which National Guard has the legal form of a non-governmental organization and works more as an association.

Key words: *National Security, State Security, Non-Governmental Defense Organizations, Comprehensive National Security System*

Introduction

The contemporary national security system must face various challenges and threats, as well as be ready to take advantage of emerging opportunities. However, it must also respond to dangerous situations during the ordinary functioning of the state, including crisis and emergency situations (military and non-military ones) and in relation to special threats. National security is not only about the reaction to threats and their consequences but the implementation of all available assets and means while pursuing the security policy in order to create conditions in which the appearance of threats and their consequences would be less probable or less severe for the state or the society.

The fourth operational goal included in the Strategy for the Development of National Security System of the Republic of Poland 2020 focuses on the increase of integration of public policies with security policies (*National Development Strategy 2022*, 2013). On the one hand, the priorities and

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directions of intervention grouped around that goal present security sector's activities, on the other one, they show possibilities how to use civil society's potential for security. Therefore, it is essential to enhance links between national security and education, protection of national heritage, support for employment and fighting against unemployment, protection of the environment, spatial planning and regional development. With the growing role of social capital for the functioning of the state, it is important to support the cooperation with social partners operating for national security and defence (Świniarski²⁰¹¹).

The defence of the country's sovereignty is not only the matter of the military or uniformed services but it is the duty of all citizens. Creating national and international security in the 21st century reality requires taking into consideration such entities which provide contribution and necessary element building the security of a democratic country. There is no doubt that meeting contemporary military challenges and threats requires a modern organization of national security, in which government entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participate equally and complement each other (Śpiwak¹⁹⁹⁷). Because of a considerable diversity of NGOs due to their activities, territorial range, number and organizational structures, it is crucial to group them in federations in order to select their common representation so that they can cooperate with public administration bodies so as to develop a uniform legal, financial and organizational rules, necessary for a widespread inclusion of volunteers into the national security system. The positive experience of paramilitary organizations' functioning (eg. *Strzelec*, *Legia Akademicka*) and so called uniformed military classes in secondary schools, as well as students' military training provide a good basis to devise a concept of voluntary military service for the needs of National Reserve Forces (NRF) and to create, alongside a professional army, a civic form of military system. Such solutions function, among others, in Scandinavian countries where National Guards operate as associations. This problem is particularly vital in the time of the Polish Armed Forces' ongoing professionalization (Kośmider²⁰¹⁴).

1 Possibilities to engage paramilitary organizations in defence matters

The preparation of an integrated national security system to a "*comprehensive response to emerging problems and challenges, taking into consideration the fundamental need to possess capabilities necessary to ensure the direct security and safety of the nation and citizens, as well as the territory and structures of the state*" (National Security Strategy, 2014, p. 45) necessitates looking for organizational solutions aimed at creating trained personnel reserves. One of possible directions to solve this problem is to include non-governmental paramilitary organizations into the military training system and military training in the so called uniformed military classes.

New principles of Poland's development policy adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2009 largely influenced the change in approach to national security problem joining it with the social and economic development policy. The government's course of action, as it was stated in the Strategy of the National Security System's Development of the Republic of Poland 2022 adopted on 9 April 2013, which included the "*concept of ordering binding strategic documents, pursuing middle- and long-term strategy for the development of the state, incorporated it into the package of nine integrated national development strategies*". Such a solution provides an "*opportunity to strengthen the strategy's realization layer, as well as gives a new impulse to work related to building the integrated national security system in connection with social and economic development of the country*" (*National Development Strategy, 2012, p. 4*). Long-term development strategy of the country *Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności* (Poland 2030. The Third Wave of Modernity, 2013) recognises the ensuring of internal and external security as the necessary condition for the successful development of the state. A similar approach is presented in the mid-term Strategy of the Development of the Country 2020² which stipulates the strengthening of national security as a priority direction of public intervention in the strategic area *Sprawne i efektywne państwo* (Effective and Efficient State). Constantly evolving security architecture of the Republic of Poland imposes the necessity of constant development of the society who perform tasks within the national security system, consisting of entities and resources allocated by the state to carry out tasks in the area of security (Rybak, 2014).

Actions taken to create the national security social basis must include initiatives aimed at supporting paramilitary and rescue non-governmental organizations. It seems appropriate to develop an organizational framework of general voluntary military training in order to, among others, build trained personnel reserves for the Polish Armed Forces, as well as include military uniformed classes and other paramilitary organizations in the NRF system. It is estimated that approximately ten thousand young people could be incorporated into this forms of training annually. It is also appropriate to create the training system for military uniformed classes, members of *Strzelec, Legia Akademicka*, re-enactment groups and other paramilitary organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to develop training standards (programmes) by appropriate Ministry's of National Defence structures for basic and specialist training, an equivalent of preliminary and initial preparatory training for the military service (*Concept of improving...*, 2015).

In the situation of shrinking reserves of trained personnel for the needs of military and other organizational units assigned for conducting defence tasks, and in the situation of ongoing professionalization of the Polish Armed Forces,

² *National Development Strategy 2020 r. Active Society. Competitive Economy. Efficient State*, document adopted by the Council of Ministers on 25 September 2012.

devising an effective system of the youth's defence education compatible with the system of preparatory service remains a kind of *signum temporis*.

For the purpose of conducting basic training, thereby shortening the duration of proper training within the preparatory service, the potential of paramilitary organizations might be used. Arrangements included in the Minister's of National Defence decisions of 21 January 2015 lead in this direction (*The Minister's of National...*, 2015).

The process of basic training within paramilitary organizations could be supported by the Polish Armed Forces under the terms defined in *Koncepcja doskonalenia współpracy Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej z organizacjami proobronnymi na rzecz wsparcia systemu obronnego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Concept of Improving Cooperation between the Ministry of National Defence and Paramilitary Organizations for the Support of the Republic of Poland's Defence System). The mentioned above solutions will allow using the training reserve created in this way to train a larger number of soldiers in a shorter time. At the same time, the preparatory service could be a prerequisite for a candidate for the service to join from any other uniformed formation, which, on the one hand, would ensure military training for future functionaries, and on the other, would increase the effectiveness of personnel reserves' management in case of war. This will also create the opportunity to incorporate some structures of these formations into the armed forces, if the need arises, as each functionary would also be a reserve soldier. Naturally, this would require the introduction of appropriate law regulations in particular pragmatics of uniformed services (Kośmider, 2015).

The cooperation with NGOs conducting their activities for defence has a good legal and organizational instrumentation. NGOs growing engagement and increased activity for defence and military services is a positive phenomenon observed in recent years. Members of many paramilitary organizations and social environments declare their willingness to join the Polish Armed Forces. They also see their role in reserve forces as sub-units of territorial support.

The development of NGOs cooperation with different military units is also noticeable. It is necessary for the Armed Forces to recognize the potential of these organizations and treat them as partners in conducting joined defence tasks, including preparing personnel reserves for the Polish Armed Forces. Another barrier affecting the development of the defence of the state capability is a modest analytical base for defence, which results in a low flow of knowledge into the realm of defence. The reason for this is a small number of expert centers that deal with defence problems and the perception of defence subject as hermetic (*Concept of Improving...*, 2015).

The basis for the society's activation in the defence area provides programming, coordination and monitoring of the Ministry of National Defence with non-governmental organizations and other social partners, first of all schools, universities, museums, local governments or religious organizations

(Rymsza – Frączak – Skrzypiec - Wejcman, 2007). It is essential, especially in the time of full professionalization of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland and social phenomena accompanying this process, to include NGOs to perform tasks in order to acquire and improve all citizens' defence competence. The main measures in this area include (Kośmider – Gąsiorek - Kulickowski 2015):

- supporting social partners' programme, organizational and logistic activities for the defence of the state through various forms of assistance for non-governmental sector and equipping social partners with tools that allow independent actions taken for defence;
- strengthening the civic activity in the defence and patriotic education, particularly in promoting modern forms of defence education for the society (preparing the youth for the service in a professional army);
- inspiring social partners to promote knowledge about civic defence obligations;
- maintaining ties with the environment of war and overseas missions veterans and former soldiers;
- supporting the participation of associations representing reserve soldiers in international organizations and activities.

The effectiveness of government organizations' (armed forces, police, border guard, fire service and other inspections) operation largely depends on proper specialist support from non-governmental organizations which equally to government entities offer help in different national security realms. NGOs have unique possibilities to socially monitor non-military threats, especially in the area of detection, warning and alerting.

To sum up the current considerations, one can draw the following conclusions:

- NGOs are a part of the public space which affects the national security system and has special missions to fulfil;
- the functioning and performing statutory tasks by NGOs influence the building of civic society whose members feel co-responsible for the common good on the local and national scale;
- despite the implementation of solutions in the area of public benefit and voluntary actions, NGOs are too little involved in conducting public tasks, including the ones for national security. Usually, the third sector is noticed in emergency situations, whereas their daily activities are not appreciated enough;
- the NGOs activities are manifested both in undertakings directly strengthening national security and indirect ones, such as for instance educational activities;
- creating the social capital of national security support will not be possible without the introduction of legal, organizational and financial conditions

in order to strengthen attitudes connected with openness, social activity, ability to cooperate, growth of trust, expanding the range of free civic activity through public administration's practical activities, cooperation and financial as well as institutional support for NGOs, promoting pro-social behaviour and civic active involvement.

2 Non-governmental organizations in building Poland's national security

Active citizenship in NGOs is often considered to be the biggest success of political and economic transformations in contemporary Poland. In just a few years there have spontaneously appeared dozens of thousands of associations, foundations and other organizations which have attracted over 8 million Poles in their activities, including two million volunteers.

An exact number of NGOs currently operating in Poland is difficult to estimate. Taking as a basis for calculations the REGON (tax identification number) register conducted by Central Statistical Office of Poland, it can be approximately stated that about 100 000 organizations are currently operating in Poland. Among them there are associations and foundations, Voluntary Fire Brigades, social organizations such as hunting clubs, social committees as well as trade unions, churches and religious associations, economic and craft governments and also groups of employers' associations and political parties (NGOs in Poland²⁰¹⁵). While estimating the number of organizations, one has to be aware that they have an obligation to register the commencement of their activity, however, not their closure. Consequently, their number is constantly growing, which in fact is not true.

The NGOs activity for security results from at least several important reasons such as (Kośmider – Gąsiorek - Kuliczkowski²⁰¹⁵):

- accepting co-responsibility for security by civil, both government and non-governmental, environments;
- preventing contemporary non-military threats which mostly target society, their environment, as well as conditions of life and development;
- stimulating and engaging the social potential, latent in every democratic state, in national defence issues;
- widespread social support for government and local government structures and activities in the area of defence, as all civilian sector and armed forces are not able to ensure security in its all dimensions without the reinforcement from the society;
- common compliance to the constitutional duty to defend the homeland by all citizens;
- stimulating the society's defence awareness and activeness in order to meet contemporary security threats and challenges;
- efficiency of measures taken for defence and security, whose costs could be significantly lowered thanks to the inclusion of NGOs.

Poland's and other democratic states' experience gained from NGOs functioning for national defence and protection (safety) allow determining the necessity of their participation in creating Poland's national security in the following dimensions:

- accelerated development of civil society;
- stimulating social activity related to common security issues;
- creating local communities' security and safety as a contemporary basis of national security;
- supporting public bodies and services in the process of building a coherent national security system;
- coordinating efforts of government and non-governmental entities in their efforts for security;
- undertaking activities for common security education;
- supporting the armed forces in military and non-military operations;
- creating national reserve forces;
- supporting activities to meet the constitutional duty to defend the homeland;
- coordinating efforts for spatial and comprehensive monitoring of contemporary threats as a prerequisite of effective counteracting threats.

3 Paramilitary organizations in the system of preparing the Polish Armed Forces' personnel reserves

Non-governmental organizations have the opportunity to cooperate with the armed forces on many levels. These activities may relate directly to the support of the military in specific tasks alone or together with the armed forces or indirectly, for instance creating social acceptance for the military as well as influencing the society and their attitude to defence matters. The sphere of direct activities includes a crucial issue of preparing the Polish Armed Forces' personnel reserves which can be carried out in terms of basic training covering part of preparatory service. Unfortunately, as one can read in the Concept of Improving the Cooperation between the Ministry of National Defence and Paramilitary Organizations for the Support of the Republic of Poland's Defence System of 20 March 2015 approved by the Minister of National Defence, *"according to the binding interpretation of the law, a considerable scope of training programme for a candidate or a volunteer in the preparatory service makes it virtually impossible to prepare fully a volunteer to take a soldier's position being trained by non-military schools and paramilitary organizations"*. It results from the fact that they carry out several other statutory tasks, moreover, they do not have sufficient staff of instructors and training facilities. Additional circumstances affecting the possibility to train paramilitary

organizations' members to the level of a reserve soldier rely on the access to firearms and taking a military oath (*Concept of improving cooperation...*, 2015).

To sum up, paramilitary organizations can participate in future soldiers' basic training, however:

- military training in NGOs can be carried out on a limited scope, on a basic level;
- there is no possibility to train NGOs members in the scope entitling them to receive the status of a reserve soldier due to the fact that they are not authorized to carry guns or any specialist military equipment;
- allocating the mobilisation assignment is only possible in reference to reserve soldiers after having completed their military service;
- employing NGOs in military operations can take place only in special situations (*Concept of improving cooperation...*, 2015).

The variety of NGOs causes that each of them, even the most specialist ones, could be properly engaged to conduct defence tasks. This will bring satisfaction not only to social activists but also contribute to increase the defence of the state capabilities and thus strengthen the sense of security and safety, so much needed for every human being.

4 Possibilities to employ NGOs in time of peace, crisis and war

Non-governmental organizations are a permanent element of a civic society whose activity is manifested in all situations of the functioning of the state. The analysis of Polish historical experience has proved that NGOs operated not only in peacetime but actually they increased their activity when the state was at war and official government structures remained outside the country (*Bezpieczeństwo narodowe Polski, 2011*).

A special mission of non-governmental entities in peacetime should be connected with preparing citizens to counteracting and functioning in the time of threat. NGOs attributes predispose them to be included in the process of education for security and preventive actions in various areas of security, as well as monitoring threats, particularly the non-military ones.

In the education for security area, non-governmental organizations have the possibility to train and prepare for actions in situations of extreme emergencies. The education process should target mainly children and the youth so as from their early age they can shape their ability to function in the modern world. As far as adults are concerned, there is an urgent need to catch up on the backlog that resulted from negligence of the previous years.

In peacetime, non-governmental organizations have the possibility to prepare the society to the common defence duty. The educational and training activity may include psychological and physical preparation of the youth for the military service and acquiring certain military abilities, as well as maintaining acquired skills. NGOs have a wide range of possibilities to create a social

consensus for the armed forces, necessary especially in peacetime, when the army carries out non-armed missions.

An interesting initiative of cooperation with paramilitary NGOs are agreements signed with them by the Ministry of National Defence. Over 80 were signed with the Minister of National Defence and approximately 700 with commanders of military units in 2014. The Polish Armed Forces have been engaged in over 6 thousand undertakings organized by social entities (*Concept of improving cooperation...*, 2015).

The period of crisis is characterised by breaking or weakening social ties while serious disruption of the functioning of the state. During such a time, public administration struggles with difficulties resulting from attempts to resolve the crisis or minimize its effects. The mobilization of assets and forces takes place, it is also possible to impose states of emergency, aimed at stabilizing the situation. This record confirms that in the time of crisis there is a special need for the NGOs potential and capacity.

The possibility of NGOs functioning is different during states of emergency (in accordance with the Act of Law of 21 June 2002 on the State of Emergency) and martial law (in accordance with the Act of Law of 29 August 2001 on Martial Law and the Competence of the Armed Forces' Supreme Commander and Principles of His Subordination to the Constitutional Bodies of the Republic of Poland). The provisions of these laws stipulate that the right to form unions or associations may be suspended by denying the formation and registration of the new NGOs, as well as the order of periodic abandoning of activities of registered organizations whose operation in the state of emergency may increase the threat for the constitutional system of the state, citizens' safety or public order; whereas in the situation of martial law it may hinder the realization of defence tasks. One may assume that limiting the possibility of NGOs operation will be binding for all social entities regardless the character of their activity, which significantly narrows down the possibilities of their operation and will bring harm to the state and the society. It is worth considering to allow certain NGOs to carry out their statutory activity which would strengthen the activities of the state at that time (Kośmider – Gašiorek - Kuliczkowski²⁰¹⁵).

The time of war is an exceptional mobilisation for the whole state and society. Extensive experience that the Polish nation has in this regard shows that NGOs can be included in war operations, and their activities' automatic suspension resulting from the provisions of the Law on martial law will significantly weaken the defence potential of the state. The special role of the third sector shows in the support of the armed forces which will bear the main burden of the war. The possibilities of organizations rely mostly on the observation of the enemy operations, conducting irregular, diversion and reconnaissance operations, as well as material and moral support. NGOs have a crucial role to fulfil in relation to protection of the population who depending on

the scale and kind of war operations may need assistance and organization of the common self-defence. Meeting contemporary military and non-military challenges and threats by a democratic state requires a modern organization of national security in which government and non-governmental entities equally participate complementing each other.

Building a civic background for the defence of the state must be accompanied by the increase of public administration's effectiveness in security issues through systematic raising the level of qualifications in order to achieve and maintain a high level of readiness and capabilities of services, guards and administration for efficient response to emerging threats.

Conclusions:

- positive experience in paramilitary organizations' functioning (eg. Strzelec, Legia Akademicka) and so called uniformed military classes in secondary schools, as well as students' military training provide a solid basis to devise a concept of voluntary military service for the needs of National Reserve Forces and to create, apart from professional army, a civic form of military system. Such solutions function, among others, in Scandinavian countries where National Guards operate as associations;
- shortening the time of training in military schools and military training centres due to the training in paramilitary organizations will enable to increase the capacity of these centres, contributing to the growth of the number of trained soldiers;
- engaging social initiatives in the security system of the state will have influence on the increase of the Polish Armed Forces' personnel reserves;
- membership in NATO is strengthening our own defence capabilities. However, it will not replace the national effort of security building. The constitutional duty to defend the homeland applies to every citizen, despite the introduction of professional military service.

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