

## Security and its Political Threats in a Theoretical Perspective

### *Bezpieczeństwo i jego polityczne zagrożenia w perspektywie teoretycznej*

#### **Abstract:**

The article is an attempt of presentation of leading theoretical approaches to the issues of security present in current studies in Poland. The article refers to the most characteristic definitions and typologies of such research categories as: security, typologies of security, political security, dangers, threats of political security. In the analyses the author assumed the perspective proper for, first of all, such scientific disciplines as the science of politics and administration and science of security. Theoretical, model, and academic perspectives of the essence of security and the most important research views in the literature on the subject were referred to. Where necessary, the author tried to present his own approach to the discussed categories. The presented deliberations refer also to the present state of research, completed by an attempt of the author's commentary.

#### **Keywords:**

security, security threats, political security, threats to political security

#### **Streszczenie:**

Artykuł jest próbą prezentacji wiodących ujęć teoretycznych problematyki bezpieczeństwa, obecnych we współczesnych badaniach w Polsce. W rozważaniach odwołano się do najbardziej charakterystycznych definicji i typologii takich kategorii badawczych jak: bezpieczeństwo, typologie bezpieczeństwa, bezpieczeństwo polityczne, zagrożenia, zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa politycznego. W analizach przyjęto perspektywę właściwą przede wszystkim dla takich dyscyplin naukowych jak nauki o polityce i administracji oraz nauki o bezpieczeństwie. Sięgnięto do teoretycznych, modelowych oraz podręcznikowych ujęć istoty bezpieczeństwa oraz najważniejszych stanowisk badawczych występujących w literaturze przedmiotu. Starano się też, tam gdzie to wskazane, zaprezentować autorskie ujęcia omawianych kategorii. Zaprezentowane rozważania odnoszą się również do stanu badań, uzupełnionych próbą autorskiego komentarza.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

bezpieczeństwo, zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa, bezpieczeństwo polityczne, zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa politycznego

## 1. Introductory Remarks

Security is a very important research category of modern processes of globalization characterized by a wide meaning spectrum. Having an abstract dimension, security, in practice, functions with an adjective describing whom personally or which scope it pertains to. At the same time it is a dynamic category which undergoes multidimensional redefinition.

Majority of researchers agree that security is anthropocentric category and, apart from the fact that it refers to physical or natural phenomena, is perceived in a human perspective as a social being. It is frequently recognized as a basic existential need connected with the existence, survival, identity preservation, independence, and also with certainty of functioning and development. In the context of the security of a human being the benchmarks are health, work, respect, tangible goods<sup>1</sup>. In the context of a state, security comprises protection and defence of vital national interests including not only survival but also the preservation of prosperity, freedom, liberties, national, religious, and ethnic identity<sup>2</sup>.

American psychologist A. Maslow included the need of security( besides physiological needs, need of love and membership, need of respect and recognition, and the need of self-realization) in the group of rudimentary needs. Another American scientist, C. Alderfer, located the security need on the first step of his hierarchical pyramid, among three, mentioned by him priority categories of human needs. In the first, the most important category he enumerated the physiological and security needs, naming them – existential needs. In the second category he included the need of establishing social relations and in the last place he mentioned the desire for personal development<sup>3</sup>. Similar attitude is presented by J Stańczyk who describes security as a main need and value of a man and social groups and at the same time their main goal<sup>4</sup>.

Security is most often perceived as a “state” and a “process”. K. Malak regarding security as a “state” has in mind its dimension, scale of durability, territorial range. Whereas the “process”, according to him, is a constant formation

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<sup>1</sup> J. Pilżys, *Leksykon bezpieczeństwa ekonomicznego*, Szczecin 2012, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> M. Górka, *Współczesne wymiary polskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa 2015, p. 17; R. Zięba, *O tożsamości nauk o bezpieczeństwie*, „Zeszyty naukowe AON”, 2012, No. 1(86), p. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> See.inter alia.: *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria- Badania- Praktyka*, ed. A. Czupryński, B. Wiśniewski, J. Zboina, Józefów 2015, p. 11; M. Niedźwiedź, *Podmioty polityki bezpieczeństwa narodowego nadzorowane przez ministra właściwego do spraw wewnętrznych we współczesnej Polsce*, Zamość 2018, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> J. Stańczyk, *Współczesne pojmowanie bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa 1996, p. 18.

and strengthening of security which at the same time describes its dynamics which is best expressed by still growing its subject, object, and spatial scale<sup>5</sup>.

In this article which is an introduction to deliberations of subsequent authors, the author concentrated on theoretical, model, and textbook presentations of the essence of security, its kinds, specificity of political security, including also its dangers. The article invokes main definitions, categorizations, and approaches that function in Polish literature on the subject. The presented deliberations refer also to the state of research, with an attempt of author's commentary.

## 2. Definitions and Security Category Approaches

The security category is defined in the literature on the subject in many ways; it is connected with its ambiguity and adopted criteria. In general, according to e.g. S. Sulowski<sup>6</sup>, W. Fehler<sup>7</sup>, and E. and M. Nowak<sup>8</sup> the understanding of the phenomenon of security is possible in two ways. The first one is a narrow approach, also called a negative approach within which security is treated as lack of threats which results in prescribing the dominant role to the actions which protect against threats. In the second, wider, approach, also called a positive one, security is perceived mainly from the perspective of active modelling of certainty of survival and possessing basic freedoms and development values of a given entity<sup>9</sup>.

In the most general approach, it may be adopted, after R Zięba, that security is a lack of dangers, protection against dangers, and keeping the dangers at a minimal level<sup>10</sup>. He defines security as the certainty of existence, survival, and functioning and development of a given entity. This certainty is a result of not only the lack of dangers (their absence or elimination) but also due to a creative activity of a given entity and it is changeable in time<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> K. Malak, Bezpieczeństwo jako kategoria i zjawisko społeczne, „Piotrowskie Zeszyty Międzynarodowe” 2007 No. 2, p. 91-95.

<sup>6</sup> S. Sulowski, Państwo i bezpieczeństwo w kazualnym związku, [in:] Trzy wymiary współczesnego bezpieczeństwa, ed. S. Sulowski, M. Brzeziński, Warszawa 2014, p. 11 et sqq.

<sup>7</sup> W. Fehler, Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne współczesnej Polski, Warszawa 2012, p. 9 et sqq.

<sup>8</sup> E. Nowak, M. Nowak, Zarys teorii bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Zarządzanie bezpieczeństwem, Warszawa 2011, p. 165 et sqq.

<sup>9</sup> M. Niedźwiedz, p. 20 et sqq.

<sup>10</sup> R. Zięba, Instytucjonalizacja bezpieczeństwa europejskiego, Warszawa 2007, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> R. Zięba, O tożsamości nauk..., p. 7; R. Zięba, Wprowadzenie. Pozimnowojenny paradygmat bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, [in:] Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie, red. R Zięba, Warszawa 2008.

Different approach is presented by Stanisław Koziej who defines security as a process aiming at assurance the possibilities of survival, development, and freedom of implementation of their own interests in defined conditions by making use of favorable conditions (chances), undertaking challenges, risk reduction, and counteracting (preventing and juxtaposing ) all kinds of threats for an entity and its interests<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, W. Fehler says that security is a state of certainty and peace which results from a low level of threats, controlling of positive development perspective and also effective security measures in relation to phenomena and processes negatively valued<sup>13</sup>. According to S Sulowski, security should be understood as a certainty that the defined expectations of an entity connected with its existence and development will be fulfilled<sup>14</sup>. R. Szpyra is of an opinion that in social sciences security is regarded as a changeable in time state which describe possibilities of fulfilling social needs connected with lasting and development of an entity in the face of real or potential threats, the awareness of this state and activity tending to reach a desired level of this state<sup>15</sup>.

The authors of a collective work titled ” *Institutionalne podstawy bezpieczeństwa państwa w III Rzeczypospolitej*” [*Institutional Basis of Security of the State in the Third Republic of Poland*] expressed their opinion on a general category of security. They define security as a state of perception of internal and external stability of a country which reflects the lack of dangers on the level of fulfilling basic behavioral and existential needs of a society and the treatment of countries as sovereign entities in the sphere of international relations. According to them, security is a value of a dynamic character which undergoes changes. To them a comprehensive presentation of security character should include both the limitation of negative impulses which have their source in the activity of other countries or international milieu and also the guarantee of domestic harmony and stability of a country and a nation<sup>16</sup>.

In the view of general presentations of security category the positions of other, well known researchers should be recalled. Thus, J. Stańczyk defined security as a basic human need, whole social groups, and countries and interna-

<sup>12</sup> K. Fus, Kierowanie bezpieczeństwem narodowym RP, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo w XXI wieku. Asymetryczny świat*, ed. K. Liedel, P. Piasecka, T. R. Aleksandrowicz, Warszawa 2011, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> W. Fehler, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> S. Sulowski, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> T. Compa, *Infrastruktura bezpieczeństwa państwa*, Zamość 2019, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Introduction, in: *Institutionalne podstawy bezpieczeństwa państwa w III Rzeczypospolitej*, ed.. M. Żmigrodzki, A. Żebrowski, Lublin 2014, p. 5.

tional systems. According to him, it comprises the need of existence, survival, certainty, stability, identity, independence, protection of the level and quality of life<sup>17</sup>. According to W. Fehler, security is a defined state of social, political, and economic structures inside a country and formation them in such a way that they would assure the feeling of certainty to its citizens and would create proper conditions for the implementation of aspirations of this country<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, L. Korzeniowski states that security is an ability to a creative activity of an entity and denotes the objective state consisting in the lack of threats which is subjectively sensed by individuals or groups<sup>19</sup>. For K. Grisicka, L. Grosicki, and P. Grosicki security, in general presentation, is a state of certainty, a peculiar lack of threat or threats which does not fundamentally influence the feeling of peace<sup>20</sup>.

The international context in defining the category in our interest is expressed by M. Pietraś. He underlines that it comprises the security of a country and also other participants of international relations including the system of organizing and functioning of international milieu. According to him it is a sum of securities of particular countries and in the era of globalization it is a dynamic process which undergoes a frequent redefinition. He shows that contemporary widening of the scope of security consists in the change in understanding security in negative categories for its positive perception. He suggests to enlarge the definition of security as a state of lack of threats and describe it as “aspiration for something” e.g. for freedom, equality. M. Pietraś points also to a co-operative and interactive character of security in the post- cold-war world<sup>21</sup>.

*It is also worth to present an institutional approach to the security category. In Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej [The White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland] one can find the following definition: “Security – the theory and practice of ensuring the possibility of survival (existence) and the realization of an entity’s own interests, including, in particular, by taking advantage of opportunities (favourable circumstances), facing challenges, reducing risks and counteracting (preventing and opposing) all kinds of threats to the given entity and its interests”<sup>22</sup>. In the dictionary of*

<sup>17</sup> J. Stańczyk, p.16.

<sup>18</sup> W. Fehler, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> L. Korzeniowski, Zarządzanie bezpieczeństwem. Rynek, ryzyko, zagrożenia, ochrona, Kraków 2000, p. 437.

<sup>20</sup> See M. Niedźwiedź, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> M. Pietraś, Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe [in:] Międzynarodowe stosunki polityczne, (ed.) M. Pietraś, Lublin 2007, p. 27 et seq.

<sup>22</sup> Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa 2013, p. 247.

social sciences UNESCO a more synthetic definition of security was suggested; security is described as safety, lack of dangers and the protection against them<sup>23</sup>.

The author of the article is of the opinion that security is the lack of objectively existing threats and subjective fears, and harmonious aspiration and activity for the protection of defined values with the help of norms, institutions, and instruments which ensure peaceful solution of disputes and formation of political, military, economic, social, ecological, and other circumstances of stability and elimination of threats.

Summing up, in compliance with the literature on the subject it may be regarded that the category of security is understood as a principal need of a man, social groups, countries, and international systems. At the same time it is a state of safety which gives the feeling of certainty and the guarantee of its preservation and the chance for perfecting<sup>24</sup>. Here it is worth to refer to two utterances: by a politician and a general cited by T. Compa. H. Kissinger, an American politician and diplomat, the Secretary of State in R. Nixon administration and then G. Ford's administration, 1973 Nobel Prize winner described security very laconically: security is the basis of all we do. On the other hand, K. Neuman, retired German general, former Bundeswehr Chief of Staff and chairman of NATO Military Committee Conference in Warsaw in 2013 said that security was not everything but without security everything would be nothing<sup>25</sup>.

### 3. Typologies of Security

Different divisions of security are presented in the literature on the subject. Most frequently suggested typologies are based on chosen criteria e.g. subjective, objective, spatial, sources of dangers, and ways of the organization of a security system. Therefore, national and international security is present in a subjective dimension. In an objective scope one can distinguish the following security subcategories: political, military, economic, cultural, sociological, informational, or ideological. The spatial dimension of security comprises local, regional, sub-regional, supra-regional, global (also called universal or world security). On the other hand, due to the sources of dangers the security may

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<sup>23</sup> See: J. Stańczyk, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> See.: K. Grosicka, L. Grosicki, P. Grosicki, *Organizacja i kierowanie instytucjami bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państwa*, Pułtusk – Warszawa 2013, p. 14; M. Niedźwiedź, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> See T. Compa, *Teorie i strategię bezpieczeństwa*. Podręcznik, Zamość 2018, p. 13 and 14.

be divided into external and internal, due to the way of its organization we may talk about individual (unilateral) security, bloc system (allied), system of co-operative security and system of collective security (universal, regional)<sup>26</sup>.

From the above presented typologies, disregarding the adopted criteria of division, the most important for contemporary security are: national security, international security, political security (it will be described in a different part of the article), military security, economic security, social security, ecological security, and cultural security.

Thus, national security is defined by J. Marczak as common awareness and necessary strive for the preparation of a country at all levels of its organization for continuous and effective protection and defence of national interests and values against military and non-military dangers – which will assure the nation its values, propitiousness, and prosperity and the creation of favorable conditions of the development for present and future generations<sup>27</sup>.

*Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*[*Dictionaru of National Security Terms*] gives the following definition of national security: national security is one of the basic fields of functioning(activity) of a state which is to ensure the possibility of survival but first of all the development and freedom of implementation of national interests in a defined security environment (circumstances) by undertaking challenges, making use of chances, reduction of risk, and counteracting all kinds of threats for its interest<sup>28</sup>.

According to W. Kitler, national security is the most important value, national need, and a priority goal of the activity of a state, individuals, and social groups. It is at the same time a process comprising various means, guaranteeing permanent, free from disturbances existence and national (state's) development including the protection and defence of a state as a political institution and the protection of individuals and the whole society, their goods and natural environment against dangers<sup>29</sup>. W. Fehler expressed it more synthetically. To him national security is such a state in which a country has the ability to

<sup>26</sup> See, inter alia.: M. Niedźwiedz, p. 9 and 22; K. Grosicka, L. Grosicki., P. Grosicki, p. 14; W. Fehler, p. 9; E. Nowak, M. Nowak, p. 165; T. Compa, *Infrastruktura...*, p. 9; R. Zięba, *Wprowadzenie. Pozimnowojenny...*, p. 16; R. Zięba, *Instytucjonalizacja...*, p. 30-32.

<sup>27</sup> J. Marczak, *Potrzeby i udział społeczeństwa w tworzeniu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, [in:] *Wojskowe wsparcie władz cywilnych i społeczeństwa – założenia przygotowania i użycia, część 2 (final study)*, ed. W. Kitler, Warszawa 2004, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Warszawa 2008, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> W. Kitler, p. 31.



create, develop, and protect important for it values against internal and external dangers<sup>30</sup>.

International security is an important subcategory. In the literature on the subject it is defined as the lack of objectively existing dangers and subjective anxieties and a harmonious aspiration and activity of international society for the protection of defined state and social values with the help of norms, institutions, and instruments which ensure peaceful solutions of disputes and the formation of economic, social, ecological and other conditions of dynamic stability and the elimination of dangers. According to M. Pietraś it comprises the security of a state and also of other participants of international relations together with the system of organization and functioning of an international milieu. It is a sum of securities of particular states and its base is continuously amended international law<sup>31</sup>.

Military security is another kind of security. It comprises various activities and means whose main goal is to counteract the dangers which could lead to the threat of using military power to seize a territory or limit the sovereignty of the state. At the same time, it is the ability to juxtapose the use of military power and the condition received as a result of organized defence against those dangers<sup>32</sup>. Military security is also defined as a condition achieved as a result of keeping properly organized and equipped military forces and military alliances, and also as a result of strategical concepts pursuant to existing situation<sup>33</sup>.

Economic security is also an important fragment of security. In various approaches it means:

- 1) a state of economic development of a country which by an optimal use of internal development factors ensures high efficiency of functioning and ability to an effective juxtaposition against external pressures which can lead to development disturbances;
- 2) a state in which necessary conditions for survival, prosperity, and sustainable development of society and institutions of a given country are ensured;
- 3) ability of an economic system of a state (group of states) to use external factors of development and international economic inter-

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<sup>30</sup> W. Fehler, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> M. Pietraś, p. 22 et seq.

<sup>32</sup> A. Warmiński, *Administracja bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego w Polsce*, Warszawa 2013, p. 17-18.

<sup>33</sup> W. Smolski, *Bezpieczeństwo militarne państwa*, [w] *Wybrane problemy bezpieczeństwa. Dziedziny bezpieczeństwa*, ed. A. Urbanek, Słupsk 2013, p. 77 et seq.



dependence in such a way that they will guarantee its unthreatened development<sup>34</sup>.

Social security is one of the oldest types of securities. It comprises various actions and means whose main goal is survival, welfare, and sustainable development of society and assurance of high quality of life for citizens, families, and people who need a special care. The assurance of proper living, working, rest conditions and the access to consumer goods, and counteracting unemployment, social stratification and social conflicts are included in this security<sup>35</sup>.

On the other hand the cultural security, in the literature on the subject, is viewed as a process comprising various activities whose main goal is strengthening and cultivating the values which decide on national identity, learning from experiences and achievements of other nations and at the same time counteract foreign influences which weaken internal coherence of a given country and its society<sup>36</sup>.

Presently, ecological security is an important fragment of security. The preservation of natural environment i.e. the whole of the elements of living and non-living nature in an undisturbed state necessary for efficient functioning of a man, for his/her life, health, and property is the essence of this security. These goals are achieved by cohesive and total management of the access to the environmental resources and liquidation and prevention of creation of negative for the environment effects of human activity and rational use of the natural resources<sup>37</sup>.

#### 4. Political Security and its Threats

In the literature on the subject, political security is most frequently treated as the ability of free formation, by a given country, its internal and external policy within political, social, economic, and cultural system with the preservation of its own traditions and national identity. According to other definitions it is

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<sup>34</sup> M. Plecka, A. Rychły – Lipińska, Istota bezpieczeństwa ekonomicznego państwa – aspekty teoretyczne, [in] Wybrane problemy bezpieczeństwa. Dziedziny bezpieczeństwa ..., p. 130 - 131; K. M. Książkowski, Ekonomiczne zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa państw. Metody i środki przeciwdziałania, Warszawa 2006, p. 25 et seq.

<sup>35</sup> Z. Witaszek, Bezpieczeństwo społeczne, [in] Wybrane problemy bezpieczeństwa. Dziedziny bezpieczeństwa..., p. 191.

<sup>36</sup> A. Urbanek, Bezpieczeństwo kulturowe, [in] Wybrane problemy bezpieczeństwa. Dziedziny bezpieczeństwa..., p. 227 et seq.

<sup>37</sup> S. Kozdrowski, Bezpieczeństwo ekologiczne, [in] Wybrane problemy bezpieczeństwa. Dziedziny bezpieczeństwa..., p. 255 et seq.

e.g. free from dangers political organization of a society expressed by a social conviction about lack of dangers for implementation, by the political authority, its principal functions. The presentation of the political security as a process comprising various activities (means) whose basic goal is assurance of political sovereignty of a state and conditions of undisturbed functioning of its political system and at the same time the conditions in which organizations and other institutions which participate in political life and organize this life can implement their functions in an unthreatened way is also justified<sup>38</sup>. According to S. Zalewski the political security consists in three elements: security of authority, security of a state as a political organization of society, and security in international relations<sup>39</sup>.

The issue of its dangers is a very important part of political security. And thus, danger, in general presentation, means the situation in which there appears a probability of formation of the condition dangerous for environment<sup>40</sup>. According to B. Balcerowicz, a threat is a situation in which there appears an increased probability of the formation of a dangerous condition i.e. the condition of lack of security<sup>41</sup>. Generally, a threat for political security may be determined as a probability of occurrence of a negative phenomenon which influences the functioning of a state, society, and citizens.

In the literature on the subject a threat to political security is also viewed as a situation in which fragmentary or multilevel disturbances of the activity of a political system lower the quality of implemented by it functions; in extreme cases they lead to the limitation or loss of its legitimization. Such dangers may consist in, inter alia,: disturbances of the function of ruling and its legal validity; undermining sovereignty and territorial integrity by third countries; weakness of the rule of law and structures of civil society, ethnic conflicts, corruption, connection of criminal elements with the structures of the state, terrorist's attacks against state institutions.

Generally, the dangers of political security may be treated as a threat of destabilization if the institutions of authority which may lead to the loss of the ability of ruling and representing the state in international relations. The cata-

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<sup>38</sup> A. Warmiński, 17; J. Radwanowicz - Wanczewska, T. Leszczyński, *Bezpieczeństwo państwa a bezpieczeństwo narodowe*, in:] *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i zarządzanie kryzysowe w Polsce w XXI wieku - wyzwania i dylematy*, ed. T. Jemiot, K. Rajchel, Warszawa 2008, p. 114.

<sup>39</sup> S. Zalewski, *bezpieczeństwo polityczne państwa. Studium funkcjonalności instytucji*, Siedlce 2010, 22 et seq.

<sup>40</sup> *Słownik terminów...*, p. 172.

<sup>41</sup> B. Balcerowicz, *Wybrane problemy obronności państwa. Materiał studyjny*, Warszawa 1999, p. 50.

logue of protected values in this field include: political process, social structure, international position of a state.

## 5. Final Remarks

From the above presented deliberations it appears that security is a complicated notion and is understood in various ways. It is defined in many ways but almost each such an attempt may be referred to a positive perspective (as aspiration for peace) or a negative one (lack of dangers). Frequently, security is understood as a state of tranquility, peace, certainty; the state which gives the feeling of certainty and a guarantees its preservation and chances for improvement; the main need of a human, social groups, countries and international systems.

Today, both in a political practice and in a scientific perspective, a re-definition of the notion of security takes place. Frequently, the new aspects which influence its stability are included in this sphere. New threats appear e.g. asymmetric and hybrid ones. At the same time, classical dangers e.g. military ones lost their importance in comparison to economic, ecological, cultural, energetic ones. Also it should be underlined that contemporary redefining of the scope of security and the way of its understanding consist in the change of its perception in negative categories for positive perception. Security in the post-cold-war world at the same time assumes co-operative and inter-action character. Let's hope that these tendencies will be permanent and they will dominate the processes which determine the essence of contemporary and future security, including also the political one.

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