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Autor(i) / Author(s): Kaščáková Dominika – Štulajter Matúš
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NEW APPROACH TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21st CENTURY

Dominika Kaščáková – Matúš Štulajter*

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Security of a State, its role in a political system and state sovereignty are closely related concepts, as they determine the composition of international political system, State's international obligations, as well as the causes of military conflicts. However, the problem of state internal organisation and its development, its functioning in the realm of International Relations and connection between internal and external threats to national security are usually treated as separate subjects. Presented book entitled *New Approach to National Security at the Beginning of the 21st Century* tries to break with this tradition and offer more complex insight into these essentially intertwined and closely related issues. Co-authored by **Pavel Nečas** and **Jaroslav Ušiak**, this book represents an interesting attempt to create and apply a coherent theoretical framework that would encompass all these fields and draw relevant conclusions for the security environment of the Slovak Republic and a larger European security space.

* Mgr. Dominika Kaščáková is a full-time PhD. Student at the Department of Security Studies, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica, e-mail: dominika.kascakova@umb.sk.

Mgr. Matúš Štulajter is a full-time PhD. Student at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica, e-mail: matus.stulajter@umb.sk.

Pavel Nečas has an extensive experience in the area of military training and education of the Slovak Armed Forces. Thanks to his knowledge and experience in the military operation planning he plays an important role in the implementation of the simulation technologies. He has also worked as a Director of the Academic Planning and Policy Division at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. **Jaroslav Ušiak** is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Security Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations of Matej Bel University. In his research he focuses on the issues of the securitisation, sector security and the security of the State. He has written remarkable scientific articles, studies and chapters in monographs and actively participated in many conferences at national and international levels.

Due to their diverse professional experience, both authors have specific insights into the topic of the book, as well as different approaches to the concept of national security. However, it is by no means to the detriment of the monograph they co-authored. As it has been already mentioned, presented book attempts to overcome certain artificial separation in the research of the national security and move towards more comprehensive approach. This, indeed, represents the strongest point of the book, i.e. that it provides a well-structured and comprehensive theoretical analysis of the possible approaches to national security at the beginning of the 21st Century, cutting across three fields of inquiry: Political Science, International Relations and Security Studies.

The first chapter analyses the internal as well as external political system of a State as a point of departure for the development of the security environment states have to operate in, as well as a starting point for further analysis. Much attention is correctly dedicated the subject of state sovereignty and its far-reaching implications for both internal as well as external behaviour of a State. Authors correctly point to the fact that the changes in the security environment are to a large extent contingent on the internal development of a State and outline several security-related problems associated with the domestic political environment, especially in cases of inadequate performance of a State or an outright state failure. They hint to the possibilities the international community has in addressing these situations, as well as to the problems it encounters, again mostly in the form of state sovereignty. The treatment of state sovereignty is accurate and provides solid foundations for the further analysis; however, it seems to rather conveniently avoid the current debates in this realm and seems to be stopping short of providing more timely

reflections of the tensions between the concept of state sovereignty, contemporary security threats and challenges and the need of the international community to respond to them on individual or collective basis. Such omission is understandable from the point of the main focus of the book as well as authors' stated research objectives; however, we believe that more detailed analysis would represent an added value to the volume by further accentuating the cross-boundary character of the research framework. The analysis might be also complemented by focusing on the role of political ideology in the form of the currently dominant Western neo-liberalism and the way it influences the approach to sovereignty of a State failing to comply with Western standards of expected behaviour and its reactions to such treatment; as well as impact it has on the regional and global security.

Second chapter of the book builds on the theoretical framework presented in the preceding chapter by providing an overview of the so-called classical and new approaches to security, focusing on Realism and Liberalism as "classical paradigms" and mainly Constructivism and Copenhagen School as the most influential representatives of the "new approaches to security". Authors individuate 17 key features of the post-Cold War era decisively contributing to the shaping of new security agenda, namely: shifts in sovereignty attribution; emphasis on the self-determination; minority rights; growth in importance of human rights and freedoms; economic integration; growth of importance of international organisations; scientific and technological revolution; balance of power; structure of the international political system; the role of International Law; the role of non-state actors; changes in ideologies; security dilemma of a State; globalisation; military threats; environmental problems; and terrorism. Authors stress that this list of contemporary security threats and challenge is by no means definitive, given the fact that more and more issues from various areas make their way into the security agenda of the respective states. This diversity of issues and areas subject to deliberations within the realm of national security contributes to proliferation of numerous research methods that would be able to come to terms with them with accuracy they deserve, but on the other hand it creates a specific problem for Security Studies research – the problem of continuous expansion, or the so-called broadening and deepening of its agenda. This point is addressed in the second part of the chapter where authors apply the approach elaborated by the Copenhagen School of Security, i.e. theory of security sectors. The Copenhagen School originally individuated five security sectors: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental. In

their analysis authors add two more sectors: information and energy security, on the merit of their crucial and growing importance in the contemporary security environment. However, the points are rather loosely made and authors do not set any precise criteria for adding of new sectors or for their potential removal from the centre of the security agenda. In fact, authors seem to be interested only with the process of adding new sectors if an issue or threat tops the security agenda in a given time, but not with the process of its possible removal (and if so, under what conditions) if it happens to lose its relevance.

The second chapter concludes with an overview of new actors that operate in contemporary security environment and their relation to a State. Authors subscribe to the idea that albeit new security actors are relevant for shaping the security environment, they retain their inferior position vis-à-vis State that remains the dominant actor, specifically in the realm of security policy, and that the majority of roles in provision of security still befall on the State which has at its disposal the most effective instruments to settle potential disputes or address emerging threats.

The last chapter is the most innovative part of the book, since it represents an attempt to integrate theoretical foundations provided in two previous chapters into a coherent framework and to apply it, subsequently, on the specific case of the overlap between political and societal sectors of a State. Authors focus mainly on the role of identity in the societal sector of a State and its capacity to generate security threats or challenges, more or less related to the survivability of a society in question, and, in turn, a State that embodies her. Consequently, on the case study of the Slovak Republic they individuate the most relevant area where societal and political security sectors intersect, i.e. the case of extremism. Extremism according to authors represents an illustrative case that *“failure to solve the problems in the societal sector has repercussions in the political sector, while State remains to be the main security actor responsible for solving given problems, threats and risks.”* (p. 114). Essentially, it has two options at its disposal: coercive measures (police, armed forces, intelligence and so forth) or legislative framework. The following analysis is concentrated on the measures taken with the second option, i.e. the legislative framework, set of norms and rules created, maintained and consequently also enforced by the State.

The problem of extremism in the Slovak Republic is, according to authors, an identity-related issue, stemming from the horizontal competition between majority and minority groups (in case of the Slovak Republic these are Slovak –

Hungarian and Slovak – Roma population), having possible negative consequences not only internally (stability of the internal political system and potential destabilisation of the society), but also internationally (changes in foreign policy with broader repercussions). State, therefore, has to take effective action going beyond the formal declarations about “wiping extremists out of the political map of the world” with no practical measures to be adopted (which is, sadly enough, also the case of the Slovak Republic). Instead, authors suggest that the strategy to combat extremism adopted in the Czech Republic should provide a blueprint for Slovak authorities in their declared fight against extremism. They further suggests that any meaningful strategy to combat extremism should, in case of the Slovak Republic, focus on: communication; education; situation monitoring; addressing root causes; zero tolerance approach; specialisation of State apparatus; cooperation with non-governmental sector; and cooperation with other countries.

To sum up, the presented book represents a valuable contribution to the literature on the national security, contemporary security environment and current security threats and challenges. Albeit useful mostly for those interested in security-related matters, it might be of considerable interest also for students and practitioners in the wider research area of International Relations as well as Political Science.