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Author(s) / Autor(i): Juliusz Piwowarski
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BOOK REVIEW: THE APPROACHES TO CREATING SECURITY AND DEFENCE STRATEGIES

Juliusz Piwowarski*

PROCHÁZKA, J. – NEČAS, P.: *Přístupy k tvorbě bezpečnostních a obranných strategií*. [The Approaches to Creating Security and Defence Strategies]. Banská Bystrica: Belianum. Vydavatelstvo Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici, 2020. 199 s. ISBN 978-80-557-1656-5.

The authors, **J. Procházka** and **P. Nečas**, present results of extensive research, the purpose of which was to find best practice regarding the approaches and development of comprehensive methodological framework for the effective creation of security and defence strategies. In my opinion, the authors present a comprehensive set of knowledge fully usable for objectifying the creation of strategic documents.

The aim of their efforts was to create appropriate conditions for the adaptation of security and defence systems to the challenges coming from the strategic environment while considering their current capabilities. The reader is offered an interesting look at the issue of strategic management in the field of security and defence of the state. The scientific monograph is without any obvious shortcomings and errors. The strengths of the authors are very good stylistics and very apt use of a systems approach and strategic and analytical thinking. The rich citation apparatus presents the reader not only with the possibility of perfect orientation in the topic, but also with the opportunity to delve even deeper into the issues addressed. The monograph is intended primarily for security and defence community and experts, who, in practice deal with the strategic documents in the realm of security and defence.

The monograph “*The Approaches to Creating Security and Defence Strategies*” responds to the current unprecedented increase in uncertainty in all

* Prof. dr. hab. Juliusz Piwowarski is Rector of the College of Public Security and Individual “Apeiron” in Krakow, Krupnicza 3 str., 31-123 Kraków, Poland, e-mail: rektorat@apeiron.edu.pl.

areas of human activity. Despite these circumstances, the authors emphasize the importance of long-term strategic planning in the field of security and defence for efficient, cost-effective and efficient use of public funds. The planning process itself and the creation of security and defence strategies take precedence over their own strategy to some extent. It is in the process of creating these strategic documents, that they emphasize the need to objectify difficult-to-structure decision-making problems, which have major implications for the capabilities of developed systems and security and defence levels in a deteriorating security environment.

The authors present a set of recommendations to strengthen the institutional capacity for strategic adaptation of the security and defence system and their main tools, especially the Armed Forces. They offer a very interesting approach to the rationalization of the system of strategic documents, which is universally usable for clarifying the meaning and content of individual strategic documents, often created within the bureaucratic systems without any apparent effort for their subsequent implementation. The authors identify best practice approaches to strategy development based on the outcome of a comparison of approaches applied within NATO, the EU, Canada and Norway.

The choice of these organizations and states was not an end in itself. National systems in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia are harmonized with the processes in NATO and the EU, and it is desirable that this harmonization create the necessary level of interoperability of these systems. It is not only about process or material interoperability, but also interoperability in the thinking of all actors involved in these processes. Canada and Norway need to be included among the very advanced modern administrations, which with their development and applied approaches offer a high degree of inspiration and their choice is fully justified. The authors created a comprehensive methodological framework enabling repeated processing, implementation and evaluation of strategic documents. This methodological framework includes a detailed process of strategy creation and assigns appropriate analytical tools to individual activities. The method of application of these tools is described in reasonable detail.

In eight chapters of monograph, the authors proved their erudition in a number of areas. Their common denominator is adherence to the line, and the main goal, announced by the very title of the work, which permeates the entire monograph. I consider Chapter 7, which presents a set of recommendations for strengthening the capacity for strategic adaptation (pp. 129 - 159), to be

particularly beneficial. The authors demonstrate here an extraordinary understanding of the current needs of management practice.

I did not find any factual errors in the text of the book. The authors try to accompany the readers in the individual chapters of the book with the basic facts of the issue of strategic management in the conditions of security and defence with an emphasis on the creation of strategic documents.

It is worth mentioning the approaches to the assessment of skills gaps in Chapter 6. This is a very underestimated area in management practice, where the requirements for the development of skills are very often derived on the basis of intuition and experience of managers. Given the importance of security and defence and the significant resource implications, it is necessary for management practice to focus on making informed decisions. In this sense, the monograph offers high-quality recommendations that can strengthen the argumentation in terms of defending the requirements for the development of capabilities and their prioritization based on a careful consideration of operational risks.

The monograph is of particular benefit to management practice at the strategic level of state management, where security and defence strategies are created and related strategic decisions are made on ways to ensure the security and defence of the state. However, the presented recommendations and approaches can be used universally and at lower levels of management in creating strategies in public administration at the level of regions and municipalities. The researched results can be also used in the training of experts, especially for the needs of lifelong learning of civil servants, members of the armed forces, police, etc., who are involved in the process of creating strategic documents.

The content of the elaborated topic and knowledge exceeds the hitherto available works, which deal with the subject matter usually only partially. I am convinced, that the authors' comparative analysis of the approaches of NATO, the EU, Norway and Canada, and the theoretical and practical knowledge and recommendations presented by them, can be used not only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also abroad.

The presented monograph *"The Approaches to Creating Security and Defence Strategies"* is a comprehensive and complex publication, which deals with theoretical and practical issues of strategic management and the creation of strategic documents in the field of security and defence, which has the potential to strengthen the effectiveness of the implemented processes.

The stated recommendations are the result of several years of research and expert work in the practice of both authors. The recommendations were verified within the educational process and within the management practice. Many of the recommendations have already been put into practice. In the conditions of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, they were applied within the framework of management regulators and methodologies regulating the creation of conceptual documents within the national Ministry of Defence.

The authors, **J. Procházka** and **P. Nečas**, give an opportunity to look into the issue of strategic management, which is characterized by the intertwining of not always identical political and disgusting attitudes to ensure the security and defence of the state. This usually manifests itself when deciding on large modernization projects, when deploying forces and resources in solving crisis situations and when allocating the necessary resources.

However, the dominant position of politics over strategy in liberal democracy should not suppress rationality in solving the burning problems of the development of the security system and the state defence system. Decision-making should not be burdened by opportunism and particular interests. The rationality of the decision-making process is determined by the pursuit of exclusively long-term national interests. To support these approaches, the publication offers a number of excellent answers.

Finally, the monograph "*The Approaches to Creating Security and Defence Strategies*" is written in clear and comprehensible language, suitably supplemented by tables and diagrams. It is a great enrichment of available literary sources not only for the professional but also for the lay community. I am more than convinced that it will certainly find its readers in the general readership and definitely should not be overlooked by the security and defence community, i.e. professionals, academics and experts.