

## Jarosław Cymerski, Contemporary security formation in the face of terrorist threats<sup>1</sup>

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For many years, Jarosław Cymerski has been professionally involved in issues related to providing security for protected people and facilities. In the publication entitled *Contemporary security formation in the face of terrorist threats* he undertook – on the example of the Government Protection Bureau and then the State Protection Service – to characterise the transformations and phenomena associated with the activities of a contemporary security formation in countering terrorist and criminal threats

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<sup>1</sup> J. Cymerski, *Współczesna formacja ochronna wobec zagrożeń terrorystycznych* (Eng. Contemporary security formation in the face of terrorist threats), Warszawa 2023, Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA, 342 p.

affecting the security of protected persons and facilities. The activities of these formations have been analysed historically and psychologically, as well as in terms of their impact on protected persons, objects and the public's sense of security.

The book consists of an introduction, four chapters, an ending and a bibliography. It is also accompanied by a list of tables, abbreviations, expert biographies and attachments. The layout of the content is problem-chronological, which allowed to show the multidimensionality of the presented phenomena related to the activities of protective formations.

In the first chapter entitled *The terrorist threats against persons and objects subject to statutory protection* the author defined and characterised the contemporary terrorism. Cymerski sees it as the resultant of a number of factors, including rapid and radical social changes, technological development and an increasing number of areas experiencing political, economic and migration crises. Accordingly, he divides the sources of terrorist threats into political (resulting from the diversity of political views and interests), social and religious (concerning strong interactions of different religions followers). The history of attacks carried out since the beginning of the twentieth century on protected persons highlights the scale of the challenges faced by security formations. It is also true for national services, as Poland takes part in the activities of the international anti-terrorist coalition, and its territory has been recognised by terrorist organisations as a potential target for attacks.

In the following chapter, entitled *Characteristics of the anti-terrorist system of the Republic of Poland*, the author pointed out counter-terrorism legislation that was the basis for the introduction of *the Act of 10 June 2016 on anti-terrorist activities*<sup>2</sup> and listed the specific objectives of *the National Anti-Terrorism Programme 2015-2019* corresponding to the different phases of crisis management in Poland. The chapter discusses the alert levels and phases of operations defined in the cited act as well as the organisation of the anti-terrorist system of the Republic of Poland at all its levels (strategic, operational, tactical). For each of them, the entities of the system and the basic activities that these entities undertake are indicated. The issue of the special use of firearms as a specific entitlement for entities carrying out counter-terrorist activities is very important. The author asks

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<sup>2</sup> Consolidated text of Journal of Laws of 2024, item 92.

whether it is possible to use firearms in every situation, which, according to the applicable principles expressed in *the Act of 24 May 2013 on means of direct coercion and firearms*<sup>3</sup>, should be done in a way causing the least possible damage. It follows from the practice of protective actions that only the physical elimination of the assailant is effective. The author points to the need for new legal solutions defining the powers of the State Protection Service officers to specific use of firearms.

In the third chapter, entitled *the Government Protection Bureau (BOR) and then the State Protection Service (SOP) in terrorist activities – comparative characteristics*, the author described the formations in those aspects that affect the implementation of counter-terrorist operations. He presented the legal basis for the functioning of the security services and their organisations, and outlined the differences between the officer powers of the two formations to, among other things, the aforementioned use of direct coercion means and firearms, as well as to carry out preventive actions and operational-recognition activities.

The most valuable and, at the same time, the most extensive part of the monograph is the fourth chapter entitled *Contemporary protective formation in the face of terrorist threats – research conducted by the diagnostic survey method*. It presents the assumptions for the research process, research methods, criteria for the selection of expert groups and their categories. The main objective of the author's research was to identify the scale of terrorist threats in European Union countries and to diagnose the effectiveness of changes introduced in the anti-terrorist system of the Republic of Poland after the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. Moreover, the research was used to find out the position of protected persons towards the obligation to provide protection and the scope of its limitations, to assess the preparation of the Government Protection Bureau and its successor – the State Protection Service – for the implementation of the protection activities against terrorist threats. On this basis, the author has prepared a proposal of such a way of functioning the contemporary security formation, so that its actions are adequate and proportional to the dynamically changing threats that may occur to persons and objects statutorily covered by protection. Respondents answered questions on the formation of the level of terrorist threat in the European Union countries, systemic solutions in the field of counteracting and combating terrorism,

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<sup>3</sup> Consolidated text of Journal of Laws of 2024, item 383.

the obligation to provide protection and the scope of its limitations, the place of contemporary protection formation in the structure of the state security system, the scope of its statutory tasks and forms of action, powers to use means of direct coercion and firearms, as well as to conduct operational-recognition activities. In addition, the research concerned the required competencies of security formation officers, directions for its development and elements of the training process.

A limitation of the study that may be questionable is the lack of presentation of how the given answers are valued. The author indicates that despite attempts to eliminate the problems associated with this, the intended objective was not achieved. It was considered that the only solution to make the research reliable would be to value these responses equally. This involved the assumption that such an approach could contribute to an error in the research process, understood as a “discrepancy between the actual and the explained state” or as a “discrepancy between reality and its perception in human consciousness”.

The research conducted by Cymerski is unique for its choice of respondents, among other reasons. It included representatives of authorities (as persons under protection while serving in office), security experts representing the world of science and representatives of the state security system entities supervised by the minister responsible for internal affairs and administration, the minister of national defence, as well as representatives of secret service. The innovativeness of this research is also due to the fact that the analysis of the obtained results allowed an in-depth diagnosis of the current state of conducted protection activities. On their basis, the author presented postulates concerning the principles of a contemporary security formation, taking into accounts its place in the structure of the state security system, the scope of tasks, forms of action, powers, elements of the training process and directions of its development. Cymerski’s proposals are worth supporting and implementing into the state security system.

In the ending of the reviewed study, the author referred to the formulated hypotheses and the results of their verification in the research process. He indicated that the assumed objective has been fulfilled.

The high substantive level of the publication is also due to the interesting analysis of the literature, netographic sources and documents. The literature used in the monograph is extensive, up-to-date

and comprehensive. The book by Cymerski stands out for the current content. There is no book on the publishing market in which the reader can find so much relevant information on security and the activities of security formations. It is worth mentioning that publications devoted to this issue, terrorism as multifaceted phenomenon affecting societies and the importance of security services, secret service and counter-terrorism have been of great interest for years. This is due to the need to share the experiences of secret service related to combating security threats on a national and international scale. The book by Jarosław Cymerski is valuable publication for those interested in this issue, students of national and internal security, students of military schools and academies, as well as police and other services officers.

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