

FROM THE EDITOR

“THE TERRORIST BOMB IS STILL TICKING” – EVEN IN THE SHADOW OF COVID-19

COVID-19, alongside numerous other problems affecting various parts of the world, has caused the international community to increasingly forget about the terrorist threat. Unfortunately, however, it remains present, and in some cases is even intensifying. This can be confirmed, for example, by data presented in two recent studies: *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019* – published in June 2020 at the request of the US Department of State, and *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020* – also presented in June this year by Europol. Both reports discuss the events of 2019, comparing selected aspects with the situation in previous years.

COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

According to the statistics published in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019*, 8,302 terrorist incidents took place worldwide in 2019, which is an increase of 3 per cent on the year before. In statistical terms, this means over 20 attacks a day. Last year, attacks were launched in 89 countries and territories on different continents, which shows the continued global extent of this threat. Approximately 84 per cent of these attacks were geographically concentrated in three regions: West Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, the states most threatened by terrorism included Afghanistan, Syria, India, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Yemen, the Philippines, Colombia and Congo – which together accounted for 74 per cent of all incidents. Afghanistan has maintained the position of ultimate leader, where the number of attacks increased significantly (by 35 percent: from 1,294 in 2018 to 1,750 in 2019). Syria was second with an increase of 18 per cent (from 871 to 1,028), and – rather surprisingly – India was third, although it featured a decrease of 2 per cent (from 671 to 655 incidents).

The authors of the *Report* indicate that 25,082 people died last year in the wake of terrorist attacks (a decrease of 24 per cent compared to 2018), 19,924 were injured (a decrease of 12 per cent) and 2,895 kidnappings were recorded (a decrease of 18 per cent). The largest numbers of casualties (fatalities plus injuries) were recorded in Afghanistan (over 16,000) and Syria (almost 5,000). The case of Afghanistan is particularly interesting, where, despite the decline in their number (4 per cent down), 36 per cent of all victims of global terrorism were reported. A much stronger downward trend was recorded in Syria (25 per cent down) and Yemen (54 per cent down), while Burkina Faso suffered the largest increase in casualties (219 per cent up).

Table 1

States with the highest numbers of casualties 2018 and 2019

Country	Total Casualties (Fatalities plus Injuries)				
	2018	Perc.*	2019	Perc.*	Perc. Chg**
Afghanistan	17,000	31%	16,324	36%	-4%
Syria	6,506	12%	4,906	11%	-25%
Nigeria	4,521	8%	3,630	8%	-20%
Somalia	3,380	6%	2,570	6%	-24%
Yemen	4,133	7%	1,908	4%	-54%
Iraq	3,349	69%	1,671	4%	-50%
Mali	1,390	3%	1,468	3%	6%
Philippines	1,118	2%	1,192	3%	7%
Pakistan	1,896	3%	1,154	3%	-39%
Burkina Faso	358	1%	1,142	3%	219%
Sub- Total	43,651	79%	35,965	80%	-18%
Year-End Total	55,487		45,006		-19%

* Percent of casualties against the annual total.

** Percent change in number of casualties in 2019 compared with 2018.

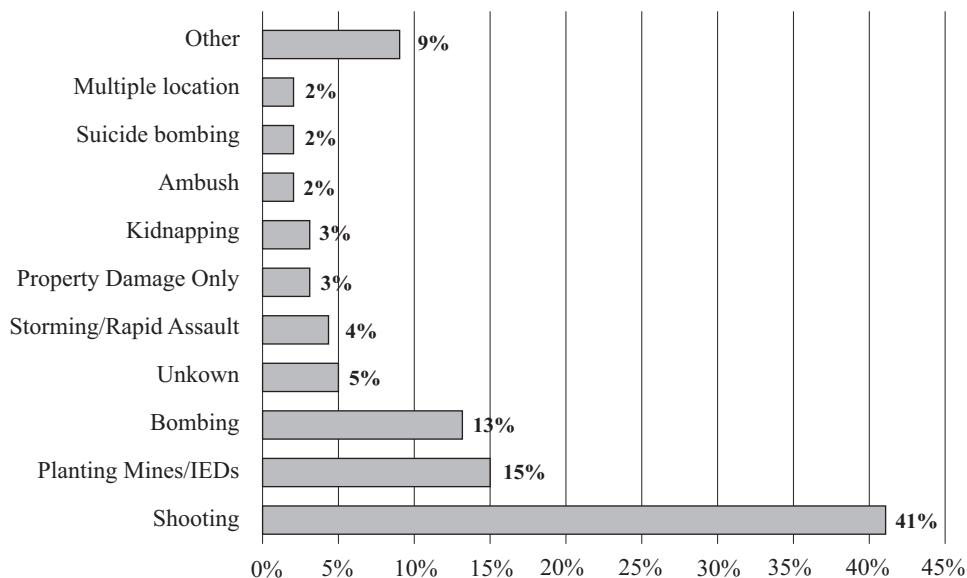
Source: *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019*, June 2020, prepared for the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism by Development Services Group, Inc. Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019>.

An important aspect addressed in *Country Reports on Terrorism* is the description of the attack perpetrator or perpetrators. As in previous years, in the case of some incidents (around 30 per cent), the perpetrators could not be clearly identified. The most dangerous and active groups include the Taliban (1,459 incidents, an increase of 35 per cent on 2018), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria – ISIS (575, a decrease of 11 per cent), al-Shabaab (484, a decrease of 10 per cent), the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (292, an increase of 65 per cent) and Boko Haram (272, an increase of 24 per cent). The *Report* describes also a further sixty or so other terrorist organizations. It should be emphasized that the Department of State separately considers individual groups affiliated or cooperating with ISIS. A total of 19 such groups are indicated across an area of 26 countries. They often share the same component of their respective names (e.g. ISIS-Bangladesh, ISIS-Greater Sahara, Islamic State’s Khorasan Province, ISIS-Philippines, ISIS Sinai Province, and ISIS-West Africa). In 2019 alone, they perpetrated over 900 terrorist incidents. Of these, ISIS West Africa recorded the largest escalation of activity (85 incidents, an increase of as much as 325 per cent). The situation is similar in the case of groups operating within what are called “Al-Qaida networks,” ten of which are mentioned in the *Report* (including the above-mentioned al-Shabaab, Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, to name but a few). Last year, they were jointly responsible for over 700 terrorist incidents.

The largest group of terrorist attack targets around the world were the entities classified as “military” (30 per cent), followed by “general population” (27 per cent) and “government” (19 per cent). These indicators varied considerably in different parts of the world, however, which resulted from the profile of the organizations operating in respective locations. For example, Boko Haram or ISIS attacked general populations more frequently, and the Taliban, al-Shabaab, and the Communist Party of India (Mao-

ist) attacked military and government officials more frequently. The methods used by terrorists also varied, covering a total of about 30 different categories identified by the authors of the *Report*. For instance, 41 per cent incidents of “shooting” were recorded alongside 15 per cent of “planting mines/IEDs,” 13 per cent of instances of “bombing,” 5 per cent of “unknown,” 4 per cent of “storming/rapid assault,” 3 per cent of “property damage only” and 3 per cent of “kidnapping.”

Graph 1. Most frequent methods of terrorist attacks 2019



Source: *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019*, June 2020, prepared for the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism by Development Services Group, Inc. Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019>.

EUROPEAN UNION TERRORISM SITUATION AND TREND REPORT

The reports by Europol are detailed analyses of terrorism occurring in a specific region. They show the scale, nature and specific character of terrorism inside the European Union. The most recent one, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020*, was prepared in a new, significantly expanded formula and primarily covers the events that took place in 2019. It not only presents jihadist terrorism, ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism, left-wing and anarchist terrorism, as well as right-wing terrorism (terminology used and explained in the *Report*), but also addresses numerous other issues, including that of persons arrested for terrorism, the number of convictions and acquittals per EU member state and per type of terrorism, relevant anti-terrorist legislation, theories and research methodology of terrorism studies, the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists, their connections with criminal groups, financing of terrorism, terrorist propaganda and hate speech. It also includes a description of the most important terrorist groups and analyzes single-

issue terrorism, the returns of ISIS fighters, and the threat of terrorism from outside the territory of the European Union.

According to the report, 119 completed, failed and foiled attacks were reported within the EU in 2019, which shows a decrease compared to 205 cases in 2017 and 129 in 2018. This was the lowest rate in many years. According to Europol experts, it can be explained, among other things, by the increasingly effective combating of the terrorist threat, the weakening influence and ideology of ISIS and the restriction of migration processes, including curbing the scale of return of terrorist fighters.

In 2019, terrorist attacks were launched in 13 EU member states, with a majority in the UK (64), 28 in Italy 28 and 7 in France. On top of that, 4 cases were reported in Greece, 3 in Germany and Spain each, 2 each in the Czech Republic, Denmark and the Netherlands, and 1 each in Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland and Lithuania.

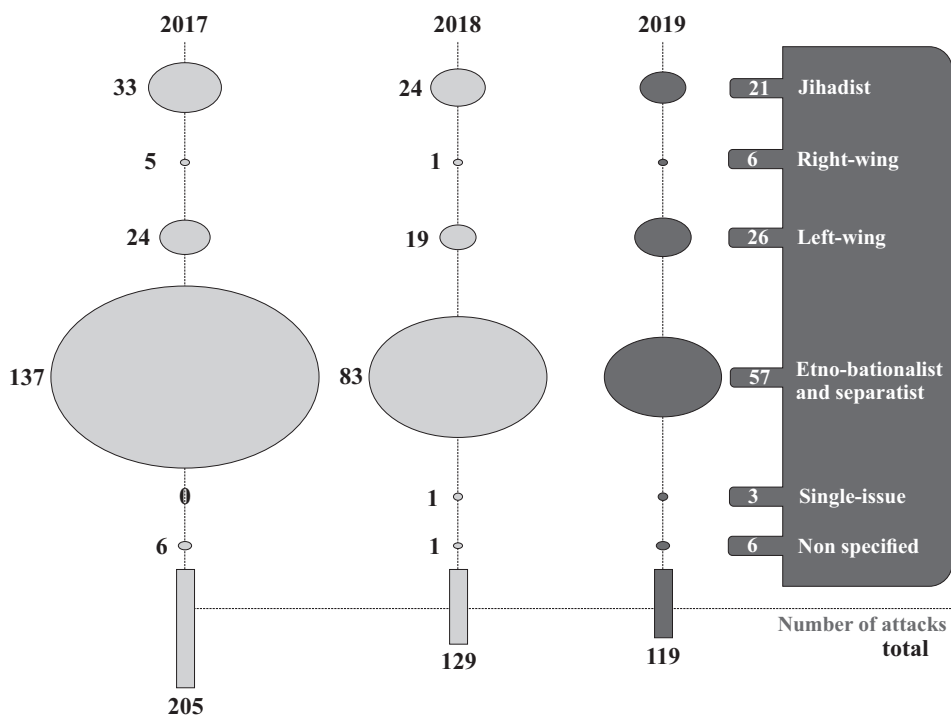
Contrary to common and often repeated opinions, Islamist attacks have not dominated in the EU for many years. In 2019, almost half of all attacks (57) were inspired by ethno-nationalist-separatist sentiments (almost all of them in the UK). A further 26 incidents were classified as left-wing (mainly in Italy, Greece and Spain), 21 as jihadists (France, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Belgium and Bulgaria), and 6 as right-wing (Great Britain, Lithuania and Poland); 6 attacks were not classified and 3 cases were identified as single case terrorism. Compared to 2018, this means an increase in right-wing (from 1 to 6) and left-wing attacks (from 19 to 26), and a decrease in those resulting from jihadist (from 24 to 21) and ethno-nationalist-separatist motives (from 83 to 57).

However, the fact that terrorism remains a serious threat to the EU is demonstrated, among other things, by the high number of people arrested on this charge (1,004). In 2018, there were 1,056 such cases. In 2019, the largest number of detainees identified with jihadist ideology (436 compared to 511 the year before), including almost half of the cases in France. The number of people arrested for left-wing terrorist activities (mainly in Italy) also increased significantly (from 34 in 2018 to 111 in 2019). In the same period, the percentage of people detained and suspected of right-wing terrorism decreased (from 44 to 21). Another example of the scale of the threat, as well as of the involvement of individual EU countries in combatting terrorism, included in the *Report* is the number of convictions and acquittals for terrorist offences. There were 520 of them in 2019, 664 in 2018, and 569 in 2017.

In 2019, 10 people were killed and 27 injured in terrorist attacks in the EU. All the fatalities and injuries of 26 victims were sustained due to jihadist activities, while one person was injured in an attack carried out by right-wing terrorists. In addition, a further 17 EU citizens were killed outside the EU, for example, during the attack in Sri Lanka (April 21, 2019). For comparison, in 2018, 13 people were killed and 53 injured due to terrorist attacks inside the EU. This is a significant change, as 62 people were killed and 844 injured in 2017; and 2016 saw 142 fatalities and 379 injured victims. Most of the victims suffered in attacks inspired by the Islamist threat.

Another important and worrying trend that occurs in various parts of the world, including the territory of the EU, is the increased activity of Hezbollah. When analyzing its current activity, two main aspects come to the forefront. It should be emphasized that the object of the analysis here is an extremist Shia group of Lebanese origin which

Graph 2. Terrorist attacks completed, failed and foiled in the EU and their perpetrators’ ideological profile 2017–2019



Source: *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020*, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>.

very effectively combines activities of a political, social (e.g. running schools, clinics and cultural centers), religious, media-related (possession of numerous and various media), but also military and terrorist nature. The second aspect concerns the gradual territorial expansion of Hezbollah’s activity, not only to the Middle East, Asia and Africa, but also to North and South America, Australia and the European Union.

Hezbollah is not only increasingly interested in the area of the European Union, but also exercises considerable and consistently expanding possibilities to operate here. The operations of Hezbollah are significantly facilitated, for example, by the presence of a large Muslim community, mass influx of migrants, the possibility of deriving enormous profits from drug trafficking and money laundering, as well as the development of communication technologies and moving activities to cyberspace.

Hezbollah is very active in EU member states, including on the territory of Germany, which can be explained primarily by the political and economic significance of this state, its geopolitical characteristics and the large Muslim community living there, estimated at over 5 million people (about 7 per cent of them are Shia Muslims). According to general estimates by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, over one thousand people are actively involved in various forms of Hezbollah activity in Germany. In reality, however, their actions are aided and supported by tens of thousands of Muslims living there.

Several issues are among the most important security threats generated by Hezbollah in Germany and other EU countries. One involves drug smuggling and trafficking – mainly from Colombia, Africa, and Central Asia. The value of drugs smuggled from West and Central Africa alone is estimated at around USD 900 million. The second type of activity is related to organizing clandestine collections and transfers of funds accumulated among the Shia community and generated by legal or illicit institutions controlled by Hezbollah. This is associated with hiding, smuggling or legalizing the stay of wanted persons, as well as smuggling weapons, propaganda materials, etc. Another important, though rarely discussed topic concerns the monitoring and harassment of political opponents in Germany in cooperation with Iranian intelligence, including people associated with the Kurdish (around 600,000) or Persian diasporas (over 120,000). These are mainly people who fled Iran after the outbreak of the Islamic revolution in 1979 or left the Middle East in the wake of the Syrian conflict and the expansion of ISIS. This is accompanied by operational, intelligence and propaganda activities that are detrimental to American, Israeli, EU or NATO interests and institutions in Germany. Such activity is carried out for the benefit of Hezbollah, Iran or other foreign services, e.g. Syrian or North Korean, cooperating with Hezbollah. Another important threat to the security of Germany concerns various areas of cooperation with terrorist organizations operating in Germany, including Hamas, but also Salafi and Wahhabi groups, including Al-Qaeda. This cooperation extends to financial, criminal and political, as well as strictly terrorist spheres. Hezbollah initiating independent terrorist activities cannot be ruled out, for example, inspiring attacks, collecting the necessary resources and information, training people, etc. Additionally, Hezbollah also carries out tasks related to the legal or illegal acquisition of equipment, experts or technologies that are then used for intelligence or combat purposes (e.g. obtaining components manufactured by Siemens for the construction of drones).

On April 30, 2020, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer announced a ban on Hezbollah's activities in Germany and justified this decision by saying that the organization was against the "idea of understanding between nations," including calling for the annihilation of Israel. In the opinion of some experts, however, the true reasons were completely different and concerned the threats indicated above. Hezbollah has no official representation in Germany. Therefore, the ban applies to four associations that served Hezbollah's supporters to conduct their activities. At the same time, the police searched the headquarters of the organization in Berlin, Bremen, Muenster and Dortmund, as well as related mosques and private apartments. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution had previously recognized Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, pointing out that it used Germany, for example, as a shelter for wanted activists, collecting donations and spreading propaganda messages directed against Israel and the USA. These actions have posed a threat to the security of Germany, the EU, and their allies.

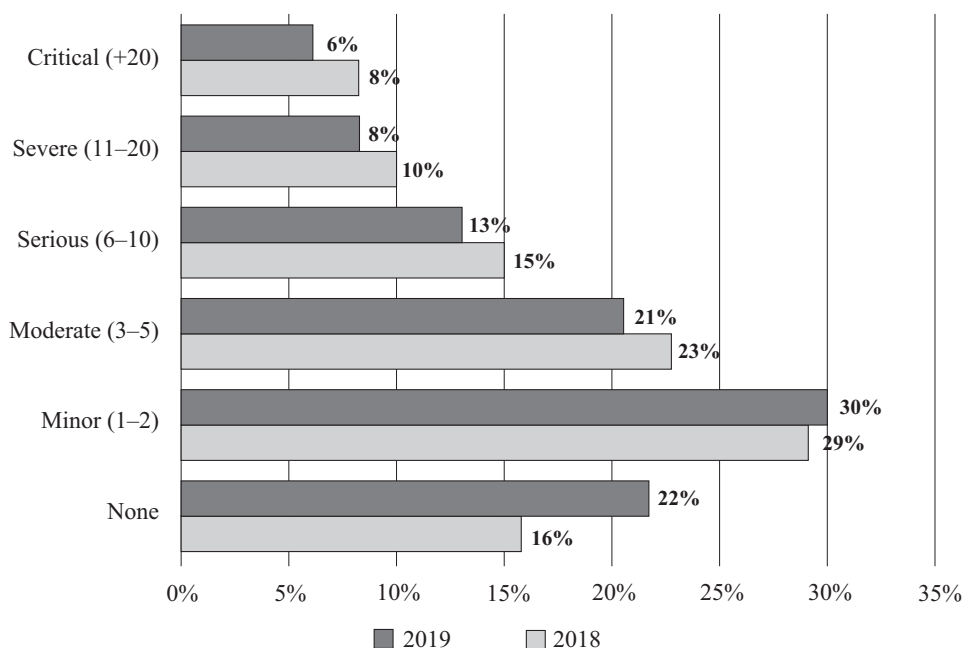
It should also be emphasized that international community sometimes has a different view on the operations of Hezbollah. For example, the USA, Canada and Israel treat Hezbollah (the political and military wings alike) as a terrorist organization. In 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution identifying Hezbollah (its military wing only) as a terrorist group, and in 2016, the League of Arab States, the Gulf Coop-

eration Council and other Arab states (excluding Syria, Iraq and Lebanon) recognized Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. However, some countries, such as Iran, Russia and China, strongly oppose this approach.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the reports discussed, it should be emphasized that terrorism continues to pose a serious global challenge (over 8,000 incidents in 2019). Although in some countries (e.g. Afghanistan, Syria or Yemen) the scale of attacks increased over the period under analysis, the number of their victims fell. This trend is confirmed by statistics showing, for example, that the number of attacks classified as “serious” by the Department of State (6 to 10 victims) dropped from 15 per cent in 2018 to 13 per cent in 2019, the number of “severe” attacks (11–20 victims) decreased from 10 per cent to 8 per cent and that of “critical” (over 20 victims) – from 8 per cent to 6 per cent.

Graph 3. Terrorist attacks by number of victims in 2018 and 2019



Source: *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019*, June 2020, prepared for the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism by Development Services Group, Inc. Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019>.

The Taliban remained the most active and most dangerous perpetrators of terrorist attacks in the world last year, who were responsible for 18 per cent of all incidents (around 1,500). This constitutes an increase of 35 per cent on previous year. Their actions brought about the death or injury of nearly 14,000 people, which accounts for as much as 31 per cent of all global terrorism victims. Groups directly or indirectly

related to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria – ISIS (over 900 incidents in total) and Al-Qaeda (over 700) also remain very dangerous despite the indicated declines in activity. Other organizations are also becoming increasingly active, including left-wing ones, e.g. in India or the Philippines.

The European Union showed a decline in the terrorist threat in 2019. The lowest level of completed, failed and foiled terrorist attacks in years was reported here (119 compared to 205 cases in 2017 and 129 in 2018). This can be explained, among other things, by increased effectiveness in combating the terrorist threat, the weakening influence and ideology of, for example, ISIS, and restricting migration processes, including the number of terrorist fighters' returns. The question remains, however, whether this trend will continue in the future.

Attention should also be paid to the increased activity of political and religious extremists in some EU member states, and the accompanying escalation of violence which has been highlighted by Europol. This is the case, for example, in Germany, as indicated by reports developed by the Federal Criminal Police Office which show that the number of politically motivated crimes in Germany increased by 14.2 per cent in 2019 (from 36,000 to 41,000). The vast majority of these acts were related to right-wing ideology (about 22,000 incidents, an increase of 9.4 per cent). However, the percentage of crimes inspired by left-wing ideology is also growing very quickly (approx. 9,000, an increase of 23.7 per cent). A similar, very disturbing tendency can also be seen on other continents, the best example of which are the events taking place in the USA in 2020.

The level of the current terrorist threat in the world should be assessed not only on the basis of information on the number of completed, failed and foiled attacks and their victims. Although these are very important indicators, they need to be supplemented with other key data, such as, for example, the number of people arrested and sentenced for terrorism, the scale of financial resources obtained by terrorists, as well as the numbers of persons recruited, the scope and effectiveness of terrorist propaganda, the level of public support for their operations, support from the outside, and many other aspects.

An in-depth analysis of all the above factors leads to the conclusion that global terrorism remains a very serious threat to both internal and international security. It can be compared to a "bomb" which, although recently overshadowed by the problems and challenges related to COVID-19, is still ticking... The question remains of whether and how the pandemic will be exploited by terrorists in the future, and to what extent it will financially or logistically weaken the security systems of individual countries, especially the poorest ones.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the most recent issue of the *Strategic Review* includes approximately thirty texts. They have been prepared by an international team of authors representing various countries, including Afghanistan, Cyprus, Poland, Russia, Turkey, the USA and Ukraine. Such diversity significantly enhances the journal, allowing us to present not only a variety of issues, but also often new or different points of view on a specific problem.

The whole of the new issue is divided into five main thematic sections. The first one, **INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**, is of the utmost importance and thematically diverse. It addresses, among other things, the issue of the most important sources of conflict in the world, such as the Cold War, the conflict in Syria, Donbass, Transnistria and Afghanistan, as well as the deepening US-Chinese rivalry. This section includes the following eight texts:

- *“Active Measures” of the USSR against the USA: Old Soviet Games in the New Geopolitical Reality,*
- *Born in the Ashes: Nuclear Uncertainties ‘Increasing’ Strategic Stability,*
- *EU-Africa Relations: Towards a New Comprehensive Strategy with Africa. Between a Rock and a Hard Place,*
- *Turkey-US Relations in the Context of the Syrian Conflict: from Cooperation to Confrontation,*
- *Russia’s Exogenous Factor in the Donbass Conflict,*
- *The Role of Germany in the Transnistria Conflict,*
- *The Role of the Polish Military Contingent in the Reconstruction of Ghazni Province,*
- *Inevitable War, US Decline or Business as Usual? Narratives on China’s Ascension to Power among American Academia.*

The second thematic section, **REGIONAL ASPECTS OF SECURITY** both complements and develops the issues presented above. It characterizes, among other things, the situation in the Baltic-Black Sea Region, Saudi Arabia Region, ASEAN or Arab States. It features the following six texts:

- *Baltic-Black Sea Region as a Resilience Region: Political and Security Aspects,*
- *Saudi Arabia as a Regional Power and an Absolute Monarchy Undergoing Reforms. Vision 2030 – the Perspective of the End of the Second Decade of the 21st Century,*
- *Political Regime Type and Regional Cooperation – a Case Study of Arab States,*
- *The ASEAN’s Attitude to the South China Sea Dispute after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague,*
- *The British-Irish Border in the Context of Brexit,*
- *Decentralization vs Centralization: Scenarios of Regional Development of Ukraine in the Context of Internal Stability Establishment.*

The above issues are closely related to the third thematic section: **DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF SECURITY**, which addresses various problems in the field of internal security occurring, for example, in the USA, the United Kingdom, Russia, Ukraine and Nigeria. There are six texts here:

- *Institutional Mechanisms to Ensure National Security in the Information Space of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation,*
- *Scenarios for the Development of the Migration Problem in Russia,*
- *Political Identity as a Security Factor of Ukrainian Statehood,*
- *Selling Insecurity via Twitter: Ukrainian President’s Posts and Modern Political Discourse,*
- *Ukrainian Historical Issues in Polish Media in the Context of a HybridWar: Between Myths and Post-Truth,*

– *Boko Haram – the Evolution of Jihad Activity in Nigeria 2015–2019.*

The fourth thematic section presents the issue of the **HUMAN ASPECTS OF SECURITY** which continues to be an extremely important, albeit still far too rarely discussed topic. Four texts explore it:

- *Use and Application of Firearms by the Police in the Light of Human Rights Standards in Poland,*
- *Right to Privacy and State Policy on Cyber Security. Necessity or Threat from the State,*
- *Securitization of Memory: Theoretical Framework to Study the Latvian Case,*
- *Feminization of the Police from the Perspective of Comprehensive Risk Minimization.*

For many years, the issues related to aspects of **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY** have been gaining in importance. Therefore, this issue of the *Strategic Review* could not ignore them. Three texts refer to the various contexts of energy, raw materials or food (Food Security):

- *The External Component of National Economic Security,*
- *Energy Security of the Black Sea Region: Geostrategy and Geoenergy Measurement,*
- *The Formation of the International Imperatives of the National (Food) Security Coefficient in Ukraine under Globalization.*

The new issue is additionally enhanced by the publication of extremely interesting interviews conducted by Professor Radosław Fiedler with two outstanding specialists: Bruce Hoffman – one of the world’s best known researchers into terrorism, and Richard Nephew – a key expert and coordinator of US policy towards Iran.

I would like to sincerely thank the Editorial Board for their commitment to preparing this thirteenth issue of the *Strategic Review*. Let this “13” be lucky for all of us ;-). Let me also take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Editorial Board, the reviewers, the authorities of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of AMU – especially Professor Andrzej Stelmach and Professor Magdalena Musiał-Karg or Professor Anna Potyrała, members of the Advisory Committee chaired by Vice-rector Professor Tadeusz Wallas, the English language specialist Katarzyna Matschi and the editor Ryszard Skrzeczyński. I hope the readers will find the texts inspiring.

We are pleased to announce that our journal has obtained a very high score of 120 points in the latest Index Copernicus Value.

Sebastian WOJCIECHOWSKI
Editor in Chief