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COOPERATION IN RESPECT TO MILITARY SECURITY IN ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

Abstract: With the end of the Cold War, perception of security issues changed considerably. Whereas in the period of the so-called “bi-polar order”, national security was associated mainly with military aspects, from the 1990s onward there has been a marked shift towards extending the security issues with others problems. Despite this trend, military aspects still play a major role in national security policies. The Asia-Pacific region still remains a “hot subject” from the standpoint of global military balance. This applies both to areas of armed conflict (Afghanistan) as well as regions of potential threats (such as the relations between India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan, and the latent conflict on the Korean Peninsula). For these reasons, nations of the Asia-Pacific region put the issue of military security cooperation very high on the list of their priorities.

Keywords: military security, international security organizations, bilateral cooperation.

1. Introduction

With the end of the Cold War, perception of security issues changed considerably. Whereas in the period of the so-called “bi-polar order”, national security was associated mainly with military aspects, from the 1990s onward there has been a marked shift towards extending the security issues with problems of economic, social and environmental nature. Despite this trend, military aspects still play a major role in national security policies, both on global and regional scale.

The Asia and Pacific region remains a “hot subject” from the standpoint of global military balance. This applies both to areas of armed conflict (Afghanistan) as well as regions of potential conflict (such as the relations between India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan and the latent conflict of the Korean peninsula).

For these reasons, nations of the Asia and Pacific region put the issue of military security cooperation very high on the list of their priorities. It is worth noting that this particular aspect of international cooperation is well-established in the region under study, both in the activities of organizations strictly involved with security issues and in bilateral relations between individual countries of the region.

2. The nature of military security

While international security problems may be perceived from various perspectives, the issue of military security remains one of the most important aspects of international relations, dealing with the very problem of survival of the nation in the face of external threat. Military security applies mainly to the issues involved in protecting national territory against external attack of military nature. As such, it relates to such categories as defensive and offensive potential of the nation, as well as the potential to read and assess the intentions of other actors of the international relations scene.¹

Up to the closing stages of the Cold War era, problems of international security were associated primarily with military aspects.² This perception was reflected in the theoretical views of the so-called realist school, manifested, among others, in the approach of two dominant powers of the Cold War world, i.e., the Soviet Union and the United States of America. In their strife to maintain the balance of power, both sides of the global power play accentuated problems of military nature, with any existing threats addressed using mainly military force. From early 1990s onward, the security issues have been gradually supplemented by other aspects, as a result of new potential sources of threat to national security. These involved mainly issues of economic nature (quality of life, prosperity, perspectives for development), but also those problems of environmental and social nature that would potentially affect the level of national security. As a result, the notion of national security evolved in two distinct dimensions: *hard security* covering military aspects (often related to certain economic issues) and *soft security* addressing the problems of socio-cultural, environmental, technological, humane and demographic character.³

The conclusion of the Cold War era brought about a sizeable reduction of military threat levels on global scale, but the first decade of the 21st century turned out to be a period of dramatic events (terrorist attacks in the US, Madrid and London, war in Iraq and Afghanistan, pirate threat on the west coast of Africa). It seems, therefore, that military aspects still play a major role and significantly affect the perception of international security issues.

Individual countries define their own military security in relation to military threats, mainly those that may result from military aggression on the part of some

¹ J. Czaputowicz, Kryteria bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego państwa – aspekty teoretyczne, [in:] S. Dębski, B. Górka Winter (Eds.), *Kryteria bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego państwa*, PISM, Warszawa 2003, p. 23.

² Although, as observed by M. Madej in *Zagrożenia asymetryczne bezpieczeństwa państw obszaru transatlantyckiego*, PISM, Warszawa 2007, more precise term here would be: political-military.

³ Idem, *Terroryzm i inne zagrożenia asymetryczne w świetle współczesnego pojmowania bezpieczeństwa narodowego i międzynarodowego – próba teoretycznej konceptualizacji*, [in:] R. Kuźniar (Ed.), *Porządek międzynarodowy u progu XXI wieku*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2005, p. 489.

other country, such as the neighbouring power or a population of a subdued territory.⁴ Over the years, threats of this type evolved, partly in response to changes in military and defensive potential of individual countries and the globalization of economic and political relations. Modern weaponry (stealth planes, ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons) resulted in marked increase of susceptibility to military attack from outside. It must also be noted that natural barriers (mountain ranges, insular location) are no longer a safeguard against external aggression. The change of perception is also affected by globalization processes. Economic development, formation of new international relations in economy and political cooperation result in considerable limitation of potential threat from countries and nations traditionally perceived as unpredictable and irresponsible (good example being Vietnam).

On the other hand, it is worth noting that military threats are not limited to immediate aggression on the part of particular countries, but also relate to potential threat from certain “supra-national” actors (groups of terrorist, nationalistic or religious character, private armies, illegal arms dealers) and non-military threats (illegal migration, organized crime, piracy). 21st century brought about escalation of these threats, frequently referred to as asymmetric. It must be noted, however, that asymmetric threats may as well be orchestrated at national level. The US *Strategic Assessment* report of 1998, in its listing of primary asymmetric threats (weapons of mass destruction, advanced conventional arms and armament, information technology and methods based on specificity of natural environment), refers them to activities on national level.⁵ With reference to non-national threats, the report provides such examples as terrorism, organized crime, piracy and mass migration.⁶

3. Operation of regional organization

International organizations significantly affect the area of global safety, also that of military type. They can play a large role in conflict prevention and crisis solving. They can also provide mechanisms for building and maintaining security, both on global and regional scale.

The most important organizations dealing with problems of military security in Asia and Pacific region are listed in Table 1.

Two military pacts established in 1950s – SEATO and CENTO – were dissolved after ca. 25 years of operation. SEATO, initiated by USA, was established with intent to prevent proliferation of communist movements in the South East Asia. Its members were obliged to support one another in case of aggression, which in fact involved active prevention of communist influence, also in the form of containing leftist wings

⁴ K. Żukrowska, M. Grącik (Eds.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Teoria i praktyka*, SGH, Warszawa 2006, p. 24.

⁵ The report postulated distinction into transformation states, rogue states and failed states.

⁶ M. Madej, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne...*, p. 47.

Table 1. Military security organizations of Asia and Pacific region

Name of organization	Period of operation	Member states
Pacific Security Treaty (ANZUS)	Since 1951	Australia, New Zealand, USA
South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)	1954-1977	Australia, Philippines, France (up to 1974), New Zealand, Pakistan (up to 1973), Thailand, USA, Great Britain
Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)	1955-1979	Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Great Britain
Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Since 1967	Brunei, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
ASEAN Regional Forum (ASEAN RF)	Since 1994	ASEAN member states, and China, India, South Korea, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Russia
ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS)	Since 1984	Various institutions of Asia and Pacific region
Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	Since 2001	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)	Since 1992-1993	Australia, Brunei, China, Cambodia, Canada, Philippines, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Singapore, USA, Thailand, Vietnam
Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)	Since 2002	Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan

Source: own research.

in their fight for political power. CENTO was a political and military alliance aimed at maintaining peace and security and opposing communist influence in the Middle East. USA was an active participant of CENTO structures, despite never being a formal member of the organization.⁷

Pacific Security Treaty (ANZUS) also originated in the early 1950s. Similarly to the above two pacts, it was established as yet another manifestation of the US policy of building anti-communist military blocs. ANZUS was planned to be a Pacific version of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but, despite US attempts, other countries of the region would not join the pact. One of the few visible manifestation of the treaty was the commitment of New Zealand and Australia in Vietnam War. With New Zealand adopting the status of non-nuclear country (1987), its cooperation

⁷ R. Van Dijk, *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, Routledge, New York 2008, p. 57; J.A. Kechichian, CENTO, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, www.iranica.com (2.06.2009).

with USA became marginal (the United States officially suspended ANZUS obligations to New Zealand; Australia still recognizes New Zealand as rightful partner within the treaty).

At present, organizations of Asia and Pacific region seek cooperation in two-fold manner – the first being official, through the channel of governmental institutions (ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, SCO, CSTO); the second through non-official dialogue on security issues. The latter involves non-governmental, non-official and non-formal contacts and initiatives between individual members or groups, such as scientists, researchers, journalists, present or ex-members of administration (in private capacity). This model of cooperation in Asia and Pacific region is deemed a non-formal channel of dialogue over such issues as security, politics and economy.⁸ Good examples of this approach are the organizations of ASEAN Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN – ISIS) and the Council for Cooperation in the Asia–Pacific (CSCAP). Those organizations, despite being devoid of formal and direct influence on issues of national military security in the region, play an important role in building trust-based relations in the region, through exchange of views, multilateral consultations and joint research projects.

It seems, however, that the most influential organization of the region in respect to the issue of military security is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This alliance, established in 2001 as a direct continuation of the so-called “Shanghai Five”, was signed by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with several other states acting as observers (India, Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia). It must be noted that SCO is not a military pact in the strict sense of this term; it is an organization of political, economic and military character, aimed primarily at establishing and maintaining stability and broadly taken security in the Middle East Asia region.⁹

At SCO summit of April, 2009 in Moscow, the centre of attention was the cooperation between defence departments of member states in regard to such security issues as terrorism, separatism, extremism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan. To improve the efficiency of joint activities, members decided to extend the scale of contact with neighbouring countries with SCO observer status. Although military cooperation in response to security threats remains problematic for SCO members, the organization clearly focuses on political activities. It seems that both China and Russia perceive SCO as a platform for strengthening their political influence in Asia.

It is also worth noting that cooperation within SCO has a major impact on development of bilateral relations, also in the security aspects. A good example of this trend is the cooperation between Russia and China. During the aforementioned

⁸ D. Capie, P. Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 2002, pp. 209, 213.

⁹ T. May, *Szanghajjska Organizacja Współpracy – czyli jak powstaje trzeci biegun współczesnego świata*, <http://globaleconomy.pl> (29.05.2009).

Moscow summit, a number of agreements were signed, regulating the scale of future collaboration between military sectors of both global powers. At the same time, both powers emphasized that those steps are not directed against any third party.

At present, Russia and China remain the most influential players on the SCO scene. The combined potential of both countries opens up new possibilities to further their interests in Asia. It seems that the most important agenda of the organization in foreseeable future will be to counterbalance the US influence in Middle East or even in the whole Asia and Pacific region. This may result in the transformation of global power play into a multipolar system.

4. Rising role of NATO in Asia and Pacific region

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have boosted NATO interest in security issues of the Asia and Pacific region, especially that of Middle East. NATO presence in the region, as well as its impact on military security have soared as a result of taking over command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in 2003. It should be noted, however, that even prior to terrorist attacks on US soil, the Alliance was an active player in the region, seeking to stimulate Asian governments to take measures to improve regional security. Since early 1990s, all countries of Middle East Asia have been members of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the associated Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Consequently, NATO and its partners gained access to mechanisms of practical cooperation in security and defence aspects of the region, through a number of diverse initiatives and activities. These include promotion of reforms to regional defence systems as well as improved potential for military collaboration of partnership members with NATO forces. Other areas of agreement include natural disaster relief assistance, arms control and sealing of national borders. Moreover, partnership members cooperate in such areas as science and environment protection.¹⁰

By taking command over ISAF forces in Afghanistan in August 2003, NATO made a long-term commitment in the process of building stability and security in Middle East. Parallel to that, active political measures were taken to improve Allied influence in Asia, mainly through ensuring logistic support from Middle East governments, an issue of great strategic importance to the success of military operation in Afghanistan.¹¹

At the Istanbul summit of June 2004, Alliance leaders confirmed the strategic importance of Central Asia. The region, together with Caucasus, was deemed “an area of special focus”. Moreover, NATO leaders agreed to delegate its liaison officer at regional headquarters in Kazakhstan, with the aim of supporting NATO cooperation and

¹⁰ R. Weitz, *Odnowa układów partnerskich z państwami w Azji Środkowej*, *NATO Review*, Autumn 2006, www.nato.int/docu/review/2006.

¹¹ Walczak J., *Strategia wyjścia: Zwycięstwo*, *Raport*, April 2009.

aid programs in this region. A special representative of Secretary General for the region of Central Asia and Southern Caucasus was appointed (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). Robert Simmons, appointed for this post, took care to inform public opinion of Central Asia countries on all NATO initiatives pertaining to regional security.¹²

One of the most problematic recent events to affect NATO operation in the region took place in May 2005 in Uzbekistan. At that time, Uzbekistan government decided to quell local protests in Andijan using police and military forces. The intervention led to massacre, with at least 200 civil casualties (as per official count). The Alliance issued a formal protest and demanded independent, international investigation.¹³ In response, Uzbekistan demanded withdrawal of US troops from Uzbek-based military compounds and introduced stringent limits to the use of Uzbek territory and air space for other NATO members. In the aftermath, cooperation of NATO with Uzbekistan was severely crippled. The situation, however, did not affect NATO collaboration with other countries of the region. A good example here is the involvement of Kazakhstan within the Individual Partnership Action Plan initiative, designed to support NATO on political and security issues. On the other hand, there are barriers to the process, such as the distant perspective for NATO enlargement with respect to Central Asia states, as well as the need for extensive reforms in defence sectors of potential invitees (structural changes on ministerial level, modernization of military forces).

One important aspect of strengthening NATO position in the region is the need for a dialog between the Alliance and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Central Asia is the only region on global scale, in which forces of NATO, Russia and China operate in close proximity. For the time being, the most evident problem is the fact that NATO lacks formal institutional relations with SCO and China.¹⁴ Consequently, despite declarations of both parties, there are no tangible effects to this process.

Nevertheless, certain areas of potential cooperation between NATO and SCO are already present and viable – fight against terrorist threat, control of drug- and people-trafficking, limiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Another promising area of cooperation can be found in natural disaster joint relief assistance. It seems, however, that this task will not be easy, especially when taking into consideration disparity of political, military and economic agendas of global powers involved in Asia and Pacific region.

5. Bilateral collaboration in the area of military security

Bilateral agreements are a significant aspect of military security in Asia and Pacific region. Forms of such cooperation are varied and numerous, ranging from military alliances to joint military exercises and collaboration in arms and armament development and manufacturing.

¹² Weitz R., *op. cit.*

¹³ *Uzbekistan Troops Retake Rebel-held Town*, www.usatoday.com/news/world (18.05.2005).

¹⁴ China does not even retain the status of “dialog partnership” with NATO.

A good example of such bilateral cooperation in the region can be found in relations between USA and Japan. In 1945, after the fierce conflict of the World War II, Japan adopted liberal democratic practices and soon became a major ally of the USA. Relations between the two countries were strongly influenced by the Cold War era. With such events as proclamation of Communist China and US military involvement in Korea and Vietnam, military cooperation with Japan was an important asset to USA. In January 1960, both countries signed a Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in Washington. Under this agreement, both countries assumed an obligation of military intervention in case of armed attack on either party. The end of Cold War period brought no significant limitations to military cooperation between the two powers, as certain regional threats remained in focus, such as the nuclear research of North Korea and the growing position of China on global arena. In 1996, at Tokyo meeting, Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and US president Bill Clinton signed a declaration of agreement for the next millennium. This document introduced certain changes in the scale of collaboration between the two countries, most notably increasing Japan's involvement in the process of maintaining security of Asia and Pacific region.

Despite frequent tension and controversy in relations between Japan and the USA, military collaboration of the two powers flourishes. There are numerous joint initiatives in regard to arms development (such as the design of Japanese multi-purpose aircraft F-2). Also, the potential of joint military operations has increased significantly over the years, boosted by bilateral military exercises such as Iron Fist.¹⁵ In response to the test launch of Korean ballistic missile Taepodong-1 in close proximity of the Japanese island of Honsiu in 1998, Japan and the USA initiated a joint anti-missile defence system program.

Many experts agree that American-Japanese alliance may form a base for further expansion of military cooperation in the region under study. One of such ideas is the so-called regional democracy alliance concept that would incorporate other countries of the region, such as Australia, the Philippines and India.

Another strategic ally of the USA in the region is South Korea, due to its geographic location. US administration signed a treaty of military cooperation with South Korea after the Korean conflict. Under this agreement, the USA offered to act as warrant of security, especially against large and well-equipped army of the North Korea regime. The agreement postulated US military presence on South Korea territory and subordination of local military forces to US military authority. Over the years following the agreement, military forces of South Korea improved their combat potential through US military aid and reached increasingly independent status, resulting in gradual decrease of US contingent forces on the peninsula.¹⁶ In addition, the USA is a key provider of military equipment for South Korea, as well as active

¹⁵ *US, Japan Conduct Joint Military Exercise*, www.english.cctv.com (5.02.2010).

¹⁶ In 2008, the number of US contingent forces was 25 thousand.

participant in a number of military projects (such as the training aircraft T-50). Threat of missile attack on the part of North Korea will, most probably, result in joint regional anti-missile system.

Another example of bilateral relations influencing military security of Asia and Pacific region is the cooperation between China and Russia. Both powers have common strategic interests, both on regional and global scale. However, the history of Chinese-Russian relations is replete with incidents, also of military nature, especially those resulting from territorial (border) disputes.¹⁷ Nonetheless, since the middle of 1990s, relations between the two countries have gradually improved. In 1996, China and Russia signed a strategic partnership agreement, followed next year by a “Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New International Order”. Subsequent years brought further cooperation initiatives, based, as it appears, on joint attempt to limit the US domination on regional and global scale. In respect to military security, both powers frequently presented similar position in such issues as the Balkan and Iraq conflicts, as well as over US plans of anti-missile defence systems.¹⁸ Russian-Chinese cooperation includes joint operations of military and anti-terrorist forces, intelligence operations, as well as arms trade and development.¹⁹ At the onset of the 21st century, Russia is the principal provider of arms and military technologies to China. Another benefit for the Chinese is the fact that Russian partners offer licences for production of modern weaponry, such as the multi-purpose Su-27 aircraft, opening the perspective for fast modernization of Chinese military industry.

Production of arms and weaponry is also basis for close cooperation between China and Pakistan. Good examples of this partnership include two successful aircraft constructions: FC-1 Thunder fighter and K-8 Karakorum trainer.²⁰ Moreover, both countries collaborate in production of military vessels and missiles. It seems most probable that the Chinese offered support to Pakistani project of nuclear weapons. Obviously, Chinese-Pakistani relations must be examined in a much wider context, since Pakistan, as a natural enemy of India, plays an important role in shaping the Chinese policy of regional influence.

Another interesting aspect of bilateral relations affecting military security in the region under study is the collaboration between Russia and India. Close cooperation of these two powers is well-established, going back to the 1960s. Despite drastic changes of political nature, resulting from the fall of Soviet empire, both countries maintain good relations. Russian Federation is the largest and the most important

¹⁷ Conclusive agreement on border regulation was signed as late as 2005.

¹⁸ A. Bryc, *Rosja w XXI wieku. Gracz światowy czy koniec gry?*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 165.

¹⁹ R. Faligot, *Tajne służby chińskie. Od Mao do igrzysk olimpijskich*, Wydawnictwo Sonia Draga, Katowice 2009, pp. 344, 345.

²⁰ Y. Gordon, D. Komissarov, *Chinese Aircraft. China's aviation industry since 1951*, Hikoki Publications, Manchester 2008, pp. 106-110, 179.

provider of arms and military technology to India. An estimated 75% of Indian weaponry in use is of Russian origin. Importance of India as a major partner of Russian military industry is confirmed in India's involvement in design of the fifth-generation fighter plane (code name T-50), which saw its maiden flight in early 2010.²¹ Both countries closely cooperate in training and conduct joint exercises (such as the naval exercise on Indian Ocean in May 2003).²²

6. Conclusions

In respect to military cooperation, the region of Asia and Pacific may be considered specific. It lacks multilateral structures of NATO type. The existence of military treaties of old, such as ANZUS and CENTO, is no longer justified. At present, apart from formal governmental cooperation within such organizations as ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, SCO, CSTO), countries of the region employ non-formal dialog channels to discuss the issues of security (ASEAN-ISIS, CSCAP). Recent years saw an increase of NATO activity in the Asia and Pacific region, resulting mainly from the aftermath of terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 as well as the operation of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. It seems, however, that decidedly more significant are the bilateral relations between countries of the region (USA-Japan, USA-South Korea, Russia-China, Russia-India), as the most dominant platform to affect military security, both on regional and global scale.

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²¹ *New Russian Fighter Makes Maiden Flight*, www.defencenews.com (29.01.2010).

²² A. Bryc, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 177.

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WSPÓLPRACA WOJSKOWA W REGIONIE AZJI I PACYFIKU

Streszczenie: Zakończenie zimnej wojny spowodowało, że sposób postrzegania problemów bezpieczeństwa uległ głębokim zmianom. O ile w okresie tzw. ładu dwubiegunowego bezpieczeństwo było kojarzone przede wszystkim z aspektami militarnymi, o tyle już od lat 90. ubiegłego wieku zaczęto rozszerzać je o aspekty ekonomiczne, społeczne czy ekologiczne. Pomimo tych zmian kwestie militarne w bardzo dużym stopniu wpływają na poziom bezpieczeństwa w wymiarze zarówno globalnym, jak i regionalnym. Pod względem zagrożeń dla międzynarodowego bezpieczeństwa militarnego Azja i Pacyfik wciąż należą do obszarów „gorących”. Chodzi o obszary zarówno objęte działaniami wojennymi (Afganistan), jak i takie, które stanowią potencjalne źródło konfliktów (stosunki Indie-Pakistan i ChRL-Tajwan oraz sytuacja na Półwyspie Koreańskim). Z tych powodów narody regionu Azji i Pacyfiku współpracę w dziedzinie bezpieczeństwa militarnego umieściły bardzo wysoko na liście priorytetów.