

# Security in the light of select philosophical and social concepts. Between theory and practice

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Security is one of the basic values in the life of an individual, society, nation, country, and also at the international level. However, modern security is composed of efficient utilization of the potential within diplomacy and strength, a balanced relationship between soft and hard power. This text aims at presenting an overview of security concepts included in the selected philosophical and social models. This involves bringing closer specific theories and practical actions based on them. Nowadays, this can be seen at the level of relations between military and diplomatic solutions in various conflicts that took place at the turn of the twenty-first century.

**Key words:** philosophy of security, national and international security

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## INTRODUCTION

People were interested in the issues of security as early as ancient history. This interest had a theoretical and practical character. Security essentially comprised one of the basic needs of a man and was an essential element of a state. A state had a strictly political concept and its activities were to a great extent conditioned by politics. Due to this, security could not be separated from politics and the methods of pursuing it. This had to lead to perceiving security from the point of view determined by political actions in a given country. Security issues were fundamentally covered by modern and Enlightenment doctrines. In each of these we can discover attempts at denoting universal solutions that could then find practical implementation in political choices.

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This paper is composed of two parts. In the first part, we make an overview of the selected philosophical and social concepts of security, while in the second part we strive to pinpoint their practical existence in modern international security policy. In the summary, we present a few general conclusions connected with the discussed issues.

## THE THEORY OF SECURITY

In Ancient Greece, the analysis of the outbreak and the course of the Peloponnesian War made by Thucydides was of exceptional importance in the field of broadly-defined security (Thucydides 1988). Thucydides wanted to establish the cause of the outbreak of this war. It boiled down to an increase in the power of Athens, which led to the spread of fear among the Lacedaemonians. This war presented by Thucydides is a ruthless force that destroys every symptom of humanity in social life. Undoubtedly, it is a clear destructor of the sense of security at both the individual and the social levels.

Plato's views on political issues were focused on the analysis of the notion of state, which should be shaped in such a way so as to comprise a guarantee of the implementation of the most important values (Plato 1973). Goodness, truth, justice, beauty – these could never be severed from the basic sense of security of an individual, the whole of society and the state. Plato criticized the military state, regarding it as a deviation. Nevertheless, well-organized military forces are also of importance when it comes to national security. On the other hand, he contemplated the problem of limiting the broad scope of guards' activities and subjecting them to civilian control. Philosophers played a special role in respect to controlling the state, and especially the army. They guaranteed the creation of a state that is morally-healthy, just, and successful. The state constructed and functioning in such a way as to facilitate the establishment of peace and security among its citizens and in international relations.

Aristotle highlights the state's role in the field of effective and rational modeling of the sense of security. Its assurance is the condition of a happy life for an individual and the state (Aristotle 1981). The philosopher, at the same time, argues that the fulfilment of the most fundamental human needs, including security, is impossible without the strict connection of a man's life with the state. This is the basic element of man's socialization, his or her entering the social life, which facilitates peace and security. The Aristotelian philosophy of security includes a personal component regarding the human being and a structural one, connected with the role of the state in taking care of and the provision of goods for every citizen. This is the pragmatic concept. Politics should be first and foremost a method of efficient and safe governance. In order to guarantee such a state of affairs, the use of military force is permitted in order to secure peace.

In Ancient Rome, the state was to guarantee the sense of security in citizens, who wanted to lead their lives without worrying about the possibility of suffering loss or being harmed. The concern for community and harmonious cooperation constituted its important elements. The Roman Empire, famous for great and frequent conquests, favored these requirements. Its vast borders required constant attention to safeguarding Rome against the Barbarians. Victorious battles and wars were skillfully used not only to propagate the successes and fame of the rulers, but also to boost the sense of the state's security. The guarantee of security, aside from obvious military aspects, also had its economic characteristics. Hence the need for further expansions, which brought provisions of material goods and sustenance.

According to Cicero, feeble human nature is a threat leading to war (Cicero 1969). A person cannot successfully get rid of his or her desires, especially for wealth, fame and importance in the eyes of others. Despite a specific understanding of the so-called just war constituting the mainstay of security and sovereignty of the state against the aggressor, Cicero, at the same time, highlights the damage resulting from wars. He points out that war is a threat to justice, wealth, and the state's power. These values are the foundation of the state and citizens' security.

According to Lucretius, security is ascribed to the state of nature, in which a human being is free from worries and disputes (Lucretius 1994). The dynamic and relentless development of the state is seen here as a threat. Politics, which shapes the state, introduces a desire to dominate, rule, and ultimately results in war. Getting rid of these ambitions and listening to one's reason is the only successful way to ensuring peace and security.

Important suggestions in the field of peace and security were also contributed by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Both scholars based their assumptions on the teaching of the Church, philosophy, and Christian theology.

St. Augustine put forth a suggestion of a permanent union of nations around the idea of universal peace (St. Augustine 1950). All the nations of the world were to guard the mutual sense of security and care about the one great power of peace, which was only a step on the road to the divine Heavenly City, the pursuit of which stems from human nature. Security is a fundamental need and the worldly wish of every human being, which determines his or her humanity. In the Heavenly City, this striving will be achieved and satisfied completely. The Earthly City aims to fulfill the ambitions and objectives of every person. The Heavenly City, on the other hand, is completely subjected to the law of God. St. Augustine also presented an interpretation concerning the differentiation of attitudes towards war. He allows the possibility of security assurance by means of so-called just (defensive) wars. They are the opposite of unjust (invasive) wars, based on aggression and the desire to dominate and subdue the invaded states and nations.

St. Thomas Aquinas highlights the need to be concerned about goodness in social life, as it leads to unity and peace (St. Thomas Aquinas 2008). Peace and the provision of the sense of security are continual obligations of a human being and the concerns of a ruler. This appears to be still greatly up-to-date. In fact, modern security-related problems stem from a lack of unity of peace, that is, such a definition of security, which would encompass the entire international community.

Niccolò Machiavelli presents a model of civil society where everyone is safe. The state, a republic, is the concern of all its citizens (Machiavelli 1995). Machiavelli wanted to create a political theory based on a national interest, and security should be one such interest. The ruler is responsible for maintaining security. State authorities are to help him or her in doing this. Activities in the field of security are steered in the direction of the absolute achievement of the target objective. The maintenance of security is of the uttermost importance and should be pursued by any necessary, even contemptible, means. The warrants of security in the event of war are good laws as well as a sufficiently numerous and well-equipped army, consisting of the nation's citizens who would selflessly defend the nation (the hegemonic approach). However, he also provides the possibility of external support (military alliances).

Thomas Hobbes's views are based on natural law. Peace is the fundamental law of nature and one should always strive to establish and maintain it (Hobbes 1982). A war can take place only when there is no other chance and possibility of resolving the conflict. Egoism and the desire to possess all are threats to security. The most important and principal dimension of human security is the safeguarding of one's life. This can breed conflicts and be conducive to unrest. Everyone strives to safeguard one's security through the use of their dominating position towards other people. The social contract assists in overcoming such a state of affairs, and, similarly to pacts, it should be observed. Security and social order are determined by the absolutism of a ruler and the state.

Hugo Grotius highlighted the importance of the social contract. The authorities should watch over the observance of the laws of individuals, states, and nations (Grotius 2004). The rules of the social contract can be further interpreted by including within its framework the issues of universal peace and security. These are fundamental needs and values, stemming from natural law. Their observance should be a challenge for all people and societies. Grotius allows the existence of war, including defensive war; however, security and peace comprise superior values. They stem from justice, the sense of forgiveness, but also from the pragmatic approach towards the costs and time of military operations.

The discussion on the issue of security in the sphere of the liberal idea was taken up by Immanuel Kant (Kant 1917). The preservation of perpetual peace as the highest value is the most important. The establishment of peace and security is possible through a union of states based on agreements which are more important than treaties. These are the values and objectives of reason and law. The state organized as a republic is the guarantor of the achievement of objectives in respect of providing social order. War is not a path to the development and security of mankind, but a last resort, necessary to protect one's rights and interests. The "peaceful conflict" between nations is of the greatest importance here.

Carl von Clausewitz deemed war to be a natural and perpetual state in which mankind is functioning (Clausewitz 1873). Political and diplomatic actions can potentially limit and minimize its importance and course in given periods of time. War is the domain of a state, and state policy is oriented towards the absolute achievement of objectives connected with military operations – which focuses on the complete subjugation of the opponent to the will of the victor. Security has a total and even totalitarian character. The security of a state is thus continually conditioned by the continual waging of an effective and victorious war, and the post-war social order is determined by the victor.

## THE PRACTICE OF SECURITY

The modern formation of security is diversified in respect of assumptions, methods and particular actions. Nowadays, it boils down to the different practice of the achievement of security interests by the United States of America and the European Union (Nye 2004; Bauman 2004). The first case is dominated by realism and strength, and the other is idealistic and liberal reliance on diplomacy and soft power (Jackson, Sørensen 2010).

Political realism is particularly based on the ideas of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. Definitely, security is the domain of a sovereign state, as a basic entity in international relations (Morgenthau 1986; Waltz 2010). Such a state can enter into military alliances in order to guarantee its safety. A state is equipped with internal legislation and external autonomy. The real world, with all its threats, limitations, and – which are not uncommon – different interests, serves as the basis for security. Thus, a state safeguards its interests and establishes its greatest value – the national interest. In this respect, the precise definition of opportunities and threats – allies and enemies – is of fundamental importance. This leads to the implementation of the adopted security objectives and pursuing one's personal policy within the framework of the so-called zero-sum game. If at a given time and place one state fortifies its sense of security, then, simultaneously, there occurs an increase in the sense of danger on the side of another country. One of the basic assumptions of realists is a constant belief in the threat of war: a constant state. The possibility of overcoming this state of affairs is seen in the superior power of one global superpower, a hegemon, or

in the classical balance of power. The possession of political and military power should lie in the interest of international policy. This value, however, cannot be seen as granted eternally to all entities participating in international relations. State policy has to stem from objective rights that are found in human nature. It should be based on the striving towards security and the absolute preservation of the state. The state itself should guarantee its security owing to adequate internal consolidation, military strength and the ability to deter potential aggressors. One should also be firmly warned against excessive faith in the saving power of international organizations, and also against the belief in the necessity to broaden the rule of democracy. According to realists, democratization and wide external openness is conducive to the destabilization of world order. Associating into supranational international entities does not guarantee order and security. Realists are convinced that international organizations are too weak to achieve these objectives.

While analyzing the attitude of the United States of America, we can find many analogies to the aforementioned realistic approach to security. This nation is presently able to conduct military actions in every part of the world. Its finance, industry and logistics in the field of security dominate over every other country in the world. Its allies and enemies are precisely identified. An example of this is the USA's reaction to the attacks of September 11, 2001. Since then, America has been waging its "War on Terror." The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are its natural consequence. The political and military strength of the United States of America is virtually deciding on the direction of NATO's operations – the only treaty able to stabilize security policy in the world. All this gives the USA many enemies and critics. The excessive manifestation of strength is being stigmatized, as well as not taking into account the opinion of other international entities, including the United Nations, regarding the attack on Iraq in 2003. Nevertheless, if we were to really take a look at the security-related problems in the world, it would be difficult to deny that without the USA's involvement the efficient reaction to crises could not be possible. This has been recently proved by, among others, the Bosnian War, the conflict in Afghanistan, and the troubles in Northern Africa and the Middle East.

Political liberalism (idealism) is based on a presumption that the dissemination and strengthening of democracy is the guarantee of security understood as the lack of military conflicts between states (Kaldor 2003; Howard 1978). Supporters of this theory, following Kant, advocate wide, unrestricted human right to freedom as the highest value. International relations can be organized in such a way that mutual contacts between nations and states are free from violence and threats. Such freedom is possible in the sphere of both the internal and external policies of a given state. It is assumed that part of the decisions made at the national level should be transferred to international institutions. These and not one individual state would then serve as guarantors of maintaining a peaceful world. Liberals also accentuated the importance of extra-political elements which influence security. Broadly-defined trade and economic development can favor peaceful coexistence between nations. The issue of control exercised over military forces has been an important element of the legal regulation of the matter of responsibility for security affairs. This was conditioned by mutually-identical terms of civilian, political and democratic control. In the event of an ultimate threat, armed forces are indispensable. However, we should also pay attention to the good and democratic arrangement of relations between the armed forces and society. War is a threat to international law and order. In accordance with the Kantian vision of perpetual peace, war cannot be a method of solving disputes between states, as it brings much evil, harm and destruction. Due

to this, it deserves to be condemned. If it does happen, this is only in order to restore the rule of democracy.

The process of integration within the framework of the EU is advancing in a spirit of political liberalism. There is a prevalent belief that democracy, human rights, and political and economic cooperation are the path to stabilization and security. The expansion of supranational institutions' competencies and the increasingly-visible transfer of decision-making from the level of nation states to the EU are also very important. Europe is nowadays closely bond at the economic level. Common currency – the euro – is already functioning in the majority of EU member states. The scope of common legislation is increasing, and new areas, previously dominated by sovereign states, are being unionized. The call for further development of cooperation at the level of international and security-related affairs is more prominent. Cooperation, solidarity, and co-responsibility successfully oppose power play. War, so rife in history, has not been a threat to Europe for nearly 70 years. Despite this, we cannot ultimately state that Europe is free from problems. The voices connected with the need to consolidate nation states are being heard more explicitly. The promotion of democratic principles does not always appear to be effective. We can see this while analyzing the example of immigrants from other continents, which do not want to and cannot function under democracy. Democratically-elected pan-European institutions are more often being isolated from the current problems of Europeans. In many cases, the EU's diplomacy has not met the challenges and needs of endangered societies and states. The economic crisis is spreading more prominently.

## CONCLUSIONS

What is the result of the confrontation of theoretical proposals and practical solutions in the field of security? Is the optimistic and liberal foundation of security on unanimous and proportionate cooperation of states in international organizations (the EU) “realistic”? Or maybe the striving to base security on the traditional concept of hegemony (the USA) or the balance of power appears “idealistic”? There are many questions in this field. Unfortunately, there is no clear and full answer to the majority of them. Modern threats, especially terrorism and organized crime, make us aware that univocity in assessment is difficult to achieve. Constant searching is thus needed. It would be advisable then to find common concepts which could serve as a foundation for the practical achievement of security-related objectives. The United States of America and Europe need each other. Only effective and successful cooperation, similar determination of threats, and the creation of efficient solutions will favor global stabilization and security.

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