

Security threats related to areas beyond national jurisdiction

Abstract for the general public

Nowadays many challenges facing the international community are transboundary in nature. The security issues tackled by States and non-State actors in contemporary international relations concern not only State territories, but also areas beyond national jurisdiction, such as the outer space and celestial bodies, the high seas, the seabed, ocean floor and subsoil thereof, as well as the Antarctic. On the other hand areas beyond national jurisdiction, because of their special features, may themselves be sources of numerous specific threats (biological hazards, threats connected with astronomic phenomena and transit of cosmic bodies etc.) possibly affecting the whole globe – and thus state territories.

Therefore the notion of threats related to areas beyond national jurisdiction may be understood, firstly – as threats to such areas, particularly stemming from the activities undertaken there by States and other entities, secondly – as threats to States and even to the whole international community, originating in areas beyond national jurisdiction. That concept encompasses both natural and man-made threats. It is worth noticing that for a long time the access to most areas beyond national jurisdiction had been extremely difficult, but in recent decades the scientific and technological development, as well as climate changes have made it possible to intensify human activities and ventures in the outer space, polar regions and the seabed. As a consequence, the threats related to those areas have increased, which in turn results in the urgent need to adequately respond to them. Last but not least, such threats should be viewed and examined not only in the military context, but also from a broader perspective, taking into consideration i.a. the issues of ecological security, health security, human security and economic security.

The goal of the project is to develop a two-dimensional catalog of security threats related to areas beyond national jurisdiction, taking into account specific features of each area and its legal regime. Subsequently, the catalog will be used to conduct an in-depth analysis of the security strategies of NATO and EU Member States and NATO and the EU themselves, as well as the Russian Federation and China, including the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, in order to formulate recommendations on possible modifications to the Polish Strategy, within the scope of the relevant threats. Therefore the research will have both theoretical and practical significance. First of all, it will contribute to the development of the discipline, because so far in Polish security studies there have been no comprehensive works dedicated to the problem of threats related to areas beyond national jurisdiction (existing studies generally focus on selected areas in the context of security). Moreover, it will provide decision-makers, who are responsible for dealing with security issues on a national or an international level and are interested in designing and implementing proper security strategies, with a useful tool allowing them to better analyze and assess threats affecting areas beyond national jurisdiction or/and originating in such areas.