

# The Police Academy in Szczytno

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Summary of the doctoral dissertation

## **Countering hybrid threats**

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The paper answers the question (main research problem) – how to improve the methods of counteracting current and potential hybrid threats? For the purposes of the dissertation, the entire spectrum of threats from hybrid factors was examined. The dissertation characterizes hybrid threats and presents two case studies: the war in Syria in 2011 and the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 (Crimea, Donbas). The approach to countering hybrid threats of two international organizations was analyzed: the EU and NATO, as well as selected non-European countries: Israel, Australia and New Zealand. The impact of new hybrid threats on the security of the modern state was also noted. Recommendations were developed regarding the strategic approach to countering hybrid threats (strengthening conventional and unconventional deterrence capabilities), as well as ways to improve legal mechanisms and practical systems of responding to hybrid threats (including strengthening the defense capabilities of institutions and services responsible for internal security). The role of other instruments, the implementation of which will increase the ability to counter hybrid threats (social campaigns raising awareness of threats, counteracting disinformation in social media, intensification of international cooperation in combating hybrid threats), was also emphasized. The dissertation also includes an expert assessment of the proposed solutions to improve the methods of counteracting hybrid threats.

In the light of the results of the research, it was concluded that the experience of Israel in the field of multidirectional strengthening of the armed forces and adapting the defense strategy deserves attention and study in terms of its possible use to improve activities aimed at countering hybrid threats and other types of threats to national security in Poland. The Israeli model of organizing the army and the state defense system, especially the patriotic attitude and preparing the society for active defense (which has the ability to deter) is extremely beneficial in the case of well-thought-out and responsible building of an effective defense strategy for a small or medium-sized country such as Poland. Poland's remaining a frontline NATO country and the analysis of the effects of the Russian invasion in Ukraine (destruction of the state's material resources, including the population) also argue for considering the urgent development of the domestic civil and military nuclear sector.

According to the research results, Poland has been the target of information attacks for years, including by the Russian Federation (the allegations of alleged racism, aggressive foreign policy dictated by the West hostile to Russia, and the intention to make territorial acquisitions at the expense of Ukraine are repeated). To meet the challenge of defending against hybrid threats of this type, Poland should strengthen the state services responsible for counteracting

disinformation and strictly and effectively seek from allies for support adequate to the situation: official or behind the scenes. Fast and decisive response in the group of partner countries to information attacks as well as constant preventive cooperation with allied states should be definitely strengthened. Despite divergences in internal EU policy and – to a lesser extent in NATO – activities supporting Poland should be definitely strengthened.

In the light of the results of the conducted research, it was found that the issue of improving the methods of counteracting hybrid threats in a modern state, including Poland, is becoming more and more important in the context of increasing tensions in the international security environment. The development of effective methods of countering hybrid threats, as shown by research results, is of particular importance for small and medium-sized countries, such as Poland. Some of the solutions that have proven successful in the case of countries such as Israel should be introduced by Poland immediately with political consensus (including strengthening the deterrent potential, expanding the domestic defense industry, obtaining strategic support from allies adequate to regional threats). However, due to the complex nature of hybrid threats and their evolution in the future, there is a need for further research. Efficient identification of hybrid threats and comprehensive, systemic implementation of improvements in methods of countering hybrid threats is a continuous process – calculated for a long period of time. Activities in this area require, among others, consensus of the main political groups and social consultations, adequate financial resources, consistent and cross-party legislative work and cooperation with allies. Therefore, the methods of improving counteracting hybrid threats require further research, taking into account the volatility of threats and circumstances, as well as new challenges related to the dynamically changing security policy of modern states and the risk of changing alliances, the development of new military capabilities, digital and information technologies, as well as the pursuit of hybrid aggressors to keep their activities in the gray zone – below the threshold of war.