

Introduction

Russia's war against Ukraine, launched with a full-scale invasion in 2022, marks a turning point in modern international relations and in the European security system. Until recently, it seemed that classic armed conflicts based on conventional military actions belong to the past of the 20th century, and the main threats to the stability of states take the form of cyber-attacks, economic pressure, or hybrid operations. But Russia's aggression has shown that traditional methods of warfare – tanks, artillery, and land occupation – are still effective tools for achieving political goals. At the same time, this conflict shows that modern war is a multidimensional phenomenon: in addition to direct armed actions, information operations, disinformation, attempts to destabilise democratic institutions and weaken social and state cohesion play a key role. As a result, this war is transforming not only geographical borders, but also our understanding of war and security in the modern world. Europe is facing a new reality in which it must simultaneously respond to military threats, build resilience to hybrid wars, and redefine the principles of international order.

The presented issue of the journal "Studies and Analyses of Political Science" begins with an article by Dr. Oleksii Polegky, scientific director of the Centre for Public Diplomacy in Ukraine, entitled *The Meaning and Consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian War for European Security*. The author points out that the outbreak of war in 2022 has led to an unprecedented deterioration of the security situation in Europe, leading to an escalation of geopolitical tensions and an intensification of militarisation processes. At the same time, the conflict has become an impetus for closer cooperation within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). The alliance has strengthened its presence on

the eastern flank, and the EU has taken steps towards a more coherent defence policy. The war in Ukraine thus demonstrates the duality of the current situation: on the one hand, we are facing real threats, and on the other, we are witnessing an intensification of efforts to strengthen European security structures in the long term. In the context of Russia's instability and the potential consequences of its systemic collapse and the risk of Ukraine losing its independence, questions about the future of the European security order and enlargement policy are becoming crucial. Is Europe ready to confront the brutal logic of force that is returning in international relations?

In the next article *How Disinformation Can Influence a Nation: The Case of Romania* Stefano Lovi from the University of International Studies of Rome UNINT analyses the dangers of disinformation in the digital age. The author focuses on the case of Călin Georgescu – a nationalist and eurosceptic politician whose popularity has grown thanks to social media campaigns. The study shows how coordinated disinformation activities, most likely supported by Russia, led to the undermining of the legitimacy of the presidential elections in Romania. Stefano Lovi stresses the urgent need to implement comprehensive mechanisms to combat disinformation – from the regulation of digital platforms, to the development of *fact-checking* tools, to media education – as key elements of democracy protection.

Zofia Bizan from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in the article *Between Corruption and Soft Power – Analysis of the Phenomenon of Azerbaijani Caviar Diplomacy* addresses the issue of Azerbaijan's influence on European decision-makers through mechanisms considered controversial, teetering on the border of legality and corruption. Based on an analysis of empirical data and source material, the text shows how so-called caviar diplomacy undermines the transparency of international relations and erodes trust in democratic institutions. The article is a warning against the instrumentalisation of *soft power* in a way that is incompatible with ethics and political integrity.

In the reflective essay *On the Direction of Critical Policy* by Professor Emeritus Stanisław Wojcik of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), an attempt is made to diagnose the condition of contemporary political science. The author criticises the fragmentation of research approaches, the instrumental treatment of power, and the dominance of axiological relativism. In response, he proposes the concept of systemic personalism – based on the values and dignity of the human person – as the foundation of responsible and ethical politics. At the same time, the text is an appeal to restore a deep reflection on the essence of the common good in academic and public debate.

Marcin Wichmanowski from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin in the article *Paradigm of Political Thought of Polish Christian Democracy in the Interwar Period* reconstructs the ideological foundations of the christian-democratic movement in the Second Polish Republic. The author analyses the influence of Western European christian democracy and the social doctrine of the Church, pointing to the main postulates such as: the primacy of spiritual values, social solidarity, respect for civil liberties, and opposition to revolution. The article enriches our knowledge of the intellectual foundations of pre-war political thought and its relevance in the context of contemporary debates.

An integral part of the journal "Studies and Analyses of Political Science" are reports. Tomasz Olejarz in Henry Kissinger's book review *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy* examines the role of leadership in international politics. The reviewer emphasises the analytical qualities and erudite style of the author, pointing out that the work of H. Kissinger is not only a collection of portraits of outstanding leaders of the 20th century, but also a reflection on the essence of effective management of the state in the era of global turbulence.

The current issue is closed by two reports. The first, prepared by Krzysztof Jurek from the Krakow University of Economics, concerns the International Scientific Conference "Social Dimensions of Risk – Cultural Aspects of Security" (April 24–25, 2025, University of Warsaw). The interdisciplinary conference brought together experts from different fields and countries who addressed issues ranging from military security to the cultural foundations of risk perception. The second report, by Prof. Tomasz Stępniewski (KUL), relates to the seminar "Did the West Pass the Exam? Three Years of Russia's War Against Ukraine" (February 28, 2025, KUL), during which the reactions of Western states to Russian aggression and the future of the security architecture in Europe were analysed. Both events fit into a dynamic debate about European security in an era of war and geopolitical change.

We invite you to read
Tomasz Stępniewski