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INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF MIGRATION AS AN ELEMENT OF HYBRID ACTIVITIES ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLISH-BELARUSIAN BORDER

ABSTRACT

Hybrid threats within the framework of modern conflicts have become an enduring element that determines the security formation of modern states. Previous elements of war or conflict are now being combined with new forms of warfare. The migratory pressure on the border between Poland and Belarus inspired by the Lukashenko regime is a good example of hybrid action. The instrumental use of migrants has become a tool for the Lukashenko regime to exert influence and achieve specific goals on Poland and the European Union. Instrumentalisation has resulted in migrants' attempts to illegally cross state borders. Migration pressure became an element of the information warfare by Alexander Lukashenko aimed at discrediting Poland and the European Union in the international arena. The aim of this article is to characterise the instrumental use of migrants as a hybrid action. This paper discusses both the theoretical aspects of hybrid conflicts, but also attempts to characterise the instrumentalisation of migration on the example of the Polish-Belarusian border.

Keywords: instrumentalisation, hybrid action, immigration, illegal migration

INTRODUCTION

International migrations are an integral part of the landscape of the modern world. The dynamics of migration movements is conditioned by many factors whose origins reach back to multidimensional causes of an economic, political, ethnic and religious nature. All the above-mentioned elements in the context of globalization, the development of modern technologies and the liberalization of the policy of crossing borders mean that today we are dealing with the largest population movements in the history of the world. Hence, the issue of migration

is increasingly associated with security understood in a multidimensional sense. This is a natural consequence and effect of changes taking place in the international environment. The dynamics of changes in the space of international relations also influences changes in migration movements. Combining migration with security is often considered through the prism of negative consequences resulting from the inflow of immigrants to the destination country. In such a case, the benefits that may result from controlled immigration are often forgotten.

Migrants leaving their current place of residence and work become an easy target to be exploited by organized criminal groups involved in the transfer or smuggling of migrants. Often, poor living conditions, family situation and financial problems are an important force that determines migrants to change their place and go on a journey, often to distant corners of the continent or the world. On the one hand, these factors constitute a driving force for changes. On the other hand, they reduce their vigilance and increase their trust in people who offer them help in getting to their destination. That is why, as already mentioned, migrants are a particularly vulnerable group to the activities of criminal groups for whom it is an opportunity to enrich themselves and finance their criminal activities. Migration also often becomes a political element, in other words, the issue of migration is used as an element of an election campaign or a voter acquisition strategy. It may also become an element of pressure or may be presented as an existential threat.

It is worth noting that in recent years there have been several processes in which the issue of migration has been subjected. One can point here to the issue of politicization or securitization of migration. Another example will be the instrumental use of migrants, i.e. the instrumentalization of migration. An example of such action is the migration pressure on the borders of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, with the support of the regime of Alexander Lukashenik. The subject of this article is an attempt to present the instrumentalization of immigration as hybrid activities on the Polish-Belarusian border, which began in 2021. It is worth noting at the very beginning that the migratory pressure inspired by Belarus dramatically changed the situation on the border and affected the security of the above-mentioned countries. Although the mass inflow of illegal immigration in Europe is not a new phenomenon, the 2015 migration crisis should be cited as an example, the situation in 2021 has a different - artificial character. This nature determined specific actions aimed at achieving specific political goals exerted on states and the European Union, but it was also intended to

polarize societies, introduce confusion and a sense of fear.

HYBRID ACTIVITIES AS AN ELEMENT OF A THREAT TO STATE SECURITY

The international security environment is characterized by high complexity of political, economic, cultural and social phenomena. The dynamics of the modern world, globalization processes, and the development of new technologies mean that the factors that previously significantly determined security are replaced by new conditions. Hence, changes in the security environment are observed at the individual, national, regional and global level. As Bogdan Grenda points out, security threats are determined by the above-mentioned security environment, and also result from challenges and unused political, economic, military, social, ecological, ideological and many other opportunities¹. Certainly, hybrid activities are one of such threats. The concept of hybrid operations gained importance after 2014, when the Russian Federation annexed Crimea from Ukraine. In the literature on the subject you can find terms such as: hybrid war, hybrid activities, hybrid conflict, hybrid attack, activities in the grey zone. In the context of contemporary threats, the term "hybridity" should be understood as a combination of elements of "old" and "new" wars, what is classic and what is modern, classic armed conflicts and "postmodern" wars. This hybridity may concern both the parties to the conflict, the conflict field, its genesis and nature². Hence, the result is that the one-dimensional territorial scope of the conflict has given way to multidimensional and multi-level military and non-military activities pursuing diverse goals³. The roles of the conflict participants are not constant, they change, and hybrid actions combine the forms of symmetric and asymmetric warfare. These conflicts are aimed at exploiting the vulnerability of a given country and often undermining basic values and democratic freedoms.

An attempt to define hybrid activities was made by William J. Nemeth, who analysed the Russian-Chechen conflict, in which he described the activity of Chechen fighters as "hybrid". Nemeth points out that hybrid actions are a specific conglomerate of diverse perceptions of military power, where this power

¹ B. Grenda, *Środowisko bezpieczeństwa europejskiego w świetle zagrożeń militarnych ze strony Rosji*, Toruń 2019, p. 60.

² A. Gruszczak, *Hybrydowość współczesnych wojen*, [in:] *Asymetria i hybrydowość – stare armie wobec nowych konfliktów*, W. Sokała, B. Zapala (eds.), Warszawa 2011, p. 11.

³ M. Banasik, R. Parafinowicz, *Teoria i praktyka działań hybrydowych*, „Zeszyty Naukowe AON” 2015, no. 2 (99), p. 6-7.

is determined by socio-economic development and social norms in force in society. All this is done using modern technologies in tactical and strategic activities⁴. Frank G. Hoffman in the article *Conflict in the 21st century: Rise of the Hybrid Wars* attempted to define what should be understood by the term hybrid war. In his opinion, these are various sets of military actions, including conventional actions, irregular tactics and groups, terrorist acts along with mass violence, coercion and crime⁵. Hoffman points out that the destructive nature of this type of conflicts results from criminal activities aimed at destabilizing and disintegrating the state⁶. Elsewhere, Hoffman points out that hybrid warfare combines physical and psychological, kinetic and non-kinetic convergences, the convergences of combatants and civilians, armed forces and communities, states and non-state actors, and the combat capabilities with which they are equipped⁷. Conflicts or hybrid actions go beyond the previously established patterns of combat and confrontation. These types of conflicts take place in a broad and multidimensional context, e.g. cultural, socio-political, military, economic or psychological, and the confrontation or rivalry itself goes beyond the military dimension⁸.

It is also worth emphasizing that a characteristic feature of this type of action is masking aggression towards another country⁹. Paweł Ochmann and Jakub Wojas draw attention to this fact, who claim that the activities carried out in this type of conflicts are still not intense enough to qualify them as a standard, ordinary war¹⁰. There will be different views in the doctrine as to whether hybrid conflicts should be classified as international or non-international in nature. However, for the purposes of this discussion, there is no need to elaborate on these discrepancies. It is worth mentioning that the concept of hybrid war can be understood in a narrow and broad sense. The narrow meaning will mean an armed conflict focused on military activities, while the broad meaning goes beyond the military sphere, covering the economic, energy, cultural and cybernetic planes¹¹.

⁴ W.J. Nemeth, *Future war and Chechnya : a case for hybrid warfare*, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36699567.pdf> [access 15.10.2023].

⁵ F.G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st century: Rise of the Hybrid Wars*, Arlington 2007, https://www.potomac institute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf [access 15.10.2023].

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ F.G. Hoffman, *Hybrid Warfare and Challenges*, „Joint Force Quarterly” 2009, no. 52, p. 34.

⁸ A. Gruszczyk, *Hybrydowość współczesnych wojen*, [in:] *Asymetria i hybrydowość* ..., p. 15.

⁹ T. Srogosz, *Status prawny nieoznakowanych żołnierzy w wojnie hybrydowej*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 2015, no. 4, p. 82.

¹⁰ P. Ochmann, J. Wojas, *Prawne aspekty konfliktu zbrojnego na Ukrainie jako przykład wojny hybrydowej*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 2018, no. 1, p. 285.

¹¹ P. Ochmann, *Prawne implikacje wybranych elementów terminu „wojna hybrydowa”*, „Studia Prawa

For example, the European Union in its Common Framework for Combating Hybrid Threats defines hybrid threats as "a combination of repressive and subversive activities, conventional and unconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic and technological) that can be used in a coordinated manner by state actors and non-state activities to achieve specific objectives, while these activities are below the threshold of officially declared war. Typically, the emphasis is on exploiting a target's vulnerabilities and creating ambiguity to complicate decision-making processes."¹² This definition indicates the multidimensionality of the actions undertaken, combining traditional and modern forms, the aim of which is to destabilize and, consequently, paralyze the enemy's actions.

When trying to specify the catalogue of activities that can be classified as hybrid initiatives, it is worth pointing out, among others:

- Disinformation activities using various communication channels, including: on manipulating the message, using fake news, creating new false information, using propaganda, attacks on ICT networks;
- Using new technologies as a tool to achieve specific political, economic or social goals;
- Activity of non-state entities, penetration of people/soldiers/mercenaries into the target state, carrying out specific sabotage and information activities in order to destabilize the internal situation;
- Using criminal, terrorist and economic, psychological, cyber and information activities;
- Using diplomatic activities as an element of exerting influence, putting pressure on the opponent and influencing public opinion and, consequently, social divisions;
- "Sudden pulsating" intensification of various instruments of pressure towards the addressee of the action;
- Exploitation of individuals or social groups who are susceptible to manipulation and exploitation due to their life situation, expressed needs, e.g. groups of migrants, ethnic groups, etc.

Of course, the presented catalogue is not closed. Hybrid actions may have the same goal as a hybrid war, affect the same spaces, however, the lack of open

Publicznego" 2019, no. 4 (28), p. 134.

¹² Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats a European Union response, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016JC0018>, access 15.10.2023.

military aggression will result in this type of actions not being classified as a war or armed conflict under international law. The inspired crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border fits into the catalogue of hybrid activities. Nowadays, non-military means of achieving political goals are more important than they were a dozen or so years ago. Although this situation does not meet the features of war in the classical sense, because we cannot talk about military aggression here, other features of hybridity are already present.

INSTRUMENTAL USE OF MIGRANTS AS AN EXAMPLE OF HYBRID ACTIVITIES

After 1989, Poland was an emigration country, and only in recent years has an increase in foreigners' interest in coming to Poland been observed. This happens, among others, because of the competitiveness of the Polish economy, but also because of membership in the European Union and the Schengen area. The mass influx of immigrants and repeated attempts to illegally cross the border that took place in 2021 were a new situation for Poland. This practice has become an important test of the ability of uniformed services to protect the state border. It is worth noting that Poland, as an EU border state, is not only responsible for its own security, but also for the entire European Union. The instrumental use of immigrants served Belarus as a form of political pressure, both on the countries directly affected by the situation on the border, but also on the European Union. The inspired migration pressure was the Lukashenko regime's response to the EU, Poland, Lithuania and other European countries questioning the results of the 2020 presidential elections. It was also a retaliation for criticism related to the forced landing of the plane led by Roman Pratsiewicz, oppositionist and founder of the Nexta news channel. Moreover, the situation in the context of Poland should be read as a response to Poland's support for Belarusian oppositionists.

Poland borders with Belarus at a length of 418.24 km. Since mid-2021, the Polish-Belarusian border has become an area affected by migration pressure. This is evidenced by attempts to illegally cross the border in violation of the regulations. It is worth pointing out the statistics of the Border Guard regarding illegal entry attempts at the analysed border section. In 2021 alone, the Border Guard recorded nearly 40,000. attempts to illegally cross the border on the Polish-Belarusian section. For comparison, in 2020 there were only 129 such cases, in 2019 - 20 cases, in 2018 - 4 cases. The following years, i.e. 2022 and

2023, brought slightly less migration pressure. In 2022, 15,600 attempts to illegally cross the border against the regulations were recorded on the analysed section, and by November 2023, nearly 24,000 cases¹³. It is worth mentioning that not only the Polish border was subjected to migration pressure from Belarus. Initially, immigrants tried to cross the Belarusian-Lithuanian border. The increasing number of migrants on the Lithuanian border resulted in the Lithuanian government deciding on July 2, 2021 to declare a state of emergency. However, in the face of increasing migration pressure, the Lithuanian authorities introduced a state of emergency by decision of November 9, 2021. The actions taken by Lithuania resulted in the migration flow being directed to the Polish-Belarusian border.

In Poland, due to increasingly frequent attempts to illegally cross the border, in August 2021 the regulation of the Ministry of Interior and Administration of March 13, 2020 on the temporary suspension or restriction of border traffic at specific border crossings was amended. A provision was added that stated that people without a residence permit trying to cross the border illegally would be sent back to the state border without any administrative procedure¹⁴. It is worth pointing out that migration pressure from Belarus also resulted in an amendment to the Act on Foreigners, however, an important measure used by the authorities in Poland was the introduction of a state of emergency in the area of parts of the Podlaskie and Lublin Voivodeships, based on the regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of September 2, 2021¹⁵. The regulation introduced a number of restrictions on human and civil rights and freedoms, including: in the area covered by a state of emergency, the right to organize and conduct assemblies and mass events was suspended; an obligation was introduced for adults to have an ID card or another document confirming their identity, and in the case of students under 18 years of age - a school ID; it was forbidden to stay in designated places, facilities and areas at specified times; it was prohibited to record by technical means the appearance or other features of

¹³ Nielegalne przekroczenia granicy z Białorusią w 2021 r.(12.01.2022), <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/9689,Nielegalne-przekroczenia-granicy-z-Bialorusia-w-2021-r.html>; Rok 2022 w Straży Granicznej (02.01.2023), <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/11135,Rok-2022-w-Strazy-Granicznej.html>; Skutecznie przeciwdziałamy nielegalnej migracji (8.11.2023), <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/12590,Skutecznie-przeciwdzialamy-nielegalnej-migracji.html>, access 09.11.2023.

¹⁴ Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji z dnia 20 sierpnia 2021 roku zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie czasowego zawieszenia lub ograniczenia ruchu granicznego na określonych przejściach granicznych *Journal of Laws* 2021, item 1536.

¹⁵ Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 września 2021 r. w sprawie wprowadzenia stanu wyjątkowego na obszarze części województwa podlaskiego oraz części województwa lubelskiego, *Journal of Laws* 2021, item 1612.

specific places, objects or areas located in the area covered by the state of emergency; the carrying of firearms in the area covered by the state of emergency was prohibited and access to public information on activities carried out in the area covered by the state of emergency in connection with the protection of the state border and the prevention and counteracting of illegal migration was limited.

The presented actions taken by the Polish and Lithuanian authorities are a response to the practice of instrumental use of migrants as a tool of political pressure. The analysed situation on the border was the result of Operation Lock carried out by Belarus with the support of the Russian Federation. Before analysing the issues of the mentioned operation, it is worth considering what is meant by the concept of instrumentalization, including the instrumentalization of migration. According to one of the interpretations of the Dictionary of the Polish Language, the term "instrumentalization" should be understood as the objective use of other people or goods (ethics, religion, law) to achieve one's own benefits¹⁶. In other words, in the context of people, instrumentalization objectifies people as tools to exert influence and achieve specific benefits. In the case of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, migrants trying to cross state borders illegally became this instrument. Moreover, the instrumental use of immigration is part of the catalogue of features that define hybrid activities. As Piotr Łubiński notes, this situation is of significant importance in the context of EU security and may lead to the restriction of one of the key EU freedoms. He also notes that the situation of instrumental use of migration undermines the international legal order in the field of refugee protection. It also constitutes an opportunity for disinformation and manipulation of public opinion and escalation of violence at the border¹⁷. Krzysztof Orzech stated that the essence of the situation on the border is the fact that Belarus, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, is conducting a large-scale hybrid operation aimed at the countries of NATO's eastern flank¹⁸. It is worth pointing out the potential effects of instrumental use of migration. These include:

- Causing or intensifying social polarization or social conflict;

¹⁶ Słownik Języka Polskiego, źródło: <https://sjp.pl/instrumentalizacja>, access 12.10.2023

¹⁷ P. Łubiński, *Hybrid Warfare or Hybrid Threat – The Weaponization of Migration as an Example of the Use of Lawfare – Case Study of Poland*, „Polish Political Science Yearbook” 2022, vol. 51, p. 44.

¹⁸ K. Orzech, *Zagrożenia dla Polski kreowane przez Republikę Białorusi w kontekście sytuacji kryzysowej na granicy polsko-białoruskiej*, „Studia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego” 2021, no. 22, p. 57.

- Undermining the position of a given state on the international arena by formulating theses and accusations (by the instrumentalizing entity) of violating human rights by a state that resists the instrumental use of migration;
- Extortion, political pressure by an entity using migration on a state (or an international organization) in order to obtain specific actions or concessions in a given area, e.g. economic;
- Manipulation of crowd aggression and other behaviours accompanying instrumentalized groups;
- Development of the activities of criminal groups benefiting from migrants;
- Changing public opinion towards the issue of migrants and opening or closing the border to foreigners, perceiving migrants through the prism of threat;
- Dehumanization, objectification of people;
- Creation of situations that threaten the life and safety of migrants and other groups;
- The financial burden of a country subject to migration pressure related to counteracting migration;
- Violation of the territorial sovereignty of the state affected by the instrumentalization of migration;
- Humanitarian crisis related to excessive migration pressure;
- Introduction of solutions limiting political and civil liberties by the countries towards which the instrumentalization is directed;
- Creating a potential personnel base that may be used later by the entity instrumentalizing migration.

The items listed above do not have a closed catalogue. It can be said that this is, in a way, a feature of hybrid activities that are subject to constant evolution due to changing technical, communication and socio-economic conditions.

The situation on the border between Poland and Lithuania with Belarus became an element of hybrid activities carried out as part of Operation "Sluice", the main goal of which was social polarization and causing a political crisis. Immigration pressure on the Polish-Belarusian border was controlled. It is worth mentioning that Operation Lock itself was prepared in 2010-2011, but then its goal was to force the European Union to seal the border. A decade later, Oper-

ation Lock was used to trigger a crisis on the border between Poland and Lithuania with Belarus. This was a response to these countries' support for the democratic opposition during the protests in Belarus after the 2020 presidential elections. As already mentioned, the activities of Belarus on the Polish-Belarusian border were organized. In one of his statements, Alexander Lukashenko stated that he would not prevent immigrants from the Middle East from entering the European Union through Belarusian territory. As Marcin Konieczny notes, when implementing Operation Lock, the Lukashenko regime took care of its infrastructure and logistics, including: through an increased number of air connections from Iraq¹⁹. Iraqis were brought to Belarus by the company Centru-rort, which was subordinated directly to the president's office, they received visas and were accommodated in state hotels in Minsk. From there, they moved to the border on their own or with the help of buses belonging to the Belarusian Ministry of National Defense²⁰.

A significant increase in attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border, mainly through the so-called green border, caused the authorities in Poland to take extraordinary measures. As a reminder, in 2021 alone the Border Guard recorded nearly 40,000. attempts to illegally cross the border on the Polish-Belarusian section, in 2020 there were only 129 such attempts. The legal solutions introduced in response to the situation resulted in hundreds of migrants being stuck at the border. On the one hand, immigrants were pushed by Belarusian services into Polish territory, on the other hand, the Border Guard in Poland resisted attempts to illegally cross the border. The situation has become the subject of political and social debate in Poland. On the one hand, non-governmental organizations and part of the opposition at that time, as well as people from the world of culture appealed for opening the border and helping nomadic immigrants. On the other hand, opponents and the government introduced restrictions and sealed the border in order to limit attempts to illegally cross the border. For Belarus, too, the situation on the border has become an element of propaganda activities aimed at discrediting the EU itself and the countries directly affected by migratory pressure as entities that violate human rights and the basic principles of humanitarianism.

It is worth emphasizing that on August 21, 2021, a joint statement by the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland on Belarus was published. The

¹⁹ M. Konieczny, *Operacja „Śluzą” – kryzys uchodźczy związany z przerzutem nielegalnych migrantów przez polsko-białoruską granicę*, „Roczniki Administracji i Prawa” 2022, no. 2, p. 94.

²⁰ M. Pieczyński, *Granica Propagandy. Łukaszienka i Putin na wojnie hybrydowej z Polską*, Warszawa 2022, p. 7-8.

statement stated that "Since June, we have been dealing with hybrid attacks on the eastern border of the European Union and NATO. Vulnerable third-country nationals are being exploited, and the number of cases of illegally crossing the border from Belarus is increasing. This is not a migration crisis, but a politically orchestrated hybrid operation by the regime of Alexander Lukashenko, aimed at diverting attention from the increasingly frequent violations of human and civil rights by this regime"²¹. An element of hybrid actions is taking initiatives directed against both the entire state and society, selected elements of power and society. These activities take advantage of the state's weaknesses in various dimensions, including: political, military, economic or informational²². The migration pressure inspired by the Lukashenko regime was supposed to have specific effects. One of the elements of activities that were intended to support the achievement of the assumed goals were disinformation and propaganda activities. Both the media and the Belarusian authorities claimed that the situation was the result of actions taken by Western countries. The operation was accompanied by propaganda and disinformation, diplomatic and military activities. From Alexander Lukashenko's statements and media reports it can be concluded that:

- The situation is the result of the migration crisis of 2015;
- Russia and Belarus have become victims of the European Union's migration policy;
- The European Union artificially directs population movements that aim to destabilize its "opponents";
- Immigrants from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan are seeking refuge in Europe because Western countries have participated in the "destruction" of the immigrants' countries of origin;
- Western countries led to the creation of an Islamic state, which resulted in immigration pressure in Europe;
- The situation in the Middle East is an opportunity for Western countries to enrich themselves, not to democratize those regions;
- Poland and the EU apply double standards and show hypocrisy in terms of their values, and the raised issues of values are a political tool;

²¹ Prezydenci Estonii, Łotwy, Litwy i Polski w sprawie Białorusi, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/listy/wspolne-oswiadczenie-prezydentow-estonii-lotwy-litwy-i-polski-w-sprawie-bialorusi.34350>, access 10.11.2023.

²² N. Świętochowski, *Wojna hybrydowa – realne zagrożenie bezpieczeństwa państwa?*, [in:] *Scenariusz przebiegu konfliktu hybrydowego*, Sz. Markiewicz (ed.), Warszawa 2019, p. 88.

- Poland and Lithuania are violating human rights by not allowing immigrants into their territory;
- Poland is building a barbed wire fence and, through the actions of the Border Guard, repeating the patterns typical of the Nazis;
- Poland prefers to accept oppositionists from Belarus rather than save refugees at the border;
- Polish services at the border beat immigrants and even commit genocide;
- The influx of immigrants to Belarus is legal, and the immigrants themselves want to get to Germany;
- Belarus is a country that saves immigrants from extermination, allowing them to stay on Belarusian territory and not making it difficult to get to Western Europe.

This narrative was intended to discredit the position of Poland and the EU in the international arena. These actions were also intended to polarize society, ignite social conflicts, and, as a consequence, cause specific political consequences. Although, in retrospect, the strength of the activities carried out has weakened and the migration pressure is much lower, the analyzed situation prompts reflection on the future of security. All the more so, ensuring security is one of the attributes of the state, which in the event of a threat should counteract the threats using democratic means²³. Moreover, the state's ability to control the border and ensure security determines its sovereignty. Through the actions taken to ensure security and counteract threats, the state realizes its prerogatives²⁴. The instrumental use of migrants revitalises the debate on the need for states to create effective legal and institutional tools to control migratory movements²⁵. The situation on the Polish-Belarusian border shows that people can become a tool for exerting influence. Instrumentalization leads to a kind of dehumanization of people, where a person becomes a tool to achieve specific goals.

CONCLUSIONS

²³ W. Wróblewski, *Konstytucyjne prawo do bezpieczeństwa w świetle wprowadzenia stanu wyjątkowego na granicy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z Republiką Białorusi*, „Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego” 2021, no. 5 (63), p. 540.

²⁴ G. Tutak, *Polityka imigracyjna Polski w latach 2004-2015*, Lublin 2023, p. 135

²⁵ G. Tutak, *Przeciwdziałanie nielegalnej imigracji do Polski na granicy polsko-ukraińskiej w latach 2009–2019*, „Nowa Polityka Wschodnia” no. 1 (28), p. 129.

The hybrid nature of contemporary conflicts shows that what was previously characteristic of war or conflict may now be losing its importance. Undoubtedly, the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border has shaken the sense of security, not only in the countries directly affected by migration pressure, but also in the region. Lukashenko's actions have shown that a person can become a tool of a political game, an instrument of pressure. The desire for a better life and improved living conditions became the inspiration to organize a systemic transfer of immigrants through Belarus to the territory of the European Union. Although the organized actions under Operation Lock with the instrumental use of immigration ultimately did not achieve the intended goals, they significantly highlighted the threats resulting from the hybrid nature of the enemy's actions. The situation has shown that the instrumental use of migration can serve as an element of destabilization in the region and significantly influence the sense of security. The use of disinformation and propaganda activities may significantly increase the sense of fear and threat. The response to hybrid actions indicates the need to develop the state's ability to adapt to new conditions in the changing security architecture. Although the strategic goals of undermining the authority of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia on the international arena and diverting attention from the internal situation in Belarus were not achieved, other such actions should be expected from the Lukashenko regime in the future.

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