MASS MEDIA VS. PUBLIC AND NATIONAL SAFETY

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Abstract: The media have become an integral part of the social life. They have an Abstract. The media have become an integral part of the social mile. They have an enormous impact on it. However, they occasionally may be harmful, or even – more or less consciously – their actions may lead to various distortions of the public and national safety. Under what circumstances would be such a situation possible to occur? How to prevent it? This article contains answers to those questions.

Keywords: media, terrorism, threats, information security

The contemporary society is becoming the information society¹ - information, gaining it (or hiding), the speed of processing are getting a greater significance. Undoubtedly, the mass media have a leading role in the transmission of information nowadays. Nevertheless, their role in the society is not limited only to inform.

Media - functions and mechanisms of action

The media shape opinions, additionally, they are the place of public debate on significant topics and play educational and entertaining functions. For media owners, the economic dimension is also vital: the media, are to make profit by fulfilling their tasks. This profit usually has its source in charges for using the content (selling newspapers, subscriptions, etc.) and income from ads. Therefore, more and more media content is determined by commercial factors².

Although the media themselves constitute the neutral tool that can be used for good or evil purposes, it must be remembered that the content of the media coverage depends on many factors (the aforementioned economic aspect is only one of them). First, the media content is shaped by real people who have their own views and opinions. Therefore, the total objectivity, even in the pure information, remains rather an unattainable ideal. The same selection and statement of publicized facts is already a form of commentary as well as the amount of space devoted to a particular event. A journalist becomes a gatekeeper. In other words, certain topics can be publicized by the media and fanned artificially, while others - sometimes having a much greater significance – muted and marginalized³.

State and media

The media relations with the world of politics and the state authorities in general are also worth mentioning. There exist various approaches and media doctrines - from the totalitarian doctrine, where the media are nearly a part of the apparatus of power and a tool of propaganda, through the liberal one and to

the doctrine of social responsibility⁴ – which most frequently features democratic societies.

The media system is a complex organism, which normally is under pressure of various factors including the state, society and market. In general, the media system in the state is a reflection of the social and political situation. Diverse external (especially the socio-economic conditions), legal, political and constitutional factors shape the media system and influence its efficiency. And conversely, the media are important for the state policy and understanding of the public interest. They also educate the society, which would be active in public life, according to axiology and a sense of national identity. State action should also be designed to defend freedom of expression and information, media diversity, protection and development of the domestic market and audiovisual production and also protect competition and structural pluralism of the media (a situation of over-concentration of the media ownership - especially in the hands of a foreign capital - is not acceptable from the standpoint of the national security). In Poland, these issues are regulated by the Act on Protection of Competition and a Consumer and other acts, which aim to prevent the situation where one entity has a dominant position on the media market (over 40% of the market share)5.

Media vs. information security

The media business is closely related to the concept of information security, understood (in negative terms) as the 'protection of information against unauthorized (accidental or deliberate) disclosure, alteration, destruction or preventing its process'⁶. However, the negative approach of information security may not be sufficient in regard to the growing importance of information. At this point, essentially each area of national security is becoming increasingly dependent on the free flow of information and the action of systems based on information. The army, economy, energy, media, financial and transportation systems are particularly vulnerable in this respect. As P. Paleri states, "freedom of information does not provide the right to a person to demand all information connected with the state. There is information that may prejudicially affect the elements of national security if made open"7. Thus, it is necessary for national security to introduce such an information security policy, which would ensure the protection of the existing systems and offer a guarantee of survival and freedom of development of the 'information society'8

It must be remembered that information is a strategic asset of states and organizations of the twenty-first century and knowledge and technologies resulting from it will become the basic factor of production. Decision processes in other sectors of economy and social life even more will depend on systems of processing and transmitting information, whereas a disruption of the proper functioning of information – control systems does not require high inputs of material.

Therefore, it should be expected that the competition between opponents would be transferred to the area of the information struggle, which is connected with the armed battle in the

¹ Umesao Tadao, a Japanese journalist, is considered the author of the term 'information society'. In his article published in 1963, Tadao wrote about the society based on information systems. Interestingly, he never used the term 'information society' in the article directly, however, his ideas became popularized. Currently, there are numerous definitions of the information society. The differ since the phenomenon are numerous definitions of the information society. The differ since the phenomenon of the information society is recognized in terms of various sciences: sociology, computer science, etc. Cf. I. Merklejn, *Teoria spoleczeństwa informacyjnego Umesao Tadao i jej znaczenie dla dalszych badań*, in: P. Francuz, S. Jędrzejewski (ed.), *Nowe media i komunikowanie wizualne*, Lublin 2010, p. 13. According to the report of IBM Community Development Foundation, the information society features the high level of the information usage in everyday life by most of the citizens and organizations and the use of the uniform or compatibile information technology for a personal, social, educational and professional use, and additionally, the ability to transmit and receive digital data regardless of distance. Cf. M. Nowina Konopka, *Istota i rozwój* spoleczeństwa informacyjnego, in: T. Białobłocki et al., Spoleczeństwo inform@cyjne - istota, rozwój, wyzwania, Warsaw 2006, p. 15.

istota, rozwój, wyzwania, Warsaw 2006, p. 15.
 ² Cf, Funkcje komunikowania masowego, in: W. Pisarek (ed.), Słownik terminologii medialnej, Kraków 2006, pp. 62-63.
 ³ More cf. M. Kunczik, A. Zipfel, Wprowadzenie do nauki o dziennikarstwie i komunikowaniu, trans. J. Łoziński, W. Lukowski, Warsaw 2000, pp. 105-148; PJ. Shoemaker, T.P. Vos, S.D. Reese, Jornalist as Gatekeeper, in: K. Wahl-Jorgensen, T. Hanitzsch, The Handbook of Journalism Studies, New York-Abingdon, Routledge, 2007 pp. 72-86. 2007, pp. 73-86.

⁴ More cf. T. Goban-Klas, *Media i komunikowanie masowe. Teorie i analizy prasy, radia, telewizji i Internetu,* Warsaw 1999, pp. 158-173; C.G. Christians et al., *Neuroparative Theories of the Media. Journalism in Democratic Societies,* University of Illinois 2009.

⁵ Cf. A. Adamski, Kto i jak na kogo wpływa, czyli o wzajemnym przenikaniu mediów i polityki, "Cywilizacja" 2011 no. 39, pp. 20-28.

⁶ K. Liedel, Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne jako element bezpieczeństwa narodowego, "Krzysztof Liedel - a private website" (November 27, 2008), http://www.liedel.pl/?p=13 (accessed May 7, 2012).

P. Paleri, National Security. Imperatives and Challenges, New Delhi 2008, p. 283. ³ National security is one of the circumstances that permits government censorship via National security is one of the circumstances that permits government censorship via prior restraint. The example can be the right to restrain speech about military activities during times of war. Cf. J. Turow, *Media Today. An Introduction to Mass Communication*, New York-Abingdon 2001 (4th edition), p. 82. An alternative to government censorship is government secrecy. But it is important to note that in USA secrecy regulations applies to government officials, not to mass media. If journalists find out these secrets and decide they should be published, they could not be punished. But the officiale who allowed the secrets to become known could be paralized. Cf. But the officials who allowed the secrets to become known could be penalized. Cf. R.E. Hiebert, S. J. Gibbons, *Exploring Mass Media for a Changing World*, Routledge 2000, pp. 92-93.

doctrines (and in future may become a substitute for a war)9. Hence, in certain situations the media can be a tool of destabilizing security of information by the hostile factors, for example:

a. The media may be used by the enemy as a tool of disinformation, spreading public concerns (especially, if hostile states would manage to cooperate with more significant persons from the media world and would make them their agents). In broad terms, disinformation is the 'component of the information war techniques, using such methods of influence on a recipient as: a trick, intoxication (addressed to the elite, using the point lies), white propaganda, black propaganda, influencing'10 Liedel warns that 'modern IT weapons create new opportunities for taking successful operations that are aimed at controlling the opponent's decision-making processes, even on a national scale. The introduction of multiple sets of carefully selected real and false data to public and latent information systems can create public sentiment and a political climate, which, as a result, will make decisions consistent with the expectations of the perpetrators of these manipulations,¹¹. Therefore, "informational security is not safeguarding information alone. It also has to take care information overload and misinformation based on psychological operations and information warfare whether covert or overt"1

The media, by pursuing news, also become (sometimes unconsciously) prone to disinformation of special services and turn into a tool of competition between them or an instrument of a foreign intelligence service wishing to cause the internal instability and lead to internal and international tensions by a particular publication. The unreliable relation entails negative consequences. They will be more serious, the more difficult situation they concern. The scale of damage also depends on the effect which such a situation may have on the whole society, its further development and security. These dangers pose any type of disaster, especially related to public safety. On the one hand, they require the immediate response from the media, however, on the other hand - the ability to refrain from formulating opinions too early, until all facts will be disclosed and all parties will present clear actions. Unfortunately, the modern media wishing to gain the advantage over their competitors, oftentimes publish sensational materials and do not consider the results of too early disclosure. The crisis, therefore, offers an enormous opportunity to increase the popularity of the medium. If its leadership gives in to this temptation, then, a reader or listener, instead of reliable information, will receive a false picture of reality created as a result of the so called 'news creation'

It is also possible to erode the authority of the country on the international stage by controlling the media publications in the neighboring countries¹⁴. To some extent, it results from globalization and a greater mutual 'penetration' of cultures, countries and societies. This openness of countries and societies, on the one hand, stimulates their development, but on the other is the source of their vulnerability and sensitivity to the external impacts. It manifests itself in the increase of mass communication, which extends to many areas of life - from the economy to culture¹⁵.

b. The excessive portrayals of violence in the media may affect the sense of security among citizens in a negative way. Undoubtedly, 'the information targeted at the society may affect a sense of security of recipients, especially in the area of public security¹⁶. Not only it applies to situations when the media talk about attacks or present different form of violence. It

9 Ibid.

may also refer to a broadcast of arrests and detentions of public figures, which may be perceived as a political battle by the society, and thus, increase uncertainty and a sense of instability¹⁷. According to H. Karp, we can talk about the phenomenon known as media terrorism, which is manifested in intrusive images, saturated with violence and aggression. Media terrorism, i.e., media transfers, ruin lives of not only individuals and communities, but also entire nations and cultures

c. By disclosing state secrets, which are significant for the state defense or its prestige, the media may weaken public and national safety and evoke anxiety among people. Sometimes, the disclosure of such secrets may occur randomly (e.g., Google Maps users have recently discovered the U.S. secret air base at Yucca Lake, Nevada on satellite photos)¹⁹, and sometimes may result from carelessness and lack of responsibility of journalists, and sometimes it can be an intended activity. However, there are situations when the media restrain from certain topics in the name of responsibility for the state defense or prestige. For instance, the case of the alleged CIA prisons in Poland, which was rather omitted in the Polish media. This issue is discussed in the journalistic business from the standpoint of the journalistic ethics, however, it is assumed that such an attitude of the Polish media proves their sense of responsibility for the safety and prestige of Poland (the responsibility for the national safety prevailed requirements of the journalistic ethics)²⁰. It is worth remembering that this is not just about the prestige of Poland, but also about exposing the country to a retaliatory attack from terrorists (which is of particular importance at least in the context of EURO 2012).

d. The media can be used by terrorists - directly as a tool of communication, or indirectly - the press by publishing information about attacks calls public opinion against the government (e.g., Spain, where a terrorist attack caused that the ruling party lost the election)²¹. However, the issue of the crossreferences of the media and terrorism is much broader and the provided example is just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. The war on terrorism is in fact the example of the so-called 'asymmetric warfare' translated into 'the armed conflict, in which a country or a group of countries are facing a confrontation with the enemy, whose international status, structure and objectives are beyond the semantic scope of a concept of a conventional war'22. In the asymmetric conflict, one party of the confrontation is unable to oppose the enemy in a symmetrical manner, i.e., using the same or similar means of warfare. Therefore, it choses such a field of confrontation that can be frequently characterized by the low expenditure compared to the media, social and political effects. The asymmetric threats are characterized by the uniqueness, surprise and a blow into the most sensitive cells of the state and transstate structures, with the simultaneous low-financial expenses²³. As K. Liedel notices, terrorism is a kind of a theater, whose message is directed not so much at the victims of the attacks, as at those, who hear about the attacks in the media and begin to feel fear themselves²⁴. One of the Polish prime ministers, during a conference on media and terrorism said: 'An act of terror lacks a broader meaning if there is no promotion in the media. Anonymity kills terror and takes it meaning. Therefore, terrorists skillfully use the logic of the media - their mission to provide information and present reasons. Besides, terror and acts of destruction represent the attractive topic – terrible news sell well and result in the increase of the circulation and viewership. Tragedy brings in money. Thus, terrorists use the media,

¹⁰ H. Karp, Wokół zagadnień terroryzmu medialnego, "Cywilizacja" 2001 no. 39, pp.

 ¹¹ Cf. K. Liedel, Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne..., quot. art.
 ¹² P. Paleri, National Security..., quot. jour., p. 283.
 ¹³ Cf. A. Osińska, Afganistan. Konflikty wojenne w mediach - aktywizacja mediów, nublication date is missing), "Reporterzy.info" (a publication date is http://www.reporterzy.info/318,afganistan-konflikty-wojenne-w-mediach---aktywizacja-mediow.html (accessed May 7, 2012).

 ¹⁴ Cf. K. Liedel, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne...*, quot. art.
 ¹⁵ Cf. R. Kuźniar, *Stosunki międzynarodowe – istota, uwarunkowania, badanie*, in: E. Haliżak, R. Kuźniar (ed.), Stosunki międzynarodowe - geneza, struktura, dynamika, Warsaw 2000, p. 22.

⁶ G. J. Mazur, Bezpieczeństwo publiczne w prasie – wstęp do problematyki, in: M. Gawrońska-Garstka (ed.), Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa. Bezpieczeństwo intelektualne Polaków, Poznań 2009, p. 149.

¹⁷ Cf. ibid., pp. 149-150. ¹⁸ Cf. H. Karp, Wokół zagadnień..., quot. art., p. 31.

 ¹⁸ Cf. H. Karp, *Wokôt zagadnien...*, quot. art., p. 51.
 ¹⁹ Cf. J. Brandon, *Are These Satellite Images Exposing America's Secrets?*, "Fox News" from December 10, 2011, http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/12/10/could-google-reveal-secret-spy-drone-lost-in-iran/ (accessed May 7, 2012).
 ²⁰ Cf. M. Kowalczyk, *Racja stanu ClA*, "Press" 2010 no. 10, pp. 30-32.
 ²¹ For a broader analysis cf. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, M. Kuś (ed.), *Hiszpania: Media*

masowe i wybory w obliczu terroryzmu, Wrocław 2007. ²² G. Pożarlik, Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w czasach globalnej asymetrii, in: G.

Ozatik, Bezpieczenstwo mięczynarodowe w czasach globalnej dzymetrit, in O.
 Babinski, M. Kapiszewska (ed.), Zrozumieć współczesność, Kraków 2009, p. 217.
 Cf. M. Bodziany, Socjologiczny dylemat bezpieczeństwa narodowego w kontekście zmiany społecznej i wielokulturowości, in: D. Czajkowska-Ziobrowska, A. Zduniak (ed.), Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa Bezpieczeństwo regionalne – wyzwania edukacyjne, Poznań 2008, p. 500.
 Cf. K. Liedel, Wolne media a terroryzm, "Krzysztof Liedel - prywatna strona Cf. K. Liedel, Wolne media a terroryzm, aktivaty a strona z 2020.

internetowa" (December 1, 2008), http://www.liedel.pl/?p=57 (accessed May 7, 2012).

however it is also the media that use a terror'25. For this reason, there is a growing dilemma and conflict between freedom of expression and the right to feel safe²⁶.

e. the struggle in the cyberspace - hacker attacks on the government sites.

The remedies

In connection with the aforementioned (very briefly) aspects of the impact of the media on the public and national safety, the question about the possibility to remedy such situations arises. This can be accomplished by:

- a. The education of the government and administration workers in the area of the cooperation with the media, the protection of information, the information management, the media crisis management²⁷. The contacts with the media, the governmental emergency tools and the public communication should constitute a key element in all kinds of antiterrorist exercises, which would be as important as the operational response, command and coordination of various antiterrorist departments28.
- b. The education of journalists in the field of the national safety issues, developing in them a sense of responsibility for the public and national interest and improving the typically journalistic workshop (such features as: reliability, the habit of verifying the information in at least two sources). The issues of the professional ethics as well as convicting the media workers to educate the society in shaping the attitudes of responsibility for the public safety and encouraging their participation in its creation, remain significant matters²⁹. It is worth recalling postulates related to the media that K. Jakubowicz formulated already in 1999:
 - Do not create a forum for terrorists by quoting their manifestos and letters of requests.
 - a. Do not inform about the threats against certain people.
 - b. Do not give further details about public figures who could be exposed to terrorist attacks.
 - c. Avoid mentioning names of victims so their relatives do not find out about their loss from the media (this rule does not apply to public figures). The media should indicate the source of information about victims and details of the attack.
 - d. Do not conduct interviews with the victims of a disaster who are in shock or suffering, or with their relatives who are in mourning - without their permission and confidence that they agreed to give an interview under the influence of emotions.
 - e. The first estimates of the number of victims are usually imprecise. You should be careful with their administration and, if necessary, revise them.

f. Do not re-use large parts of the direct relation from events, not to suggest that they are still ongoing³⁰

- c. Keeping the reasonable information policy by the state and its institutions - especially in the armed conflict situations (such as war journalists and the policy towards them).
- Such regulations of the media that they meet the requirements of the national security. It can be mentioned: the anti-concentration rules, the imposition on journalists the duty to serve the society, the relevant regulations in the Act on Access to Information etc.³¹ Generally, the doctrine might promote a dialogue between authorities and the press³²

As can be observed, there exist numerous danger zones. The possible preventive actions are focused on the regulation and enforcement of the law as well as the educational action. They should have a dual nature so that the media people would be aware of their responsibility for the public safety, whereas the persons, who are directly responsible for this safety, would be familiar with the principles of the media and, hence, would be able to communicate with them effectively.

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²⁵ L. Miller, Wystąpienie prezesa Rady Ministrów Leszka Millera w ramach Konferencji Mediów Publicznych "Media wobec terroryzmu" 10 września 2002 r., Warszawa, website of Prime Minister's Office, http://www.poprzedniastrona.premier.gov.pl/archiwum/4756_5194.htm (accessed

¹⁴ May 7, 2012). T. Goban-Klas presents an exhaustive analysis of this problem, *Media i terroryści. Czy zastraszą nas na śmierć*, Kraków 2009.
²⁶ Cf. J. Kochanowski, *Media a terroryzm*, the Ombudsman's website, publication date

¹² CI. J. Kochanowski, *Media a terroryzm*, the Umbudsman's website, publication date is missing, http://www.rpo.gov.pl/pliki/12271025030.pdf (accessed May 7, 2012). ¹² Thus, it might be worth creating a book describing the relations with the media for such people? Such publications are issued, e.g., in the USA and Great Britain, e.g., L.M. Brown, *Media Relations for Public Safety Professionals*, Sandbury-Mississauga-London 2004.

Cf. M. Żuber, Edukacja społeczeństwa wobec zagrożenia terroryzmem, in: D.

²⁶ Cf. M. Zuber, Edukacja spoleczeństwa wobec zagrożenia terroryzmem, in: D. Czajkowska-Ziobrowska, A. Zduniak (ed.), Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa. Bezpieczeństwo regionalne – wyzwania edukacyjne, Poznań 2008, p. 566.
²⁹ The conference 'How to write about the national safety?' organized by the Institute of the Media Education and Journalism at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw (CSWU) in Warsaw in 2008, under the patronage of the National Security Bureau, can be an example of such actions. Its participants formulated the following postulates addressed to journalists, who deal with the issue of the national safety: First, intermedie under the deviate the metional security for the deviate the securities of the securitized end. a journalist, who decides to write about the national safety, should be experienced and familiarized with this matter. However, equally important to the experience is a constant self-improvement, learning new things. Moreover, a special journalistic reliability is a necessary requirement. A journalist must be very precise and carefully verify every obtained information. Then, we should also add such features as objectivity and respecting the principles of the journalistic ethics. Cf. B. Skowron, Jak pisać o bezpieczeństwie narodowym?, "Wiadomości24" from April 16, 2008. http://www.wiadomosci24.pl/artykul/jak_pisac_o_bezpieczenstwie_narodowym_6437 6.html (accessed May 7, 2012).

³⁰ Cf. K. Jakubowicz, Zasady pracy dziennikarskiej w sytuacjach kryzysowych, "Forum Dziennikarzy" 1999 nr 1-2, [online] http://www.sdp.pl/1999-01-02 (accessed) May 7, 2012). ³¹ See also: P.J. Humphreys, Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe,

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: D, E, J