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**CYWILNE SŁUŻBY SPECJALNE W SYSTEMIE
POLITYCZNYM PAŃSTWA DEMOKRATYCZNEGO –
POMIĘDZY APOLITYCZNOŚCIĄ A UPOLITYCZNIENIEM.
PRZYPADEK POLSKI**

**CIVIL SPECIAL SERVICES IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF A DEMOCRATIC
STATE – BETWEEN APOLITIVITY AND POLITIZATION. THE CASE OF POLAND**

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Summary

Civilian special services in every country are a very important, if not key, element of the state security system, both in the internal and international aspects. Unlike military services, their tasks are usually much broader, and they are more likely to interfere with civil liberties, or even be a potential threat to democracy due to their objectives and methods of operation. Civilian counter – intelligence services counter such threats as terrorism, the activities of foreign intelligence services, the disclosure of protected information, the protection of the state's economic interests or the fight against crimes directed against the constitutional order of a given country. Civilian intelligence services, in turn, support foreign policy and, in the case of superpowers, are a very important element of the covert competition for resources, information, technology and influence. A competition that is often conducted using very brutal methods. Thus, the civilian secret services, even in liberal democracies, are not just a segment within the clerical apparatus but serve as an important instrument in the exercise of political power. Realistically they are a political institution and dependent on politics. This is one of the reasons why the system of civilian secret services in every country is not static but often undergoes dynamic changes depending on the goals and political values of the ruling elites. Especially in states with unconsolidated democracy. These changes concern:

- services as an organization, some are abolished and others are established;
- the positioning of the different services in the system;
- the powers that the services have;
- the tasks set before them by the authorities;
- executive structures of the services;
- the staffing structure of individual organisations.

These changes are caused by various internal and international factors, but all of them are implemented by political decisions of those who are in power at a given moment. The durability or lack thereof of the implemented changes is related to the changing internal political situation, but also more broadly to the developmental dynamics of the entire political system. This is particularly true of the so – called new democracies, in which the autonomy of institutions is not a value commonly recognised by political elites.

The purpose of this work is to show the special services in dynamic interaction with the democratic political system, as well as to describe and analyze the political entanglements of the special services, the reasons for these entanglements, their course and political effects. The

subsystem of the special services is organized in great detail with the help of hierarchical legal norms: laws, regulations and internal rules of the services. At the same time, it should be stated that the special services constitute a difficult research object, mainly due to the fact of functioning of these institutions within the framework set by the regulations on protection of classified information, which in practice make it impossible to know the directions of work, methods, operations, or personnel changes in these organizations. The information barrier is a fundamental determinant affecting the quality of research and the conclusions made. Problems of free access to information have a particular impact on the quality of description, which is an essential component of political comparativism. Such limitations, by assumption, determine not only the research scope, but, first of all, the way the issues of special services are presented. Bearing in mind the secrecy of special services, I have decided, paradoxically, to deal with what is overt in their functioning. On the one hand, these are the formal and institutional aspects of their organisation; on the other – the activities of the services revealed in the media.

In my work I analyze the process of practical realization of legal regulations concerning services in political life. I juxtapose the state *de iure* with the state *de facto*, in other words I search for an answer to the question how the somewhat abstractly and ideally described principles of functioning of special services, including their required apolitical character, the principles of their control and supervision, their powers and official pragmatics are realized in political practice. The results of this juxtaposition have been put in the perspective of the solutions in this respect in other countries, with special reference to Western, consolidated democracies on the one hand, and on the other hand with the solutions adopted in this respect in the Czech Republic due to cultural, geographical and historical proximity. Initially, I wanted to compare both types of solutions, but the preliminary analyses showed that the differences between the Czech and Polish services are so big that a comprehensive comparative study of these institutions would be basically impossible. This task turned out to be impossible if only for the reason that the Czech special services, unlike the Polish, are completely devoid of investigative powers, such issues as the protection of classified information or cyber security are dealt with by civilian offices in the Czech Republic and a multi – level, real control over the special services has been established by the parliament. Another aim of the work is to raise public awareness of the risks associated with the politicisation of the secret services.

The research problem undertaken in this thesis concerns the identification and explanation of the relationship between the degree of consolidation of a democratic state and

its intelligence services, and this problem will be analysed primarily on the example of Poland. The main research hypothesis of the paper in relation to the indicated research problem is of a two – part nature, as it consists of two interrelated conjectures. This hypothesis reads: The lower the level of consolidation of the democratic system, the lower the level of professionalism and functionality of special services (in the sense of lawful realization of entrusted tasks). In turn, the consolidation of the democratic system influences the stabilisation of the functionality of special services, and thus causes the limitation of the ways of action immanently inscribed in the special services, which may pose a threat to democracy.

One of the most important parameters to assess the degree of functionality and professionalism of the services was the extent of their politicization. In this study I used two indicators of politicisation. The first was the institutional – formal organisation of services, understood not so much in terms of normative acts, but in terms of specific, intentionally planned and executed political decisions. The second indicator of the politicisation of the services were media and political scandals with their participation. In simple terms, it can be said that the first indicator relates to policy, and the second to politics.

In order to apply the mentioned indicators to verify the main research hypothesis, I posed the following research questions:

1. How did the structural and functional aspects of the civilian special services and their political significance change during the period under discussion?
2. How did the position and role of special services in the structure of executive power and state administration change during the period in question?
3. Has the formal system of control and supervision of the activities of the special services by the legislative bodies during the period in question proved effective and functional?
4. Was control by the courts over the activities of the secret services during the period in question effective ?
5. What was the role in the system of public control over the activities of the secret services by the media and non – governmental organizations ?
6. Did the secret services become politicized during the period in question?
7. Have the secret services been used to fight political opposition?
8. Why were there many political scandals involving secret services after 1989? Do these scandals have any common systemic causes?
9. Was it possible to build a civilian special services subsystem based on different principles in Poland?

10. What are the peculiarities of Polish special services as compared to other services from democratic countries?

The subject of the thesis are the Polish civilian special services in the process of interaction with the political system undergoing alternating processes of consolidation and deconsolidation, as well as the evolution of these relations in time and the practical effects of the political system's influence on the services. Polish special services were shown in a comparative perspective, against a background of solutions functioning in this area in consolidated democracies such as the USA, Great Britain, Germany and France, authoritarian states – Russia, Belarus and countries described as new democracies. In the latter case, the Czech Republic was used as an example. The comparative approach allowed us to show the characteristics of the subsystem of Polish civilian special services, as well as to indicate its shortcomings and imperfections, and also to show, on the basis of the evolution of Czech special services, that a different path of development was possible. It should be stressed, however, that these are rather comparative contributions than in – depth comparative analysis, because for the reasons indicated earlier it was not possible.

The work covers changes in Polish civilian special services in the years 1989 – 2018 with numerous references to later years. This is due to the fact that in the time after 2018, many of the sometimes very old, dating back to the beginning of the democratic transition, scandals involving the special services found their explanation in courtrooms. The year 1989 is a natural time caesura related to the regime changes after the fall of communism. The second time caesura was determined in connection with the fact that in 2018, Order No. 163 of the Prime Minister of 26 September 2018 on granting the statute of the Internal Security Agency (ABW) came into force, which changed the organisational structure of this service in a very serious way, abolishing most of the field delegations, which had a major impact on weakening the position of this organisation in relation to, for example, the Central Anti–Corruption Bureau (CBA).

The research was conducted from a systemic perspective treated more as a way of thinking about the issues under study than as a unified research method¹. The key concept in this connection became the notion of interaction, which means the mutual, recurrent interaction

¹ Recently, Polish theorists have increasingly questioned system analysis as a research method. See e.g.: Z. Blok, *Spory wokół istoty i statusu metod badań politologicznych*, [in:] F. Pierzchalski, M. Tobiasz, J. Ziółkowski (red.), *Wokół holistycznej interpretacji polityki Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana prof. zw. dr. Hab. Mirosławowi Karwatowi.*, Warsaw 2020, p. 437. Due to the objections put forward, in my work I treat the system analysis rather as a certain theoretical perspective for describing and explaining political phenomena, which enables the selection of appropriate research methods.

of two or more components of the political system. The notion of interaction as the basic unit of analysis refers both to relations within the political system, as well as to interactions between the political system and its environment. The interaction of political parties and the special services, and especially the changes in the special services caused by these interactions, was treated as a particularly sensitive indicator of the level of consolidation of democracy.

Various theoretical methods useful in scientific cognition have been applied in this paper such as² :

1. Analysis, which consists in the mental and factual division of some object of study into its component parts, in order to know as well as possible each of them, i.e., its place, function, and role in the whole, so as to know the whole better on this basis and to determine what is general and correct. The analysis should be multilateral in nature. The subsystem of civilian special services in Poland consists of individual services: Internal Security Agency (Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego – ABW), Intelligence Agency (Agencja Wywiadu – AW) and Central Anticorruption Bureau (Centralne Biuro Antykorupcyjne – CBA). These components have been analysed e.g. due to their position and role in the structure of executive power and state administration, or structural and functional aspects of their activity.

A special type of analysis as a research method used in the study is comparative analysis. Political comparativism (or comparative method) is one of the basic research methods of political science, which consists in determining the similarities and differences of at least two objects representing a certain class of phenomena, which allows to go beyond the description of individual characteristics and to formulate generalizations that form the basis of theory. Comparative studies are those according to which at least two cases are studied in at least one respect. This method helps to achieve two goals: to define the object under study in a way that makes it possible to distinguish it from similar or seemingly identical objects, and to determine the variations occurring within the class of objects under study. The comparative method has been used to study systemic solutions in the field of special services in other countries, including those with completely different political systems, and to compare them with the structure of Polish special services, but it has also been used in a narrower sense, when I compared, for example, the functioning of Polish intelligence services in different moments of development of Polish democracy.

2. Synthesis consisting in reconstructing back from the unitary, specified and learned components and features of an object its whole or obtaining knowledge about the whole of the

² 2 See E. Nowak, K. Głowiński, *Teoretyczne metody badawcze w naukach społecznych*, "Obronność. Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania i Dowodzenia Akademii Obrony Narodowej" No. 2 (6), 2013, pp. 136– 146.

studied object. In the present work such knowledge and generalized conclusions have been obtained about, for example, the system of control and supervision of special services.

3. Deduction and induction as methods of logical thinking and scientific inquiry that are based on the objective relationships and relations that exist between the individual, the particular and the general. In deductive inference, from some general theorem, specific theorems are derived. Inductive inference, on the other hand, involves inferring a set on the basis of the characteristics of its elements. The basis of deductive reasoning in the present work was the derivation of differentiated conclusions about the political dysfunctions of the services in connection with their investigative powers. On the other hand, inductive considerations allowed me to collect a rich research material on the so – called political scandals with special services in the leading role in order to derive generalizations on the systemic significance of the services.

Specific qualitative methods such as text analysis, discourse analysis and document analysis were also used in the research. The legal acts regulating the work of special services and scientific publications on the location of special services in the Polish political system were analyzed, from which an ideal theoretical model of the functioning of the special services subsystem in Poland was constructed. This model was confronted with the actual state of affairs, which was described on the basis of the analysis of public discourse, mainly press articles and memoir publications of former special services officers. The juxtaposition of these data showed fundamental differences between the state postulated in formal documents regulating the work of the services and their actual operation.

The dissertation consists of: Introduction, Part One devoted to the presentation of systemic optics and the possibility of applying this way of thinking to the study of special services, Part Two in which I present the institutional – legal system of supervision and control of special services in Poland with all its limitations, Part Three devoted to the analysis of practical activities and entanglements of special services in the political system, Conclusion and Bibliography.

The first part is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter the notion of political system is characterized. Political system is a separate entity of complex structure functioning in a certain environment. One of the most important problems analysed in this chapter is the question of political system boundaries. Classics of the systems approach such as David Easton pointed out the difficulty of a sharp distinction between the system and its environment. However, they have found a way out of this problem by adapting the notion of system for the analyses they make, because ultimately the system is a way of looking at things. Such an approach is possible thanks to the basic feature of a political system, which is its openness. In

the political system we can distinguish numerous subsystems such as political parties, courts, media, including also the subsystem of special services. There are various types of interactions between the system and its subsystems. An attempt to analyse these interactions between the political system and the subsystem of special services is the subject of this paper. The clarification of the already classical notion of a system is a more contemporary notion of politicity. The category of system directs our attention in the research process towards a certain organization, relations, structures of political phenomena, their dynamics and connections. However, the notion of system will always be incomplete if we do not know what the content and scope of these phenomena are. The category that allows us to grasp their comprehensive character and link them both with the political system, but also with its environment, is politicity, including precisely the politicity of special services.

The second chapter tells the story of what special services were in the early days of many ancient states, and how and where institutional intelligence and counterintelligence services were created in the modern sense of these terms. The emergence of modern intelligence is associated with England, where from the 15th century onwards there was a gradual institutionalisation of this type of institution. In turn, services of a counter – intelligence nature evolved in most European countries from the 19th century political police. However, the greatest influence on the development of special services has always been exerted by wars, and above all World War II and the so – called "Cold War" that followed. Intelligence as a subject of research of various detailed sciences has always aroused great interest, mainly due to the secrecy that surrounded its activities. The secrecy of the activities of the services is at the same time what attracts to this subject and the basic limitation for research works. The issue of special services is now within the scope of interest not only of security sciences, but also of political and legal sciences, sociology, management and historical sciences. The period of the greatest development of research work on the problems of intelligence falls on the 80s of the twentieth century. Due to the relatively greatest openness of democratic systems, it was in countries such as the USA, Canada, France and the UK that research work in this area developed most widely. The research has led to the creation of many definitions of intelligence. Common elements in these definitions are concepts such as: secrecy, intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, information analysis and undercover operations. All researchers also emphasise that intelligence does not act for its own sake, but on the instructions and needs of the political, mainly executive, power. Already at the beginning of the scientific study of intelligence in 1965, one of the scientists associated with the systematic method, K.W. Deutsch, formulated a basic warning for intelligence activities, writing that the fundamental error in intelligence is to

formulate assessments according to political orders. This sentence was one of the first descriptions of the mechanism of politicisation of intelligence. To sum up, one can say that intelligence is not only specific operational activities, but above all cognitive activity.

The third chapter deals with democratic principles and values, such as openness or the necessity of acting within the limits of the law, as the context for the functioning of special services. The chapter shows the evolution of the concept of democracy. The introduction of a definition of democracy allows, on the one hand, to distinguish non-democratic systems from democratic ones, and on the other hand it shows what values can be threatened by badly managed and controlled activity of special services, which are based on such anti – democratic ways of acting, as secrecy, hierarchical organization and acting on orders. J. Schumpeter proposed an account of democracy as a method of government based on such indicators as: cyclical elections, political competition and the existence of political parties. These indicators allow to measure the level of democratization and to indicate the regression or progress of democratization. At the same time, among the indicators mentioned by this researcher, it is often the competitiveness of elections that becomes the most frequent victim of the illegal actions of the secret services. In turn, Robert A. Dahl's concept of „polyarchy" cited in this chapter, in which he lists the factors that characterise this democratic system, grouped according to the electoral stage, which include, among others, majority voting, the right to equal information on possible electoral alternatives, the principle according to which the group winning the election replaces the losers in power and the right to exercise power for the winners, is the basis for the distinction made by researchers of the models of special services that operate around the world. The chapter also refers to the typology of democracy proposed by M. Burton, R. Gunther and J. Higley, who, on the basis of such variables as the level of trust between elites and the extent of political participation of other social groups, distinguished several types of political systems, among them consolidated democracy, unconsolidated democracy, limited democracy and pseudo – democracy. The evolution of the Polish political system from unconsolidated democracy, in which there is a lack of real agreement among the elites on the democratic order in politics and a lack of mutual trust among political actors, to consolidated democracy, characterised by an agreement among the elites on common democratic values and cases of periods of regression on this path, as well as the role in these political processes of the secret services and the feedback between the political system and the services, are crucial for this work. In the context of the interaction between the political system and the special services, the problem of politicization of the services is very important.

The second part consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, I try, on the basis of the adopted criteria proposed by one of the American researchers Jorge A. Tapia – Valdes, such as: the political context, the perception of threats, the definition of permanent national security goals, the rank of national security policy, the degree of autonomy of national security bodies and the observance of human rights, to describe the evolution of Polish civilian special services starting from the establishment of the Office of State Protection (Urząd Ochrony Państwa – UOP) and to relate the model adopted in the Polish special services with highly developed investigative powers to the models dominating in the Euro – Atlantic countries, whose services are mostly deprived of these powers. The conducted analysis leads to a conclusion, that the structure and tasks of the newly appointed Office of State Protection (UOP) were modelled on the Security Service (Służba Bezpieczeństwa – SB), which carried out tasks of political police, and it has not actually changed until today. Services deprived of autonomy become an easy tool to destabilise the political system, e.g. by using them to make media – famous arrests of political opponents.

In the next chapter I address the issue of the position and role of the special services in the structure of the executive power and state administration in the aspect of effective control of the services by the executive power. As Robert Jarvis wrote, special services are, on the one hand, indispensable, on the other hand they constitute a threat to democratic values. In this chapter I try to find an answer to the question how effective are in the Polish political system the formal and legal mechanisms of control over services included in the law. These mechanisms are presented in the chapter against a broad comparative background. On the part of the executive power, the basic element of the control system in Poland is the prime minister who usually cedes his powers in this respect to the minister coordinator of special services. The basic obstacle in effective, personal supervision of the prime minister over the current work of special services may be lack of time resulting from the necessity to manage the entirety of the government's work. In turn, the construction of the powers of the minister coordinator is full of contradictions. Similarly, from the point of view of the democratic system, the role of civilian oversight over each of the services is not performed by their heads because, as appointees of a particular political party, they are loyal to that party and carry out political orders. In relation to the special services, individual political parties build their political supervision mainly through deep personnel changes and filling the structures of the special services with their own people. So far, in the Polish political system, two entities have been the most involved in changes in the services. These were the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD) on the one hand and the Law and Justice Party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PIS) on the other. In both

of these cases, the activity in the field of reforms of special services could be a kind of feedback to the wrongs that these circles suffered in the past. This refers to the so – called Olin affair (the Left) and the surveillance of the Right in the 1990s (Law and Justice – PIS).

In the third chapter, I describe the role of the legislature and the judiciary in the process of controlling the special services as well as the control of services by such political actors as the media and NGOs. According to Western standards, a truly democratic control of institutions must involve accountability to the parliament. In the Polish political system, in comparison to other Western countries, parliamentary control over the special services is very limited. The Parliamentary Commission for Special Services has two basic limitations: it does not have the powers of an investigative committee, so the heads of the services can give any answers they want during its deliberations, and the role of parliamentary opposition is practically marginal in its work, because, taking into account the parity of seats, the majority in the committee is always held by the ruling party. Moreover, the participation of each MP in the committee is dependent on the granting of a security certificate to the member, and these are issued by the Head of the Internal Security Agency (ABW), who is formally supervised by the committee. In a slightly different dimension, their control function is performed by the courts, which in the political system play the role of guardian of „obedience to the law and regulation" on the part of the actors of the political system. The role of the courts cannot be overestimated in uncovering the real, political reasons for various spectacular actions of the secret services, such as media – famous arrests of politicians. Another effective institution of control over the services, whose action is closest in time to a given event, is the media.

The third part consists of three chapters. In this part, I introduce the notion of political scandal, thus aiming to strip it of its journalistic slant. A political scandal is an event that involves political gain as a result of illegal and unlawful actions, contrary to the law and accepted norms. These gains are most often directly or indirectly related to the issue of power: its acquisition and consolidation or the possibility of influencing it. In the third part, I examine the emerging information in the public discourse on scandals involving the special services over the years 1989 – 2018. The material for analysis is mainly media information on various types of irregularities in the activities of the special services. Media reports and other documents, were analyzed in order to catch the symptoms of political entanglement of the services and their instrumental use by political actors for their own purposes.

In the first chapter covering the years 1989 – 1997 I describe the political entanglements of the newly created special services in the context of the evolution of the Polish political system during this period. In the years 1989 – 1997 within the Polish political system there was a

process of gradual transition from unconsolidated democracy to consolidated democracy. Until the enactment of the Constitution in 1997, the state functioned within the framework of provisional solutions, which in the first period assumed a major role of the president. Two key scandals involving the secret services at that time, which in a sense shaped certain political processes and whose effects were long-term, were the surveillance of the right wing and the so-called Olin affair. The actions of Colonel J. Lesiak's team, which invigilated, among others, the environment associated with the later activists of PIS, influenced in a feedback loop the consolidation in the consciousness of part of the elite of the so-called paranoid style of thinking, and in a longer perspective, the appointment of the CBA. In turn, the trauma of the left-wing circles affected by the Olin affair, in which the services accused Prime Minister Oleksy of cooperation with Russian intelligence, led in feedback to the reform of the centre of state management in 1996, and to the reform of the special services in 2002. It should be added that the special services in that period functioned in an environment in which even formal control mechanisms, including parliamentary control, did not function, hence the political entanglement of the services was easier.

The second chapter covers the period from 1997 to 2015, i.e. after the enactment of the Constitution. The political system seemed to stabilize during this period. The Constitution and other laws introduced various control mechanisms over the special services. At that time, the Parliamentary Commission for the Control of Special Services, the Special Services College and the institution of the Minister of Coordination were already operating. Poland became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). However, between 2005 and 2007, there was an unprecedented politicization of special services and their direct use to fight political opposition. The fundamental democratic value of competitive elections became the target of politicized services in the land scandal and the affair of MP Sawicka. In both of these cases, the formal and legal system of control and supervision of the special services did not work, and the mechanisms of both scandals, including extra-legal actions indicating political motivations in the activities of the services, were uncovered by the judicial system. Both scandals overstepped the bounds of provocation. There were two reforms of the secret services in the period under review. Both were conducted under the slogans of depoliticization of the services. These were the reform of the government of the Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność – AWS) initiated in 1997 and the reform of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) in 2002. Both failed to achieve their goals. The services remained open to the dangers of politicization.

In turn, under the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO) government in 2007–2015, the political system again entered a phase of stabilization. However, this party also failed to create a real system of supervision and control over the special services that would protect democratic values. As a result, the special services were once again used, this time to fight against the ruling party. The wiretapping affair, in which the most important state officials were wiretapped and the recordings were later published and in which there were threads of involvement of CBA officers, led to destabilization of the political system. Despite the fact that the system was relatively consolidated at that time, the scandal happened anyway. In this case, the scandal was caused by forces that sought to destabilize the political system. While the previous scandals were, in a way, an internal product of the system, in this case, the source was largely external, perhaps even external to the Polish political system. It resulted not so much from the weakness of the system, but from the desire to weaken it. The next elections were won by Law and Justice (PIS).

The third chapter covers the years 2015 – 2018 with numerous references to later years, as it was during the time after 2015 that many of the scandals involving the secret services, found their explanation in courtrooms. In this chapter, I examine the processes of deconsolidation of democracy that began after 2015, as indicated, among other things, by the reforms of the judiciary. The likely aim of these activities is to gain political influence in the broader judiciary. Similar processes are also taking place in the public media. The process of taking over these institutions is part of the phenomenon of so – called cartelisation understood as the creation of political patronage over these institutions, consisting of appointing people with political, personal or ideological ties to the ruling party. From the point of view of actual control over the special services, it is the changes in the media and the judiciary that are most dangerous. In the chapter I point to new methods of politicising the special services and also to deep – rooted paranoid thinking among politicians from the ruling party, which has been further strengthened as a result of the Smoleńsk catastrophe and which is being implemented in the activities of the services, mainly of the Central Anticorruption Bureau (CBA), and manifests itself in the persistent initiation of cases that in the past were discontinued by the prosecution, such as the case of the Kwaśniewski villa. The most important political affair of this period is undoubtedly the „Pegasus" affair, in which the head of the electoral staff of the largest opposition party in Poland was subjected to surveillance during the election campaign. This case can only be compared to the Wategate affair.

The analyses carried out allowed me to positively verify the hypothesis, although taking into account one case, the rule of PO, it requires more detailed elaboration, which I will do

below. Civilian special services in Poland have not served and do not serve the purpose of building a consolidated democratic system. On the other hand, the Polish political system, weak for various reasons, fuels the weakness of special services. The analysis of mutual relations of the political system and the subsystem of special services indicates the occurrence of feedback between them. As I have stated before, the Polish political system, weak for various reasons, fuels the weakness of special services. And weak, dysfunctional special services influenced the destabilisation of the political system. At the same time, a tendency to culmination of certain factors could be noticed in the system. The weakness of democracy was coupled with the weakness of services and vice versa, but stabilisation was also mutual, although not entirely permanent. This indicates not only the systemic nature of the links, but also the high sensitivity of the services subsystem in relation to the entire political system. It should be emphasized that also the PO did not lead to a significant structural change in terms of control over the services, and as a result, paradoxically, by not dealing with the services it exposed them to a potential threat. The political system between 2007 and 2015 was stable, despite the unstable control of the secret services, which in practice led to the destabilization of the system. In general, therefore, the hypothesis of the relationship between the system and the services was confirmed, only that in this case the coupling was retarded. The ruling group, which by its actions stabilises the political system, cannot make political mistakes associated with failure to exercise real political control over the special services, taking into account the protection of such democratic values as civil rights and freedoms, as well as the operation of the services within the limits of the law. A mistake consisting in the failure to introduce real political oversight over special services was committed by Civic Platform (PO) in 2007–2015, when, for example, it abandoned the demand, included in its election programme, to strengthen the powers of the Parliamentary Commission for Special Services with investigative powers, or when it failed to appoint a minister coordinator. The omissions (political indecisions) in this regard were used by forces outside the ruling coalition, and possibly by international actors, to destabilise the Polish political system, which led to the wiretapping affair.

It seems to me that my work can contribute a lot to the knowledge about special services in Poland, but also to the knowledge about democracy, because I do not limit myself to description, but I put forward some conclusions. The key to building professional and functional special services, especially in the context of radically worsening international situation and new security challenges, is not, or at least should not be, unilateral creation by groups of experts connected with particular political parties of abstract, formal legal and organizational constructions changing the present subsystem of special services, but consolidation of

democracy. The problem is whether, in view of the existence of broad political circles openly contesting liberal democracy, it is possible at all? The experience of the interaction between the political system and the special services subsystem in the years 1989 – 2018, described in my work, shows that the formal system of democratic oversight of the special services in the form of various executive institutions and parliamentary committees has not prevented any of the major scandals involving the services. In fact, the only positive element protecting civil rights and freedoms in confrontation with the special services, often acting for political reasons, turned out to be the courts.