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The Fragile States as a Challenge to the Contemporary International Security

Abstract: The article analyzes the influence of fragile states on the contemporary strategy of international security. The above inquiry aims to depict the fundamental factors responsible for the threats that destabilized fragile states pose to modern global security systems. Therefore, primary research questions concern issues responsible for various forms of antagonisms undermining the socio-political situation of fragile states. To achieve the above research goal, however, the author exposes the complex specificity of fragile states in the context of the multidimensional dynamics of recent geopolitical changes. Analyzing the conceptualization process of these issues reveals attempts to use them instrumentally. In addition, the presented discourse discloses an evident ambiguity, semantic ambivalence, multi-faceted nature, and even inconsistency of the fragile state concept, especially in the context of the discussed aspects. It is why the above issues are considered the most complex and “wicked” problems of the modern world, particularly affecting the peripheral areas of the Third World. Henceforth, diagnosing the impact of the discussed factors may help shape a more effective international security strategy, as well as create better support programs enabling effective resolution of the multiple problems affecting fragile states. Moreover, the answer to such questions is significant in the context of contemporary global political changes, which, combined with the concepts of the so-called “political correctness”, are becoming a severe challenge for the entire international security agenda.

Keywords: fragile states, political destabilization, International Relations, threats to international security, International Security Strategy.

Państwa rachityczne jako wyzwanie dla współczesnej koncepcji bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego

Abstrakt: Artykuł prezentuje wpływ państw rachitycznych (fragile states) na współczesną strategię bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego. Przeprowadzona analiza ma na celu przedstawienie fundamentalnych czynników odpowiedzialnych za zagrożenia jakie zdestabilizowane fragile states stwarzają dla współczesnych systemów bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego. Podstawowe pytania

badawcze dotyczą zagadnień odpowiedzialnych za różne formy antagonizmów destabilizujących sytuację społeczno-polityczną państw rachitycznych. Aby osiągnąć powyższy cel badawczy autor ukazuje złożoną specyfikę państw kruchych i upadających w kontekście wielowymiarowej dynamiki współczesnych przemian geopolitycznych. Prezentowany dyskurs wskazuje na wyraźną niejednoznaczność, ambiwalencję znaczeniową, wieloaspektowość, a nawet niespójność koncepcji państwa rachitycznego, zwłaszcza w kontekście omawianych aspektów. To właśnie dlatego powyższe kwestie uważane są za sferę najbardziej zawikłanych i „nikczemnych” problemów współczesnego świata dotyczących w sposób szczególny peryferyjnych obszarów Trzeciego Świata. Zdiagnozowanie wpływu omawianych czynników może zatem pomóc w kształtowaniu bardziej efektywnej strategii bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, jak też tworzeniu lepszych programów wsparcia umożliwiających efektywne rozwiązywanie wielorakich problemów nękańcych państwa rachityczne. Ponadto, znalezienie odpowiedzi na tak postawione pytania badawcze jest niezwykle istotne w kontekście współczesnych globalnych przemian politycznych, które - w połączeniu z kwestią tzw. „poprawności politycznej” – stają się poważnym wyzwaniem dla całej globalnej koncepcji bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego.

Słowa kluczowe: państwo rachityczne, destabilizacja polityczna, stosunki międzynarodowe, zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, strategia bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego.

Introduction

Political deterioration of the state, various forms of its impasse and powerlessness, fragility, and thus the degradation as well as destabilization of political and administrative structures are currently widely discussed issues that relate to the state's inability to act within its limits. In this sense, fragile and failing states display various deficits in implementing the fundamental tasks required of the central administration of state power. These include, among others, monopoly control of the legal use of violence, enforcement of state law, fiscal policy, provision of essential social services and benefits, as well as local and international security issues. In other words, in the context of state fragility, traditionally used theorems and concepts defining the capabilities, predispositions, and competencies of the state, as well as its legitimacy, must be appropriately verified and adapted to the specificity of particular countries struggling with various problems, which, as a consequence, threatens to destabilize the local and regional as well as international situation. The very concept of state fragility is also the subject of criticism often, both by representatives of the scientific community and political elites of countries that have been classified as fragile. Some opponents even find the above concept useless and even harmful. In their opinion, the idea of fragile states is characterized by methodological inconsistency and simplifying many complex problems faced by politically weak and unstable states (Call, 2011;

Nay, 2014; Saeed, 2020). Moreover, the “fragile state” concept has been criticized for its instrumental use to justify international military interventions. In turn, political leaders of countries classified as fragile emphasize the danger of their marginalization in the eyes of - potential - donors and investors, which may inhibit their economic development and, as a consequence, cause further political destabilization, both locally and globally (Hagman & Hoehne, 2008).

Therefore, the issue of state fragility is the subject of many scientific analyses, including the phenomenon of state fragility and its definition (Baliamoune-Lutz & McGillivray, 2011; Grimm et al., 2014; Ficek, 2022). Attempts were also made to determine the parameters of state fragility (Ferreira, 2017; Mata & Ziaja, 2009), its genesis and causative determinants (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Lambach et al., 2015), the consequences related to the issue of development (Naude et al., 2011; Ault & Spicer, 2020), as well as the involvement of the international community in building political stability and peace (Di John, 2010; Gisselquist, 2014; Faust et al., 2015). However, particularly abundant literature dealing with the issues of international security and its threats related to the functioning of fragile states appeared in political science practically from the early 2000s, especially after the traumatic for the West terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York (September 11, 2001). The Fragility States Index (FSI) plays an essential role in this research, which was created as a systemic tool for assessing conflict situations occurring mainly in destabilized and vulnerable areas of fragile states. The above index is based on The Fund for Peace (FFP) analysis. It is used as the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) to identify and better understand complex socio-political determinants, especially in destabilized areas affected by military conflicts. In other words, the Fragility States Index (FSI) - i.e., the annual ranking of 179 countries taking into account various destructive factors that affect their level of instability and fragility - is based on CAST's proprietary analytical approach. Based on a comprehensive social science methodology, the three main data areas - quantitative, qualitative, and expert validation data - are analyzed and critically reviewed to obtain the final results necessary for decision-making centers shaping strategic projects in the field of international security (Fragile States Index, 2021).

Nevertheless, the existing literature, ongoing analyzes, and research programs show numerous gaps, flaws, and shortcomings. Particularly striking is the lack of systematic research into the causes and conditions that fragile states pose as a potential threat to international security. It is mainly due to

methodological deficits in the political science sub-disciplines of international relations, comparative political science, and the lack of adequately verifiable data for conducting significant research in the field of global security, taking into account the maximum amount of data on various cases and variety of situational conditions. In other words, many research hypotheses have been formulated in the scientific literature regarding the causes of fragile statehood and its impact on international security issues. Still, they have not yet been fully verified based on reliable data (Lamont, 2021, pp. 11–35). Moreover, the above research still seems to be scientifically too abstract or closely related to the theoretical specificity of a twisted methodology adapted to the nature and form of political debate. Besides, the research field of the analysis is often used instrumentally to legitimize the negative phenomena occurring in the dimension of international security, especially in the context of the Third World countries.

It is related to several different concepts of involvement in the processes of constructive systemic transformation of fragile states, which have now become an essential priority for the international community working for the resolution of armed conflicts, socio-political stabilization, and peacebuilding, particularly in destabilized regions of the periphery of the modern world. However, many significant concerns have arisen at the interface between several vital areas of international politics. They mainly concern (a) the emphasis on international security strategies (including, among other things, the threat of international terrorism) and building stability and peace, mainly in destabilized regions affected by armed conflicts; (b) supporting the structures of administrative power of fragile states motivated by concern for the integration of the effectiveness of the functioning of the state with its development; and (c) the belief that political and economic decline, underdevelopment, as well as social destabilization, stagnation and, broadly understood, overwhelming uncertainty (local and international) are integrally correlated (Andersen, 2008, pp. 7–20; Zoellick, 2008, pp. 73–79).

In the context of the global and multidimensional concept of international security, the term ‘fragile state’ raises a lot of controversy and heated discussions. Generally, it is invoked in the perspective of the erosion of the state, stagnation and the collapse of the socio-economic order, violent socio-political conflicts, as well as frequent situations of human rights violations and humanitarian crises. The disintegration of the administrative structures of fragile states, social divisions, ethnic struggles, destabilization of the political scene, and the lack of legitimacy of

state power leads to a situation in which it is difficult to find a recognizable core of the legitimated center of state power. In this case, an essential verifier of fragile state erosion will be the category of the effectiveness of the exercised power. However, the above factor is typical of a qualitative nature. Yet, it is a counterargument to quantitative changes in the efficiency of state administration in the distribution of primary goods (a key verifier of the degree of the collapse of a fragile state). In this case, there is a gradual disintegration of the core of centralized power structures, which is associated with the loss of the monopoly on the use of coercion.

Therefore, the presentation of the concept of “fragile state”, its genesis, as well as the specificity of determinants of international security issues can develop and enrich the debate on the prevention of armed conflicts, solving crises, building peace, and shaping stable structures of the rule of law. And it is not only an analysis of specific elements - both hidden and exposed - related to the concept of fragile states hybridization, which often seems ambivalent and politically uncertain. It also comes with so-called ‘added value’, which bridges the analytical gap between the usually unconnected state-building and nation-building concepts in fragile states. Moreover, the conceptualization of state formation understood as the process of “normalization of government”, has important implications for the interpretation of the complex and delicate issue of international security. In this dimension, however, it seems necessary to pay attention to the political situation of particular fragile states, their specific historical context, which determines the specificity of political processes, and focus on appropriate forms of governance as an independent variable influencing the legal and legitimized state structures conditioning the building of a security strategy both locally and internationally.

The “Fragile State”: Genesis, Heterogeneity, and Appliance

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the research discourse in the science of international relations, global economic development, and international security issues has focused on the narrative emphasizing the importance and role of the state in the context of international relations (Kuciński, 2003, pp. 49–52; Muszyński, 2012, pp. 13–15; Ficek, 2022, pp. 4–5). The modern state can therefore be defined as a historically grounded social organization that effectively claims the right to a monopoly on the use of violence, controls its territory and the population that inhabits it is responsible for the provision of relevant services, and is recognized by the international community in terms of international law (Sørensen, 2001,

pp. 74–81). Nevertheless, the situation becomes more complicated in the case of the so-called “fragile states”. As a result of ‘securitization’, the above problem was identified as a complex issue of governance efficiency, which has important implications for the concept of security, including international security. In the processes affecting the global strategy of international security, it is impossible to isolate dysfunctional, fragile, and failed states from the international environment, leaving them to themselves. Although the phenomenon of fragility and the collapse of the state has been the subject of extensive research in social and political sciences for at least several decades, it is still difficult to define unequivocally due to the specific dynamics of various variables as well as their multiformity and heterogeneity. Recent cases of dysfunctional fragility can, however, be reduced to three interrelated features: (1) a deficit of social legitimacy of the state power, (2) weakening of control over its territory and population, and (3) dysfunction in providing citizens with essential public services (Gil, 2015, pp. 12–13).

However, the genesis of “fragile states” has a long and twisted historical trajectory, dating back to the post-war Cold War competition between East and West, the repercussions of which also affected peripheral countries often referred to as the Third World countries. At that time, the term “failed state” appeared to describe dysfunctional states in a condition of permanent political conflict. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, Gunnar Myrdal introduced the term “soft state” to denote backward and corrupt Asian post-colonial states (Myrdal, 1969, pp. 7–12). In 1987, Robert Jackson created the term “quasi-states” (Jackson, 1987, pp. 519–549) to describe the state’s situational “weakness” (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982, pp. 1–24). However, in this case, the perception of this phenomenon was different. Until the beginning of the 90s, the international community treated the above issue as an economic problem (underdevelopment) of local or regional importance. Over time, especially after September 11, 2001, it attracted the international community’s attention as a severe problem in the area of global security.

The above perspective, however, emphasizing the specific situation of fragile states, is a noteworthy change in the perception of threats in the context of the international situation. In the 1990s, only a few analysts responsible for shaping global political strategy drew attention to the detrimental effects of poor governance in the Third World countries. Most Western politicians, however, perceived the so-called fragile states only through the prism of humanitarian aid.

The situation changed radically after September 11, 2001, when the United States was attacked by a terrorist group inspired by Al-Qaeda with its pivotal point in Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest and most unstable countries. The terrorist attack quickly led to consensus in U.S. political circles. Thus, it was concluded that state fragility is both an incubator and a vector of many international threats. President George W. Bush apprehended this new view in his 2002 National Security Strategy, announcing: "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones" (*National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002). According to Richard Haass, director of policy planning at the Department of State: "The attacks of September 11, 2001, reminded us that weak states could threaten our security as much as strong ones by providing breeding grounds for extremism and havens for criminals, drug traffickers, and terrorists. Such lawlessness abroad can bring devastation here at home. One of our most pressing tasks is to prevent today's troubled countries from becoming tomorrow's failed states" (Haass, 2003).

In other words, the events of September 11, 2001, highlighted the incalculable consequences that fragile states may have on the international security strategy. The above situation caused not only concern of international political groups but also led to the establishment of many agencies in diplomacy, intelligence, defense, new concepts of development, and even trade. In 2003, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) identified fifty dangerous, lawless zones worldwide that could favor illegal activities that threatened international security and began allocating new intelligence-gathering resources to the peripheral pieces of the world. The following year, Secretary of State Colin Powell established an "Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization in the State Department," tasked with working closely with the "National Intelligence Council" to pinpoint and identify fragile states posing a potential threat to the international community. Particular actions to prevent and mitigate conflict situations are also proposed. "The National Security Strategy," developed in 2006, emphasized that weak, poor, and politically unstable states, as well as ungoverned areas, pose a significant threat to the United States (*National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006).

In turn, the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, Powell's successor, announced a new initiative, the so-called "Transformational Diplomacy", the primary goal of which was to support and help countries that adhere to international standards in implementing their state reconstruction strategy and shaping internal (human

rights) and foreign policies (Nakamura & Epstein, 2007). Condoleezza Rice announced a broad-based plan to provide U.S. foreign aid to fragile states in line with U.S. foreign policy priorities to achieve this goal. Meanwhile, USAID defined the so-called Fragile States Strategy, aimed at supporting countries threatened by the specter of instability, which creates a hotbed of terror, organized crime, illegal immigration, as well as various diseases, and other misfortunes. The Bush administration even designed a campaign to liberalize trade with politically unstable countries as a preventive measure against the destabilized states and their adverse effects on the international community. Similar actions were continued by the Obama administration, informing about the directive on foreign policy and international development (Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, QDDR) issued in September 2010. Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, also repeatedly portrayed politically unstable fragile states as increasing threats to international security, development, and justice (Krasner & Pascual, 2005, p. 153). The European Security Strategy presented the phenomenon of the state's failure as one of the main threats not only to all European Union countries but also to the entire world. British Prime Minister Tony Blair launched a debate to prevent the effects of such pathologies as international terrorism, organized crime, disease, uncontrolled migration, and energy insecurity. Tony Blair's successor, David Cameron, prepared the new U.K. National Security Strategy focused on politically unstable, failing, and failed states. Canada, Australia, and other countries have issued similar declarations regarding international security policy (Boas & Jennings, 2005, p. 387).

Furthermore, international organizations perceive fragile states and their collapse as a significant threat to maintaining global security and peace at the level of their multidimensional and multilateral relations. In this sense, an essential aspect of the U.N. reforms over the past two decades has been the need for successful solutions to effectively counter the contemporary global threats posed by fragile and unstable states. As U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan put it: "Whether the threat is terror or AIDS, a threat to one is a threat to all. (...) Our defenses are only as strong as their weakest link" (*A More Secure World*, 2004, p. 9). In 2006, however, U.N. member states supported creating a Peacebuilding Commission to safeguard fragile states emerging from political instability, so they would not fall into further trouble. The prominent donors, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in collaboration with

the “World Banks Fragile and Conflict-Affected States Program”, also supported a “Fragile States” project. Nevertheless, the primary motive for these actions was to secure collective security, which largely depended on stabilizing the most dangerous and politically unstable countries in the world (OECD, 2007; Meagher, 2008; OECD, 2011).

It is interesting, however, that despite the various and numerous activities, there are currently so few empirical links between the collapse of the state and supranational security threats. Of course, the world of politics has emphasized the general connection between the two facts. However, no in-depth analysis was made to display the problem’s causal links and specificity (Stewart, 2007, pp. 644–662). The generalizations provided by the various politicians do not offer much guidance for analysts constructing international policies and setting priorities for action. Moreover, the question is rarely asked: why does it affect global security if specific fragile states are exposed to particular threats?

Nevertheless, the standardization of the concept and attempts to define the above issues raise a lot of controversies and disagreements. Although no one denies the existence of a discrepancy between international law, the heterogeneity of the matters discussed, and the emergence of new, previously unforeseen threats to the stability of the international order, serious conceptual disputes arise on specific conceptual issues. It is mainly related to the legal and political consequences of validating facts on assessments and values, as well as doubts about using descriptive and normative terms, such as, among other things, the term “fragile state”. However, its evaluative character manifests itself initially in juxtaposing the “fragile state” with the “ordinary state”. Such a contrasting assessment hits the foundations of modern international law based on the idea of state sovereignty. The introduction of this term into legal language may, therefore, pose a risk of abuse. In addition, in the case of a politically determined conceptual abbreviation, the above assessment may also have legal consequences that are not reflected in the applicable norms of international law. However, one cannot escape the real problem and the related issues of solving it. Yet, in the context of actions taken and their effects, one should avoid trivializing the problem, which can have many harmful and undesirable consequences.

Many theories and definitions in contemporary discourse describe various situations that deviate from the typical concept of a Western state. It is related to such concepts as failing, collapsed, and failed states, as well as fragile states,

which are also described as unfair kleptocracies, authoritarian systems requiring partner support, or ineffective administrations known as poorly performing states or low-income states under stress. Nevertheless, in the case of failed or extremely fragile states, the administrative paralysis of state structures results from a complete failure of the policy pursued. It may lead to a total collapse, as exemplified by Yemen, Somalia, or South Sudan. This type of condition manifests itself in a dysfunction of the power apparatus, which is expressed in the ubiquitous corruption, disintegration, and ineffectiveness of the state administration, as well as a lack of interaction and communication between the government and the citizens of the country combined with the loss of the legitimacy of the state power, etc. (Gil, 2015, pp. 49–51).

Contrary to failed or collapsed state, however, a fragile state, occasionally described as a weak state, is characterized by poor ability to meet basic needs and public services, often with poor legitimacy of state authority. Although there is an intense debate around the concept and definition of a fragile state, the term “fragile state” seems highly controversial to many detractors. Some opponents even claim that it contains many normatively inaccurate assumptions concerning, among other things, legal principles and norms on which the state should function and achieve its goals. In addition, the old Weberian paradigm still dominates in the international state of affairs, emphasizing the Western model of statehood. Nevertheless, despite various criticisms of the fragile state concept, few of its opponents would allow themselves to question the severe influence that this group of countries has on the strategy of regional and international security, as well as the socio-political and economic stabilization of many susceptible regions of the Third World (Ficek, 2022, p. 5).

The concepts of “fragile states” have wide application in diplomatic negotiations concerning stabilization and peacekeeping, global security, counteracting human rights violations, poverty reduction, humanitarian aid, and even international agreements and trade treaties. Specifically, Western policymakers and international political analysts adopted the term “fragile state” to identify and rank developing countries facing violence and conflict, political instability, and other threats to security and development. In other words, the above countries not only do have severe problems with functioning independently. In many cases, their political destabilization poses a potential threat to regional or global security (Nay, 2013, pp. 326–327). According to the German *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche*

Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), “fragile statehood exists in situations where there is a low level of government performance, where state institutions are weak or on the verge of collapse and where the state either fails to perform core roles or performs them wholly inadequately” (BMZ, 2007, p. 11).

Consecutively, according to the Council of the European Union (EU): “fragility refers to weak or failing structures and to situations where the social contract is broken due to the state’s incapacity or unwillingness to deal with its basic functions, meet its obligations and responsibilities regarding service delivery, management of resources, the rule of law, equitable access to power, security and safety of the populace and protection and promotion of citizens’ rights and freedoms” (Council of the European Union, 2007, pp. 1–2). The 2020 fragility report, therefore, marks a shift toward defining the dimensions of fragility: violence, justice, institutions, economic foundations, and resilience (Akanbi et al., 2021, pp. 24–25). According to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): “A state or context is described as fragile if a significant proportion of the population does not regard the state as the legitimate framework for the exercise of power if the state does not or cannot exercise its monopoly of the legitimate use of force within its territory, and if the state is unable or unwilling to provide basic goods and services to a significant part of the population” (Ankabi et al., 2021, p. 36). The U.K. Department for International Development (DfID) has defined instability as the state’s inability to use domestic and international resources to provide security, social services, economic growth, and legitimate political institutions (Torres & Anderson, 2004). The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) uses the term “fragile states” to refer to a wide range of failing, fragile, failed, as well as recuperating states. In turn, according to the World Bank, fragile states or low-income countries under stress are becoming more and more destabilized as a result of armed conflicts, low GDP per capita, high infant mortality, poor medical care, lack of access to drinking water and sanitation (Cammack et al., 2006, pp. 12–16; Independent Evaluation Group, 2006).

When it comes to the multidimensional nature of state fragility, there are at least two approaches to disaggregating it. The first one is inspired by the Weberian definition of the state and sees instability as the degree to which the political practice and capabilities of the state differ from its idealized image (Carment et al., 2010). The above perspective can be described as functional (Carment et al., 2015). Power refers to a state’s ability to enforce binding legal regulations, use

coercion in a territory it controls, provide essential public goods and services, and create a favorable socio-political environment for civil society. The identity card covers the extent to which the state authority requires public support for its actions. In turn, capacity refers to the state's ability to mobilize material and human resources and manage them to achieve the assumed goals and provide services progressively effectively.

Table 1. Comparison of the Functional Concept and the OECD approach to defining a fragile state's disaggregation level.

Criterion	Functional concept	OECD approach
Critical aspects of defining state fragility	Based on Weberian definition of the state focuses on how effectively the state performs its core functions.	The conceptual risk typology; focuses on the state's vulnerability to risks and crises resulting from its institutional structure.
Disaggregation criteria	Core functions of the state under Weberian typology	Conceptual risk typology identifying sources of potential risks and crises
Dimensions of state fragility	Organized into three dimensions - authority, legitimacy, capacity - that correspond to core functions of the state under Weberian typology	Organized into five dimensions - economic, environmental, political, security, and societal - that reflect sources of potential risks that can cause a failure to perform core state functions
Causes of state fragility	Failure to perform essential state functions effectively creates structural gaps that leave a state vulnerable and unstable.	Lack of coping capacities to deliver a response to risks and crises that results from deficiencies in formal and informal national institutions
Consequences of state fragility	Failure to fulfill critical functions leads to increased fragility, a higher probability of conflict onset, and other emergencies.	Failure to respond to risks and crises effectively creates additional pressures and grievances, which lead to increased instability and emergencies, including violent conflict.

Source: Elagin, 2021, p. 115.

The second approach also relates to the issues of authority, as well as legitimacy and capacity. Though, it focuses on the sources of threats and challenges faced by fragile states. Recent OECD publications are examples of this approach (OECD, 2016; OECD, 2020b; OECD, 2022). Contrary to the functional attitude, OECD forms the concept of fragility based on a conceptual risk typology and identifies its five primary dimensions: economic, environmental, political, security, and social. Each component represents sources of potential threats. However, the OECD typology is a continuation of the earlier work of Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick. They proposed the perception of economic, political, security, and welfare functions as the main pillars of statehood (Rice & Patrick, 2008). The originality of the OECD approach is that it focuses on the sources of threats that may fail to perform the essential functions of the state rather than on the same obligations and procedures.

Detailed characteristics of the above concepts and their fundamental differences in defining fragile states disintegration are presented in Table 1.

Nevertheless, the term “fragile state” has spread worldwide, especially among donors, international agencies engaged in aid programs, and some governmental institutions involved in state-building, humanitarian aid, support, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. In particular, since the mid-2000s, the fragile state has been widely used by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank to identify the poorest and most fragile countries that cannot meet the minimum standards set by significant development aid donors (Ficek, 2022, pp. 6–7). In this context, many other terms are also used to describe “fragile states,” such as weak states, unstable states, uncertain, in crisis, fallen, fragmented, suspended, broken, shadowy, as well as “quasi” and warlords’ states. In this case, it could go on. Yet, each concept relates to a specific socio-political situation of a particular country (Albert & Oleyede, 2010, pp. 23–49; Odhiambo, 1991, pp. 292–296; Patrick, 2011, pp. 8–17). However, a ‘fragile state’ idea is an overarching concept used by many scientists and analysts to depict countries where state institutions’ legitimacy, authority, and capacity are dramatically declining, weak, or degenerated (Patrick, 2011).

The Fragile States and Their Destructive After-Effects on the International Security

Contemporary discourse emphasizing the growing concern about weak and fragile states in the context of international security is based on two essential concepts:

(1) traditional concepts of security understood in terms of interstate violence, which have been extended to issues of cross-border threats (e.g., terrorists), the actions of non-state actors (organized crime) or by forces of nature (diseases, natural disasters, or consequences related to environmental degradation); (2) the concept of a threat originating in weak and inefficiently managed fragile states (Brock et al., 2012, pp. 46–95; OECD, 2022).

Since the presidential administration of Ronald Reagan, subsequent versions of the U.S. National Security Strategy also considered non-military threats. These involve but are not limited only to terrorism, illegal immigration, organized crime, pandemics, other infectious diseases, energy security, as well as environmental degradation. The common aspect linking the above issues is that they have their genesis in peripheral countries but may become a potential threat to U.S. citizens and other highly developed countries. Generally speaking, it is held by official international political policymakers that poorly managed states are linked to all sorts of transnational dangers and threats. In the absence of essential institutional safeguards, fragile states are perceived as more vulnerable to penetration by the illegal structures of terrorist organizations and organized crime, destabilizing effects, civil wars, cross-border conflicts, dangerous elements, and destructive pandemics (AIDS-HIV, Covid-19, etc.). However, there are also voices claiming that only some fragile states can pose this type of threat. Only such states as nuclear-armed Pakistan or North Korea can destabilize the existing regional balance and cause a severe disintegration of the international security system. Nevertheless, it is difficult to predict where such fragile states may appear. In the 1990s, few analysts could expect that poor, backward, on the periphery of world politics, Afghanistan would be a hotbed of terrorist organizations and armed structures capable of threatening the security of the entire world (Mir, 2020).

Therefore, attempting to predict which fragile states may become strategically important from the point of view of international politics seems to be a difficult challenge for global decision-makers. “A failing state in a remote part of the world may not, in isolation, affect U.S. national security, but in combination with other transnational forces, the process of state failure could contribute to a cascade of problems that causes significant direct harm to the United States or significant damage to other countries (e.g., European allies) or regions (e.g., oil-producing the Middle East) vital to U.S. interests” (Bergen & Garrett, 2005, p. 17). However, the discussion on fragile states and the threats to the international security strategy

must not miss at least four essential aspects. (1) Fragility of the state, as well as its possible collapse. The first is the awareness that the collapse of the state is not an unambiguous clause expressed in the binary system: yes or no. Individual states - also in terms of their weakness, handicap, and fragility - may fall within a fairly broad spectrum, expressing their institutional abilities and capabilities, both at the level of aggregated and integrated administrative potential, as well as specific dimensions reduced to individual functions of the state. It is also significant that the functional or dysfunctional extent of a particular state may represent a diverse and dynamically changing amalgam of potential opportunities and a deficit of political will. (2) The second important factor is the awareness of the complex conditions in the context of which fragility and weakness of the state may radicalize and intensify the vulnerability of a given country in terms of the spread of terrorism, organized crime, infectious diseases, and other negative phenomena constituting a significant problem for international security. (3) The third aspect is that all fragile and weak states function - one way or another - in the complex international system of which they are part. In this sense, depending on the situation, they interact with the entire system and can have a positive stabilizing as well as a destabilizing effect on the whole there. (4) The fourth factor is the awareness of the specific impact of the above threats on the international security system in the framework of fragile states. The above factors may make the functioning of the state even more complicated, affect the priorities of its political strategy, as well as the ability to fulfill essential obligations towards its civil society and the international community (Brock et al., 2012, pp. 97–112).

The starting point for analyzing international security issues in the context of threats from fragile states is, therefore, the question of defining and identifying this type of state category concerning its weakness, instability, and - in many cases - collapse. In the common understanding, the fragile state is a power structure that has problems implementing its basic security, political, economic, and social functions, including state sovereignty issues. The above fundamental factors are: maintaining a monopoly on the use of armed force in its territory and ensuring its inhabitants' security against physical violence; maintaining effective, efficient, accountable, and legitimate government institutions that protect the fundamental rights of the civil society create shape a form and identity of legal institutions that regulate and support the activities of the state and private sectors promote economic growth and proper redistribution of goods serving basic social needs,

including, above all, care health and education (Lipset, 1984, pp. 88–103; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022, pp. 4–20).

Most fragile states have severe difficulties meeting even the most basic commitments to civil society. The reasons for this kind of situation are many. They are mainly historical. The reasons are partially historical. Although the state's sovereignty has been the basis of the international legal and political order since the mid-seventeenth century, in most fragile states, as formal heirs of the post-colonial world, it is a systemic specificity present in the state system for quite a short time. In other words, in the case of most fragile states, the category of sovereignty is a relatively recent phenomenon - a delayed effort to impose the rational and legal model of the Western state on the often fragile and not very promising political, legal, and social, cultural as well as geographical foundations.

However, the state's propensity to fragility, weakness, or even failure is determined by the dynamic feedback between four sets of variables: (1) the initial level of the fragile state's institutional resilience; (2) the functioning of long-term factors destabilizing the country (so-called "instability factors"); (3) positive or negative specificity of the external environment of the state; and the existence of short-term conflicts or "triggering" circumstances. In extreme situations, some fragile states can crash. It happens especially when the political legitimacy of state power is decomposed and the state - in the face of total administrative inefficiency, delegitimization processes, armed conflicts, and destabilization of the power apparatus - challenges the threat of its survival. Nevertheless, the vast majority of unstable and fragile states lie - after all - in the broad spectrum of "power efficiency," between the extremes of effective functioning of state administration and its complete failure (Patrick, 2011, pp. 24–60; Veron & Hauck, 2021).

In general, the humanitarian, economic, political, and regional implications of the volatility of the fragile states alone will suffice to ensure the particular attention of political decision-makers and international public opinion. Nevertheless, the risk of transnational threats has fueled global concern about weak and declining fragile states. Therefore, it is worth paying particular attention to many critical statements emphasizing that the weak and fragile states are disproportionately involved in five critical global threats. It is about: transnational terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international crime, lack of energy security, and infectious diseases.

The International Terrorism Threat

The main motive for drawing attention to the possible threats to the international security system resulting from the political instability of fragile states is the conviction that such countries may become the hotbed of international structures of terrorist organizations, the activities of which may destabilize not only individual states, regions but practically the entire world. According to the U.S. National Security Strategy of 2006: “Weak and impoverished states and ungoverned areas are not only a threat to their people (...), but are also susceptible to exploitation by terrorists, tyrants, and international criminals” (*The National Security Strategy*, 2006, p. 33).

The above opinion seems credible because terrorist groups in the conditions of corrupt countries and ruled by despotic tyrants, where there is no effective control, have ample possibilities to carry out their international activities on a large scale. These include, among others, finding a relatively safe shelter, as well as a training and logistics base. Additionally, destabilized by numerous armed conflicts, peripheral states are a suitable place for this. It is where you can have relatively easy access to appropriate weapons, financial resources, and the capability to recruit new members and plan as well as monitor terrorist operations. Supply lines, transit zones, transfer points, strategic activities, and attack targets can also be secured. Political destabilization of fragile states is also conducive to obtaining ideological support by providing services to local communities deprived of state assistance and aid (Patrick, 2011, pp. 61–103; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022, pp. 25–28).

Given these possible alleged links, the “U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism” obliges the U.S. Government to diminish the underlying conditions terrorists seek to exploit by bolstering state capacities, alleviating poverty, and promoting good governance. A primary strategic goal in the U.S.-led campaign against global terrorism is to deny the terrorists access to poorly managed territories, including Central and South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, where leaky borders, destabilized political regimes, and entire regions are deprived of any governmental control are considered potentially dangerous areas threatening international security (Dempsey, 2002, pp. 8–13; Pašagić, 2020, pp. 19–20).

However, not all weak and fragile states are equally attractive to transnational terrorist organizations. Undoubtedly, such failed states as Afghanistan or Somalia

are particularly vulnerable to the infiltration of terrorist organizations. However, more suitable habitats for terrorists are countries commonly considered fragile but functioning in a network of international structures (e.g., Pakistan, Kenya, Indonesia, and the Philippines). They also seem to be a better place to set up operational bases for terrorists. In other words, such poorly managed countries are fragile and prone to corruption but, at the same time, allow easier access to the logistic infrastructure and financial base connected to the arrangements of the world economy (communications, transport, military training base, banking services, etc.) (Marineau et al., 2020, pp. 366–372).

According to many analysts dealing with international security issues, the phenomenon of transnational terrorism, as in the case of al-Qaeda, has evolved. As previously necessary were centralized management structures dependent on “bases,” now the networks of terrorist organizations present more dispersed and independent “cells” operating both in unstable, weak, and fragile states, as well as in rich and well-developed countries (Piazza, 2007, pp. 521–539; Marineau et al., 2020, pp. 374–377). Moreover, some of the alleged benefits of international terrorism appear to be, in fact, not always so important. Nevertheless, the most critical factors responsible for the above problems are poor border and customs control, which is conducive to providing relatively safe shelter for command structures - and thus, the creation of training and planning centers. In addition, fragile states torn by armed conflict are an excellent testing ground for potential terrorists.

However, rarely fragile, poor, and politically destabilized states provide sufficient recruits, logistic support, or the possibility of gaining general ideological support for their activities in exchange for terrorist organizations performing “parastatal” functions in place of a state that does not exist there. In other words, the fact that a fragile state provides adequate support to international terrorist organizations depends on sufficient and usable human and material resources (Koch & Cranmer, 2007, pp. 311–326).

In addition, two other sets of variables appear to be vital to defining the uniqueness and attractiveness of fragile states as a possible shelter for international terrorism. The first factor is determined by the socio-cultural attributes of a given country, inscribed in the ideological nature of the government exercised there. However, such territories are very often managed by “alternative” forms of administration that are characterized by “non-state” socio-political and cultural

systems (tribes, clans, etc.). The specific cultural, social and political context of a given region or state, its particular interests, and, above all, the prevailing customs, religion as well as the ideology of local elites in power often determine whether international terrorist structures can develop their activities in this way. The second, perhaps more critical, variable is the state's attitude. Regardless of the state's objective ability to counter terrorism, its actual stance and official political strategy may express its genuine belief in counteracting and sponsoring transnational terrorism. As shown by the experience of United States – Pakistan relations in the years after September 11, 2001, even countries identified as strategic allies in the global war on terrorism may pursue ambiguous policies, especially if the state itself is internally fragmented and vague on this issue (Hussain, 2005, pp. 2–11).

Fragile states can provide international terrorist organizations with helpful material and human resources. Nevertheless, they may be less critical to the functioning of international terrorism structures than is commonly believed. Moreover, weak state involvement can be just as significant as the poor effectiveness of global security strategy organizations in identifying critical goals in the fight against transnational terrorism.

Illegal Proliferation of Weapons of Mass-Destruction (WMD)

There are serious concerns that fragile states may not only harbor various types of networks related to international terrorism but also, intentionally or otherwise, facilitate the spread of weapons of mass destruction or their components, as well as dangerous military technologies aimed at application for the invention and production of weapons of mass destruction. According to data from the British government, in addition to five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, 13 out of 17 countries implementing or temporarily suspending programs aimed at the production of weapons of mass destruction are “countries at risk of instability” (Abadie, 2006, p. 55; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022, pp. 6–17). However, a nightmarish specter straight from catastrophic science fiction films seems to be the prospect that fragile states armed with nuclear weapons, such as Pakistan or North Korea, may lose control of their arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, which may become intercepted by the politically unpredictable successor of the autocratic regime, or caught by unstable non-state actors of the political scene, who will have no qualms about using it. After all, the direct transfer of weapons of mass destruction in arsenals is not the only problem. Revelations

about Abdul Qadeer Khan's international secret technology transfer activities suggest that fragile states' weak and unstable governments may be a weak link in global WMD non-proliferation efforts (Langewiesche, 2005).

Therefore, it is worth paying attention to the issues of identifying and evaluating potential "proliferation paths" through which unstable and fragile states may pose serious threats related to the possible proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. First, fragile states could decide to buy, steal or even develop weapons of mass destruction or knowingly assist other states or non-state actors in such a performance. Second, state or non-state actors of a destabilized political scene can seize either the weapons of mass destruction themselves or the materials for the production of weapons of mass destruction located in fragile states' arsenals without the knowledge and consent of the country where these weapons are stored. Third, weapons of mass destruction traffickers could knowingly use fragile states as intermediaries or transit sites in their criminal activities. Fourth, fragile states could provide shelter to non-state actors seeking to develop their own weapons of mass destruction (North Korea is a good example here). Finally, the complete destabilization and collapse of the fragile state armed with weapons of mass destruction may result in the unauthorized transfer of weapons of mass destruction into the wrong hands, i.e., to non-state actors (Koch & Cranmer, 2007, pp. 311–326; Carlson & Kosal, 2017).

Nevertheless, both studies of the international situation, as well as concrete and single case studies, show that not all of the above scenarios are likely. However, fragile states have significant shortcomings and defects that - possibly - enable various types of weapons of mass destruction traders to act. They concern, among others, the lack of adequate administrative control over large territories belonging to fragile states, high corruption, poor law enforcement, and consent to this type of activity. However, the link between the fragile state's weakness and the proliferation of dangerous weapons of mass destruction is more limited than you often think. Importantly, it currently has few destabilized fragile states in its arsenals or is conducting advanced research on acquiring nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (*The National Security Strategy*, 2002, pp. 18–24).

Thus, most politically unstable countries do not raise serious concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, there are two strong exceptions: North Korea and Pakistan. Both countries have nuclear potential as well as the technology to produce it (Carlson & Kosal, 2017,

pp. 9–15). However, fragile states pose a less severe risk of WMD proliferation than many other countries with higher political stability, development, administrative efficiency, and effectiveness. These include, among others, Russia, whose massive and poorly secured nuclear arsenals have long been considered the main risk in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as Syria, Iran, and numerous other countries in the Middle East.

The Health Security Issue

The current Covid-19 pandemic and other diseases, especially infectious diseases, can kill tens of millions of people worldwide. It is no wonder these diseases, and above all, the matter of their spread, have also become a significant problem for international security (OECD, 2020a). In general, the relationship between the weakness and fragility of the state and the threat of a pandemic seems to be quite closely related. In an era of mass travel and global trade, the administrative structures of fragile states that appear unable, or even reluctant, to respond to the epidemiological problem pose a severe potential threat to many people worldwide (Patrick, 2011, pp. 207–241; Fragile States Index, 2021, pp. 9–12).

Many of the epidemics that have appeared in the world in recent decades (including HIV/AIDS, various forms of “bird flu,” Ebola, and the West Nile virus) come from developing countries in the Third World. In this context, national security and public health experts conclude that fragile states that invest too little in epidemiological surveillance, statistics, health information, and reporting systems to support primary health care lack realistic detection and containment capabilities for this kind of epidemic. Moreover, countries in the two lowest levels of the fragile states index are also among the primary victims of the world’s seven deadliest infectious diseases: respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhea, measles, and hepatitis B (The Fund for Peace, 2011, pp. 11–12; Fragile States Index, 2021, pp. 12–13). Some of these diseases are related to drug abuse. Others are characterized by highly resistant strains of viruses, which pose a dire threat and challenge to health security on a global scale (Quinn et al., 2014, pp. 15–19).

Therefore, consideration should be paid to the real and the alleged links between the fragile states’ instability and the most severe threats, particularly related to the spread of dangerous infectious diseases. In this context, the specificity of peripheral and destabilized regions of the world may facilitate the emergence

and development of hazardous epidemics. Nevertheless, there is no consistent and unequivocal relationship between the levels of fragile state instability in the phenomenon of a severe pandemic. Moreover, several factors related to the geographic, climatic, ecological, cultural, and demographic environment that has little to do with fragile states' political destabilization can help determine whether and to what extent poor developing countries are vulnerable to germinating and dispersion of infectious disease. There is no doubt that many contagious diseases are brewed up in poor and dysfunctional fragile states related to their health condition. Nevertheless, only some of these severe diseases can threaten international security and the health condition of the entire world population (Labonté & Gagnon, 2010, pp. 1–19; Quinn et al., 2014, pp. 23–28).

The Predicament of Transnational Crime

A significant problem for the global security strategy is the activity of international cartels, gangs, and criminal groups, the number of which has increased dramatically in recent decades since the end of the Cold War. It is related to the dynamic development of tourism and legal cross-border transactions. In this context, fragile states are very often presented as a critical link accumulating many negative factors facilitating the activities of international criminal groups involved in the production and smuggling of drugs, illicit arms trafficking, scarce goods, materials (rare articles, minerals, precious stones, etc.), people smuggling (illegal immigration, prostitution, etc.) or money laundering (United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime, 2005a, pp. 19–32; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2005b; Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022, pp. 23–25).

At first glance, it seems logical to link fragile states with the international criminal world. Nevertheless, it raises a lot of controversies. Given the choice of location for illegal operations, transnational criminal groups may theoretically be attracted to dysfunctional, corrupt, unstable, and conflict-ridden states that lack the capacity or political will to ensure genuine justice and the rule of law. In this case, it is difficult to talk about the possibility of providing their citizens with security and essential services, enabling the reliable functioning of the political and economic sphere of the state, or legal enforcement of trade contracts and proper regulation of broadly understood economic activity.

Therefore, it is worth paying attention to the basic illegal practices threatening international security sectors when analyzing the links between fragile states'

instability and transnational crime. These include primarily: the production and smuggling of drugs and intoxicants, illicit arms trafficking, human trafficking, financial crimes (money laundering), crimes against the environment (trade-in scarce materials), and maritime pirates (e.g., Somalia). In this case, the literature on the subject shows that the thesis about international crime related to the weakness and fragility of a destabilized state is not always actual. Fragile states can be a friendly environment for many organized crime structures. The destabilization of state power favors it, a high degree of corruption, low effectiveness of management and law enforcement, ineffective border and customs control, economic stagnation, and exceptional opportunities for criminal organizations provided by an armed conflict and its criminal consequences (Stigall, 2013, pp. 6–8).

As in the case of international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the relationship between transnational crimes in fragile states is a complex issue characterized by many variable factors. First, the specifics of these links depend on the type and form of criminal activity. Many weak and unstable fragile states play an essential role as drug producers or instigators of the illegal arms trade and maritime piracy. Nevertheless, there is no apparent correlation between money laundering, human trafficking, drug trafficking, distribution, or environmental crime. In this case, the international criminal activities of fragile states do not play too much of a role. As in the case of terrorism, fragile states do not necessarily seem to be the right place to pursue the sophisticated and high-profit interests of international criminal organizations (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2005b, pp. 34–35; Albanese, 2018).

In today's global economy, high profits by criminal organizations require the use of the world market to sell illicit goods and launder "dirty money". It requires access to financial services and modern telecommunications and transport infrastructure, which is lacking in many destabilized fragile states. Thus, fragile states are certainly less attractive from this point of view than administratively functional states, which provide a basic level of law order and easy access to international trade services. At the same time, there is a high level of corruption among political and business elites, as well as exploiting various gaps in the management and administration of the state. The geographic location and proximity to the global financial market are also significant here (IPI Blue Paper, 2009, pp. 14–22).

The above aspects explain why the activity of transnational criminal groups is more profitable in fragile states with middle income, and above all,

in highly developed countries. Moreover, the relationship between weak states and international organized crime is dynamic and scrounging. The availability and openness of the state to the activity of transnational criminals is primarily a consequence of the penetration of the state administration by the illegal criminal organizations themselves, which see good prospects for the future there. In addition to taking advantage of political instability and low management efficiency, transnational crime groups often aggravate the already complicated situation in fragile states, using corruption to weaken state institutions and, in extreme cases, even “take over” the entire state.

Energy Insecurity

The price volatility in the world oil markets, which has been progressing in recent decades, has made the energy issue one of the top priorities of the international security agenda. In other words, the complicated situation in the world energy commodity exchanges has meant that many analysts and experts in the problem see the fragile states as significant oil and gas suppliers to highly industrialized countries. In this context, attention should therefore be paid to the impact of weak states on the stabilization of global energy policy, and above all, on prices, distribution, and availability of energy worldwide. The above embarrassment is associated in particular with the extraction of crude oil and natural gas, currently the most critical energy sources, which now pose a significant problem for the energy security of not only highly developed economies of the Western countries but also the entire world (Klare, 2001, pp. 44–58; Johansson, 2013, pp. 598–605).

In this sense, fragile states’ poorly administered and dysfunctional governments can pose a problem to the global economy in many ways. It mainly applies to the geopolitical situation, particularly to fragile states as suppliers of energy resources, issues related to transit routes, as well as the destabilized political situation, and violent armed conflicts near the world’s centers of extraction of energy resources. In this sense, anarchy and violence, attacks by rebels involved in regional conflicts, terrorist activities, socio-political destabilization of regions, or the activities of organized crime groups can directly threaten the production and distribution of raw materials constituting the basis for energy production. In addition, destabilized governments with mineral resources such as crude oil or natural gas, the lack of the rule of law, and high corruption may discourage potential investors willing to engage in the construction of infrastructure

necessary for energy production. Thus, the practical possibilities of fragile states as a player in very profitable energy markets are drastically limited. Besides, the chaos in the sphere of the energy economy may intensify various types of aberrations and degenerations, so often present in the political specificity of fragile states, strengthening the negative patterns of operation of authoritarian governments, making it challenging to involve foreign investors investing their capital in various, not only energy-related, sectors of the economy, as well as increasing the risk of armed conflict between rival groups competing for access to profits (Morris, 2017, pp. 2–4).

Nevertheless, the threat posed by fragile states to international energy security often seems too much overestimated. Nonetheless, it remains accurate and probably. Moreover, the above threats will increase more and more as global demand for crude oil, natural gas, and other minerals increases. In other words, as the world becomes progressively dependent on raw materials from politically unstable fragile states, the fuel and energy market situation will increasingly depend on dynamically developing political processes in unstable countries in the world (Cherp & Jewell, 2014).

It should be noted, however, that many threats to international energy security are not limited to fragile states. In practice, the greatest danger comes not so much from countries on the bottom of the index of weak and fragile states but from more “stable” countries, albeit characterized by authoritarian forms of government with a specifically radical “anti-Western and anti-liberal” ideology (Russia, Iran, Syria, Venezuela). Apart from the conditions of managing the state apparatus, these countries seem to be much more interested in using their mineral resources to implement their spread-out policies, very often against the vital interests of the United States and other highly developed economies in the West.

Conclusion

The specificity of fragile states, in most cases their authoritarian nature of state power, and the relationship between dysfunctionality and state instability and international threats seem to be more complex than commonly believed. The political implications here depend on many specific sources of the state’s fragility and weakness, as well as the specificity of the political regime that wields power there. In most cases, fragile states do not pose a unique and significant threat to international security and peace. The sad exception is the situation of their own

civil society. More severe problems are associated with more stable, though also politically “fragile” and authoritative, states controlled by aggressive and conflict-generating ideologies emphasizing their opposition to democratic systems. There is a link between ideologically motivated despotic regimes, weak and destabilized state power structures, corruption, and the experience of violent socio-political conflicts. There are also threats to global stability, international security, and peace.

Therefore, the systemic transformation conditioning fragile states’ positive and constructive socio-political and economic transformations require a paradigm shift of power. First, reorganization and restructuring of the domestic power systems, local political elites, and the country’s civil society. Nevertheless, both regional and supranational as well as international actors can influence the situation in politically unstable countries positively and negatively. However, international involvement alone cannot solve the complex problems of a state’s fragility. Though, they can help maximize the positive impact and minimize possible harm.

Therefore, it seems necessary to apply appropriate intervention strategies aimed at helping regional and international actors strengthen their constructive engagement in countries struggling with the problems of violent conflicts and weak governance. Their vital task is also supporting the existing processes of dialogue and coordination, as well as preventing the generation of new crises. The applied strategies and assistance programs aim to reorganize and update partnership obligations. As experience is gained, the above principles should be periodically verified, legitimized, and adapted to changing conditions. An essential dimension of the long-term strategy of international involvement in fragile states is to help national reform structures shape efficient, legal, functional, and stable state institutions capable of creative interaction with their civil society in promoting socio-political stabilization and sustainable development.

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