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Selected elements concerning the transformation and change of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland

Armed forces all over the world have been transforming to adapt their forces and means to tactics and alliances. Therefore, the NATO Response Force (NRF) is a significant transformational project which has been accepted during the NATO summit in Prague. From the beginning of its membership in NATO, Poland has taken part in transformational initiatives which are conducted on the forum of the alliance. Their main aim is for NATO member states to achieve the abilities necessary to effectively accomplish the entire spectrum of missions which are a part of a collective defence and are needed in critical response operations. Polish engagement in those initiatives (apart from taking part in operations) is the second important plan concerning building Poland's position in NATO. Taking part in those initiatives, we contribute to the enhancement of NATO's military capabilities and at the same time we use them as an instrument to modernize our armed forces. As a result, they are more and more able to cooperate with NATO's armed forces. In 1999–2003 Poland was participating in the Initiative concerning the Defence Capabilities (DCI)¹. The continuation of DCI was the Prague Capability Commitment (PCC), accepted in 2002 during the summit of NATO countries in Prague, and carried out until 2007. The aim of the PCC process was to supplement the defence capabilities in the areas which are the most significant for NATO and essential for its further transformation. Poland's engagement in this initiative determined new directions of the development of the armed forces, e.g. strategic transport, fuelling in the air, and cyber defence.

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¹ *Przekształcanie sojuszu, Robert G. Bell analizuje wyzwania*, „Przegląd NATO”, Summer 2002.

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a very important transformational project which was accepted at the NATO summit in Prague.² The initiative aims to create forces of the highest readiness which ensure capabilities concerning Alliance Response in operations which are a part of article 5 as well as operations concerning crisis response.³ What is more, it is treated as the most important – apart from current operations – catalyst for the transformation of the armed forces. After 2009, the essence of the discussed changes focuses on more flexible approach to complete the NRF and its tasks. Gradually, the armed forces started to propose abandoning the stiff lists of abilities needed to accomplish the NRF mission (called CJSOR). The NRF must be a response tool in the entire spectrum of action, including the collective defence. The proposal concerning the Allied Solidarity Forces emphasizes the NRF's function which was proposed in 2009 in Cracow by Great Britain, where the light and mobile army (1,500 soldiers) is assigned to activities specified in articles 4 and 5 of the Washington Treaty. In order to accomplish all the expectations of the alliance, the existing structure of the army should have been verified. The reform of the armed forces has occurred as a result of the reorganization.⁴

Two major headquarters were introduced instead of the previous Land, Air, Navy and Special Forces. The General Staff has a changed role, but the same structure in peace and war – the new command system has been in effect in the Polish army since the beginning of 2014. In place of the four separate headquarters of branches of the armed forces, which were cancelled at the end of the previous year, two combined headquarters were formed: General Command of Branches of Armed Forces responsible for preparing the army for action and for its functioning during peacetime and the second one: Operational Command of Branches of Armed Forces (similar to Operational Headquarters of the Armed Forces functioning until the end of 2013), which is in command of the armed forces appointed to overseas missions and assumes command in the period of crisis and war. The Army, the Air Forces, the Navy and the Special Army are represented by their inspectorates in the General Command of Branches of Armed Forces. The following units are under the General Command's authority in the new structure:

- the Inspectorate for Armed Forces Support
- and through the Inspectorate for Branches of Armed Forces – groups subordinated to the General Staff earlier, e.g. the command of the engineering army, the command of the defence army against weapons of mass destruction or the military health service.

The new solution clearly specified and at the same time created the possibility for the President, who on the basis of the PM's motion appoints a person designated for the role of the general commander during wartime. The role of the General Staff of Polish Army changed after January 2014. It should become the major centre of strategic planning and projecting the development of the armed forces but it does not

² Z. Grzywna *The armed forces of the Republic of Poland in the activities for security*, „Science & Military” 2013, No 1, Volume 8, p. 35 and *Przekształcanie sojuszu, Robert G. Bell analizuje wyzwania*, *op. cit.*

³ Order/Training P-3 of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army of 2007 concerning the doctrine „Operacje reagowania kryzysowego spoza Artykułu 5” (DD/3.4) clause 1.2b.

⁴ The act of 21st June 2013 (Dz.U. of 2013, positions 568 and 628) referring to the amendment of act with regard to National Defence Minister's Office and some other acts Article 2, clause 4.

focus on commanding. It should also be the advisory body of the President, Prime Minister and Defence Minister. It will no longer be the intermediary body between the Defence Prime Minister and the army. The Prime Minister should manage the army through the two highest directly subordinated commanders and the head of General Staff in accordance with the law quoted above. In peacetime, the Defence Minister manages the activity of the Armed Forces' Branches with the General Commander and the Operational Commander.⁵ The Military Police, Military Counterintelligence Service, and Military Intelligence Service are subordinate to the Prime Minister. The reform of structures and consequently different command (at present it is too early to say it is better) will influence the functioning of units at lower levels. The departments responsible for operational issues, battle support, and security were formed in their respective staffs. The main aim is to increase the number of soldiers serving in the headquarters of frontline units – divisions, brigades, flanks, and flotillas. The continuity of commanding and managing in the army cannot be stopped and therefore some officers will go from the dismantled headquarters of branches of armed forces. „One year ago a lot of people worried if it is possible to accomplish the reform – prepare the documents, provide new structures with people. The end of the year showed that that the General Staff is ready” – the second-in-command of the General Staff of the Polish Army ensured the Polish Press Agency one day before the law came into effect. In press comments, the press spokesmen and people responsible for changes emphasized that the law did not finish on the 31st December. As every structure reform, it is also a continuous process. This reform is a particular one because it includes the entire system, the strategic and operational levels, and reaches the tactical level as well. Transformation of some structures in the General Staff of the Polish Army, minister's office, and inspectorates should originally last until the middle of the year and the changes will be assessed from the beginning. As always, exercises (not only staff ones) will verify the efficiency of our systems. It is clear that this process will last for the next several years and there must be plenty of activities which confirm strategic, tactical, and operational assumptions. As any structure, this will also require improvements, alterations, and some fields may require to be somewhat modified.

The General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces will keep its planning role but not the leadership one. The second-in-command⁶ said that the Polish General Staff had been accomplishing these tasks since the dawn of time. „In 2005 on the basis of the Prime Minister's decision the Polish General Staff received the tasks of managing the armed forces on the Prime Minister's behalf. Practically, the tasks anticipated in the reform are not new. We are coming back to the tasks which we did several years ago. The General Staff will devote itself to operational planning and preparing new conceptions – that is the tasks it is meant for,” he added. What is more, the second-in-command ensured that accepted solutions concerning employees will ensure that the officers who must leave the General Staff will find positions in the structures of the tactical level.

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⁵ The act of 21st June 2013 r. concerning the act's amendment with regard to the Minister of National Defense, *op. cit.* Article 6, clause 1.

⁶ Division General A. J Wojtan, second in command of the General Staff, speech on the website of the General Staff.

peacetime and wartime – the new command system has been in effect since the beginning of the new year. In 2011 the President of Poland talked about the changes in press and TV interviews and during meetings with regular soldiers. Moreover, the leader of the National Security Bureau, a supporter of the transformation of the General Staff into a strictly planning body, indicated that the supervisory system in the air force had failed. In his public appearances he pointed out these causes: a command system which is too diluted and the concentration of the following issues on the Polish General Staff of the Armed Forces: planning and command functions as well as assessing entrusted tasks. He also added that after the catastrophe of the CASA plane another one occurred: the air crash in Smoleńsk. The leader of the National Security Bureau has been a proponent of a change concerning the character of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces.⁷ In the President's assessment, the reform will adapt command structures to the requirements of the combined operations, the command systems of NATO, and the changes which occurred in the Polish army due to the professionalization and numerical reduction. The reform's principles, worked out together with the presidential National Security Bureau, were accepted by the Defence Department in July 2012 and by the Council of Ministers in December 2012. In June 2013 the act was passed by the Sejm, the President signed it in July and the organizational group of the General Staff of Branches of Military Forces has been working since August. Some parties opposed the changes in the command system during the work of the Sejm. Various parliamentary offices expressed their reservations. The act was referred to the Constitutional Court, with the justification that it abolishes the positions of the commanders of branches of the military forces. In accordance with the Constitution, the President appoints officers to these positions. According to the Ministry of Defence and the National Security Bureau, the amendment is not contrary to the Constitution because it does not abolish the headquarters of branches of the armed forces but changes their formula on the basis of the consolidation. The head of the National Security Bureau added that the structures of branches of the armed forces were not permanent and the current command system came into existence when the Small Constitution was in effect. The author presented the formation process or reorganization of the headquarters to prove that it was not unintentional and there were social and political debates.

The outline of management in the Polish Army

To sum up, the Operational Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces was formed on the 1st January 2014⁸ by virtue of a resolution of issued by the National Defence Minister's office and some other acts. The Operational Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces is the main command body responsible for operational commanding with regard to the Armed Forces which were handed over to be controlled in accordance with the decision of the Minister of National Defence. The Headquarters is

⁷ S. Koziej, *Polskie interesy w nowej koncepcji strategicznej Organizacji Traktatu Północnoatlantyckiego*, Warszawa 2009.

⁸ The acts of 21st June 2013 r. regarding the amendment of the act concerning the Office of the National Defense Minister and some other acts, Dz.U. of 29 July 2013 r. item 852.

responsible for planning and commanding not only the army but also for assigned non-military elements in the combined peace, rescue, and humanitarian operations, as well as actions whose aim is to prevent acts of terrorism or removing the effects thereof, and also forces designated to support self-government and government administration in case of non-military critical situations.

The basic tasks of the Headquarters include planning and performing exercises. It is written in the tasks that the Headquarters assesses the capabilities of the forces and the declared means to lead operations. The Headquarters also verifies keeping up the abilities of duty forces, the means and the tasks to be performed overseas. It accomplishes national commanding as well as is in charge of special operations in which our country is engaged. Officers of particular units are responsible for gathering and then preparing necessary planning and organizational data with regard to ensuring the suitable functioning of the Air Defence System of Poland. They are also responsible for accomplishing tasks of the National Defence Minister with regard to the defence of the Polish Air Space. This space is constantly monitored and there are seasonal exercises as well, whose aim is to assess the action with this regard. For instance, on the 23rd October 2013, the action concerning critical management took place. It was managed by the operational Commanding Officer of the Armed Forces. The main aim of the action, code-named RENEGADE / KAPER, was to counteract the terrorist threats from the air and sea.⁹ It was also an element of verifying the forces and means of the Polish Armed Forces designated to improve the Air Defence of Poland during the climate summit – COP 19, organized from 11th to 22nd November in our country.

During military crisis and wartime, the Headquarters is the body in charge of preparing the Command Post of the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces. Moreover, the Headquarters is responsible for the operational commanding concerning the Armed Forces and the elements of the non-military agreement which were designated to the Commander on the basis of the National Defence Minister's decision in order to carry out combined defence operations. The Command Post of the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces evolves from the Headquarters.¹⁰

During peacetime, the Headquarters commands by means of the Air Operation Centre, the Naval Operation Centre, as well as the forces and means designated to battle duty, whose aim is to protect the country's airspace, and also to support the Naval Unit of the Border Guards in order to protect naval areas. The regulation refers to any threats, irrelevant of their origin. If it is impossible to use other forces and means in a critical situation or if they are insufficient (if other regulations do not say it in a different way), the Minister of National Defence, on request of the provincial governor, can hand over sub-units and units of the armed forces of Poland, called the Armed Forces Units. They can even be directed to accomplish tasks with regard to crisis management.¹¹ It is a clear signal which specifies when and who can make arrangements for the armed forces concerning threats.

⁹ Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa, <http://rcb.gov.pl>, 22.2014.

¹⁰ The acts of 2nd June 2013 regarding the amendment of the act concerning the office of the National Defence Minister, *op. cit.*

¹¹ The act concerning crisis management of 26th April 2007, Article 25. Dz.U. 2007 with further amendments.

The Operational Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces, which was formed to accomplish constitutional tasks in 2014, continues its activities and accomplishes tasks using the forces at its disposal and the means which remained after the Operational Headquarters of Armed Forces (functioning until the mentioned date), which was appointed on the basis of a decision of the Minister of National Defence.¹² The Operational Headquarters of the Armed Forces has managed the forces taking part in peace-building and stabilization operations, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Chad, and others since the middle of 2005. Additionally, it managed the participation of particular military units in critical and natural disasters situations in Poland. Furthermore, it has led a series of coordinating exercises of particular components of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy in combined operations. In accordance with the Headquarters' dispatches from the 1st July 2005 to 31st December 2013, the tasks of the Operational Headquarters of the Armed Forces include:

- commanding Polish Contingents in missions and operations,
- planning concerning the use of forces in critical military and non-military operations,
- training and coordinating as well as certifying headquarters and forces of designated components of the Land Forces, the Air Force, and the Navy in combined operations.
- managing the duty forces of the Integrated System of Recognizing the Armed Forces
- monitoring the readiness of national components designated to the NATO Response Force.

Prospects and projects related to selected changes in the army

In 2011, at the conference in the Academy of National Defence, the President of Poland, who was an invited guest, specified the main development directions of the Armed Forces of Poland and the preparation stages to defend the country in 2013–2022. The President certainly did not predict the present situation in Ukraine or in the Crimea, but pointed out the need to consolidate the command system and the clear division of powers of the highest military commanders concerning the following three functions: strategic planning, current commanding, and operation commanding. In accordance with directives, political guidelines, and then orders, the General Staff is entrusted with the most important role which will be to act as an adviser to the Minister of National Defence with regard to abilities assessment and efficiency in commanding the armed forces. Moreover, it will be responsible for the future development of the armed forces and for planning to use them when they are needed. All organizational changes concerning the office of the National Defence Minister were accepted by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on the 21st June 2013. Importantly,

¹² Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 9th July 1996 concerning the detailed scope of activities conducted by the National Defense Minister (Dz. U. No. 94, item. 426), clause 2, subsection 3, decision No. Pf-57/Org./P1 of 22nd October 2003.

during the third reading the Sejm accepted the bill concerning the amendment of the law by a majority vote, which proves that the bill had been prepared in a suitable way. The document became the most important prescriptive act which allows to begin the process of implementation of the New Management System and the Polish Armed Forces Commanding System. In accordance with the schedule which had been accepted earlier, new determinants have been in effect since January 2014. A new organizational group was appointed in order to start preparations in August 2013. This group was the beginning of the future General Headquarters and started the process of recruitment and selection of regular soldiers for particular positions. Despite the fact that the structures have already been functioning for some time, it is too early to talk about a success. The system must be verified by the dynamic actions of the command. The new system of managing and commanding the armed forces, which was supposed to be more effective, has been functioning for three months. The structures of managing and commanding were simplified by combining the Headquarters of the Armed Forces Branches into one General Headquarters of Armed Forces Branches. The reorganization included the division of the planning function and general as well as operational command of the armed forces. Additionally, the General Staff of Polish Armed Forces has been transformed into a body whose tasks are: planning, supervision of accomplished tasks, and strategic advising to the Prime Minister. The second central-ranking headquarters is the reformed Operational Headquarters of Armed Forces Branches. It was previously, and still is (with somewhat modified tasks), responsible for operational commanding during wars and crises, and for commanding the units of particular branches of the armed forces designated to peaceful missions abroad.

At the same time, a reform concerning the structure of the Office of the National Defense Minister was introduced; its aim is to improve and make the system of department management less bureaucratic. The structure of the reformed office will be more effective and rational. Moreover, it will meet the requirements issued to the government administration office, as well as be compatible with the new managing and commanding systems of the armed forces.¹³

The General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces, which is subordinate to the National Defense Minister, is the combined headquarters responsible for commanding the military units of branches of the armed forces during the period of peace and crisis, and for those units which remained after being designated to the Operational Headquarters during the war.¹⁴

The Headquarters is in charge of: training the headquarters and staffs, the army, the personnel reserves, and professional education. It is also responsible for equipment, which means that it will indicate the type, value, and specificity of the equipment needed for a particular group of soldiers in order to achieve the indicated

¹³ The act of 21st June 2013 regarding the amendment of the act concerning the Office of the National Defense Minister and some other acts Dz.U. 2013, item 852.

¹⁴ Decision No. 411/MON of 19th December 2013, regarding the authorization of the General Commanding Officer of Branches of the Armed Forces and the Commander of Warsaw Garrison to entrust regular soldiers with the function of Garrison Commanders and to dismiss them from this position. Dziennik urzędowy Ministra Obrony Narodowej, 19th December 2013, item 366.

operational capabilities. Its structure includes the headquarters, staff, and Inspectorates of the Land Forces, Navy, Air Force, Special Forces, as well as Branches of Forces and Training. They are the main tools in hands of the General Commander with regard to accomplishing tasks in particular fields. The following groups will report to the General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces: Inspectorate of Informational Systems, Inspectorate of Armed Forces Support, divisions, flotillas, wings, self-sufficient brigades, and training centres. Sub-units responsible for support and security of action report to the Tactical Unit.¹⁵

The overriding aim of the General Headquarters of Armed Forces Branches will be to organize the process of the preparation of the forces and means and their selection to lead operations on the basis of the plan devised by the Operational Headquarters of Types of Armed Forces. The following strategic triad will be engaged in this undertaking: General Staff of Armed Forces, General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces and Operational Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces. On the basis of planning documents and conclusions of strategic defensive play, run by the General Staff of Polish Army, the Operational Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces will work out the standards, determine the capabilities for particular forces, prepare, and coordinate headquarters designated for the operation. However, the aim of the General Headquarters is to achieve the defined operational capabilities. Moreover, it will take part in the process of preparing the plans concerning the use of the Armed Forces within planned defensive operations and critical response. It will also be responsible for the tasks with regard to preparing and keeping the combat and mobilization readiness of the army and the reserve. The General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces has played and will continue to play the leading role in the training process of the army designated to stabilization and critical response operations, as well as humanitarian actions. Obviously, when the training stage finishes, the Operational Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces will verify the skills and readiness to carry out actions. In the next stage, the sub-units will be subordinated to the General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces. A further task of the General Headquarters will be keeping the reserves in readiness to supplement particular forces and means according to plans and superiors' orders, with the strategic aim of the headquarters' vision of particular levels of commanding.

The General Headquarters of Branches of Armed Forces, in its doctrinal principles, is a modern combined body of strategic commanding, which appropriate for present threats and ensures effective cooperation as a part of NATO and the European Union. The command staff, taking advantage of its knowledge, experience resulting from the occupied positions and engagement in overseas operations, introduces conclusions from exercises and establishes international cooperation using weaponry which the Polish Army purchases successively while preparing the Armed Forces. Changes and reorganization have a significant influence on the development of the country's defensive capabilities. They also enhance the military potential. The cooperation of the Armed Forces with the citizens and with other services of the state is allowed for in accordance with NATO Security strategies, the European Union,

¹⁵ Polska-zbrojna.pl accessed on the 17th December 2013.

the Defensive Strategies of the Republic of Poland¹⁶ and the National Security of the Republic of Poland.¹⁷

Conclusions

The Armed Forces provide the population with assistance in case of any natural disasters, as well as military and non-military threats. The following fields of basic action were accepted as principles of activities and directives:

- accomplishing programs of development of the Armed Forces,
- planning, organizing, and leading the training for subordinate military units,
- organizing the motivation development of the army,
- training the reserve in case of critical situations or war and keeping it in readiness to use,
- performing tasks concerning military logistics in military units and organizational bodies of the armed forces,
- cooperation with other bodies and subjects concerning the country's defence,
- management and control of subordinate military units and organizational bodies according to principles and procedures stated in regulations.¹⁸

The aim of the article is to provoke a discussion at various types of conferences or meetings where the issue of different aspects of national security is discussed. In appointed or reorganized headquarters, there are guidelines and orders to be carried out by subordinates concerning broadly defined known security: internal, external, military, civic, social, economic, environmental, information, and telecommunications. This paper only draws attention to the people on whom the law puts pressure in order to strengthen the sense of national identity of the Poles who trust the army.

¹⁶ *Monitor polski* w sprawie przyjęcia Strategii rozwoju systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP 2022, Resolution No. 67 of the Council of Ministers, item 377 of 15th May 2013.

¹⁷ http://www.bbn.gov.pl/portal/pl/475/1144/Strategia_Bezpieczenstwa_Narodowego_RP.html accessed on the 3rd March 2014.

¹⁸ The act concerning control in government administration of 15th July 2011, *Dziennik Ustaw*, No. 185, item 1092.