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ECHOES OF THE JAGIELLONIAN IDEA IN THE PRESENT POLISH MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

ABSTRACT

The exchange of ideas, views and mutual benefit from the experience of the traditions that prevailed in Central Europe in the Jagiellonian era also embraced the military area. Similarly, today the European Union, and especially NATO, unknowingly still refer to the Jagiellonian idea. It is certainly done by Poland, actively involved in the process of building a security and democracy zone in Central Europe. Actions called Military Assistance, which will be discussed in this article, are an important element of these activities in the area of security.

Key words: Jagiellonian idea, military assistance, Polish Special Operations Forces, Polish Regional Security Assistance Program, Regional Territorial Defence Centre Initiative

In Poland, the Jagiellonian idea as an original conception relating to shaping the external and internal relations of the state has been repeatedly defined and is subject to both fierce discussion and criticism. The Jagiellonian idea can be described in the following way: *The Jagiellonian idea is a political system, consisting in attracting to the Polish State voluntary accession or union with the neighboring territories embracing the geographical area between the Carpathians and the Baltic Sea.*¹ The Jagiellonian Republic, created by the union, was based on the following principles: the autonomy of individual constituencies, the administration built and based on local citizens, linguistic equality, religious tolerance, the development of democratic civil liberties, a combination of patriotism towards the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania with local patriotism, the apostolate of Western civilization and most importantly, a community of interests. According to another prominent Polish historian, Władysław Konopczyński, the Jagiellonian

¹ W. Kamieniecki, *Ponad zgietkiem walk narodowościowych. Idea jagiellońska*, Warszawa 1929, p. 24.

idea on the one hand meant the opposite of aggressive imperialism in foreign policy and, on the other hand, was a denial of nationalism in internal politics, assuming the widest possible form of self-government in relation to the province and culture.²

The aim of this article is to investigate whether contemporary programs, NATO activities, the EU, and in particular the Polish Ministry of National Defence and the armed forces in their goals refer to the Jagiellonian idea. If fundamentals such as respect for freedom, tolerance of different political, religious and cultural notions, and respect for the right to self-determination are at the root of such institutions as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, then the convergence with the Jagiellonian idea is reflected. Of course, the EU and NATO were created for completely different reasons and in completely different conditions than the Jagiellonian Polish-Lithuanian multicultural monarchy, but some of the common values on which the Jagiellonian Union was based and which are now the foundations of the EU and NATO are clearly visible. In today's practice of security policy and Defence strategy, it would be difficult to refer directly to the concept of a multinational monarchy, but the Jagiellonian vision might be seen as a usefull source to look for ways to stop Russia's aggressive neo-imperial policy. Here, it is worth recalling that according to Ludwik Abramowicz the Jagiellonian idea opposed the most important issue of Russian foreign policy, which saw the apogee of its dominance in the region precisely in gaining and consolidating influence in the lands of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. The involvement of these areas in the orbit of their dependencies, and ultimately fusion with the indigenous part of the Russian Empire was the historical task of Russian imperialism.³

Cooperation within the Jagiellonian monarchy, as well as with neighboring states, also had a military dimension. Not only were they supported by sending military contingents, but also commanders, specialists, exchanging experiences and learning from each other took place. Similarly, building a democracy and security zone in Central Europe has a military dimension. Today, programs referring to military security – based on partnership cooperation between Poland and Lithuania, or Poland and Ukraine – can be identified. In addition, they are an expression of the desire to oppose the expansion of the Russian sphere of influence or domination. They have a wider range than only Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. They also include Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary and even Georgia, but they remain at the boundary of the cultural, economic and military influences of Russia and the independent states of Central and Eastern Europe.

The original Polish Regional Security Assistance Program (ReSAP), Polish Special Operation Forces (SOF) cooperation with the armed forces of neighboring allied states, as well as Regional Territorial Defence Centre Initiative (for North and East Europe), can be used as an example of such actions. Three of these activities can be defined by the currently used term Military Assistance (MA).

² M. Mackiewicz, "Uwagi nad ideą jagiellońską w historiografii polskiej przełomu XIX i XX wieku", *Folia Iuridica Wratislaviensis*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2014), pp. 14-16.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE – DIFFERENT SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Military assistance has a lot of faces staring with the financial instrument, through grant transfers of excess defense articles, training programs to the special operations conducted during peace time, crisis and war in a very different environments from friendly to the malevolent one.

Military Assistance (MA – in Polish *wsparcie wojskowe*), as kind of special operation is defined by NATO's doctrine as a broad spectrum of measures in support of friendly forces in peace, crisis, and conflict. MA can be conducted by, with, or through friendly forces that are trained, equipped, supported, or employed in varying degrees by Special Operations Forces (SOF). The range of MA is thus considerable, and may vary from providing low-level military training or material assistance to the active employment of indigenous forces in the conduct of combat operations. MA activities may include the Host Nation (HN) Military Assistance and Population Security.

Host Nation Military Assistance – these are operations that train HN military individuals and units in tactical employment, sustainment, and integration of land, air, and maritime skills, provide advice and assistance to military leaders, and provide training on tactics, techniques, and procedures enabling a HN to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency, and to develop individual, leader, and organizational skills.

Population Security are operations that strengthen population security by providing supervision of tactical operations conducted by HN military units to neutralize and destroy insurgent threats, isolate insurgents from the civil population, and protect the civil population.⁴

In the United States the term MA concerns broad spectrum of tools used to help and strengthen cooperation with allies. These tools embrace economic instruments together with military means, for example: *The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program is an instrument of U.S. national security and foreign policy – a program with a substantial return on investment. It is a key component of U.S. security assistance that provides training on a grant basis to students from allied and friendly nations. While improving defense capabilities, IMET courses offer opportunities to present democratic alternatives to key foreign military and civilian leaders, and further regional stability through mutually beneficial military-to-military relations. The activities under IMET culminate in increased understanding and defense cooperation between the United States and foreign countries. The IMET program has three main objectives. It encourages effective, positive defense relationships and increases understanding between the U.S. and foreign countries, thereby promoting the goals of international peace and security. It leverages the ability of participating countries to utilize their resources, including defense articles and services obtained from the U.S., with greater effectiveness and efficiency, contributing to greater self-reliance. And, it increases the ability of foreign nationals participating*

⁴ *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations AJP 3-05*, Mons: NATO 2010, pp. 2-3.

*in such activities to recognize international norms regarding human rights.*⁵ In doctrinal papers published in the United States the concept of MA as special operations is defined by Unconventional Warfare (UW), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and Security Force Assistance (SFA).

UW consists of operations and activities that are conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.⁶ FID refers to US activities that support a host nation's internal defense and development strategy and program designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their internal security, and stability.⁷ SFA is United States Government (USG) activity on security sector reform (SSR) focuses on the way a HN provides safety, security, and justice with civilian government oversight. The Department of Defense's (DOD's) primary role in SSR is to support the reform, restructuring, or reestablishment of the HN armed forces and the defense aspect of the security sector which is accomplished through security force assistance.⁸

The areas of activity listed above (especially FID and SFA) overlap with actions defined as Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Counterterrorism (CT). COIN is described as comprehensive civilian and military effort designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes,⁹ and CT as activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their networks in order to render them incapable of using unlawful violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals.¹⁰

NATO papers also describe COIN and CT as following: *CT is an overarching umbrella of offensive measures designed to reduce the vulnerability of Allied interests, their forces, individuals, and property to terrorism; to include counter-force activities and containment by military force and civil agencies. COIN operations are those military, paramilitary, political, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency. CT and COIN are not the exclusive domain of NATO Special Operations Forces (SOF), but SOF can effectively complement the overarching application of diplomatic, economic, informational, and military operations applied in a COIN role.*¹¹

It is also worth stressing that NATO treats military assistance as a separate category of special operations. In NATO's vocabulary: *MA is a broad category of measure and activities that support and influence critical friendly assets through organizing training,*

⁵ *Military Assistance. International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Financing, Peacekeeping Operations*, p. 151, at <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/17783.pdf>>, 9 April 2016.

⁶ *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations. Joint Pub 3-05*, Department of Defense, Washington 2003, p. xi.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Allied Joint Doctrine...*, p. 2-3.

*advising, mentoring, or the conduct of combined operations. The range of MA includes, but is not limited to, capability building of friendly security forces; engagement with local, regional, and national leadership or organizations; and civic actions supporting and influencing the local population.*¹² NATO also recognizes the complexity and delicacy of such activities resulting from cultural differences, traditions and history.¹³ So the MA operations understood as a kind of special operations are quite a versatile tool that can be used in peacetime, crisis and war. In broad terms, military assistance can be defined as a multi-faceted action involving the economic and educational resources of the supportive state, and can also be defined as a type of SOF activity.

SELECTED POLISH ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Three Military Assistance activities can be identified, which are implemented by Poland. Two of them, Polish Regional Security Assistance Program and Regional Territorial Defence Centre Initiative, are the original Polish initiative. The third one, cooperation programs implemented by the Polish SOF, is implemented as part of the NATO initiative.

POLISH REGIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RESAP)

On 22 September 2015, the Council of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 173 on the establishment of the “Regional Security Assistance Program 2022” submitted by the Minister of National Defense. The establishment of the ReSAP was aimed at assisting states – with the Visegrad Group (V4), Baltic (B3), Bulgaria and Romania (collectively referred to as V4+) – in the field of military equipment (manufactured in Poland) and combat capabilities. It was assumed that the identified in ReSAP instruments for building political relations with neighbors and helping to increase their defense capabilities in conjunction with the economic and industrial interests of the Republic of Poland, would increase security in the region and contribute to raising Poland’s international standing. As a result of the implementation of the ReSAP, the Polish defense industry was to strengthen, as well as a stronger link between defense potentials in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was to be established by using the same types of armaments, specialized repair and maintenance centers, unifying training processes and joint exercises. The establishment of ReSAP was also meant to create an effective mechanism for the use of existing financial support instruments to acquire Polish defense industry products and services, with the appropriate scale and capabilities of Poland in this re-

¹² *NATO Special Operations Forces Military Assistance Handbook*, Shape: NATO Special Operations Headquarters, 2014, pp. 9-10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

gard. It was assumed that it would result, also will be the coherence of public administration activities in the area of promoting the offer of the Polish defense industry in selected markets, too. The person responsible for developing the project was the Secretary of State in the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) Czesław Mroczek, who oversaw the armaments policy branch at the time.

The main assumptions of ReSAP were:

- creating an effective mechanism for using existing financial support instruments to acquire products or services of the Polish defense industry, taking into account the scale and capabilities of Poland;
- adopting a common direction of public administration activities in the area of promotion of the Polish defense industry's offer on selected markets;
- granting national defense ministers powers to support the promotion of the defense industry;
- awarding the national defense minister a leading role in the implementation of the ReSAP;
- strengthening the defense capabilities of the allied states.

The program provided financial assistance, which included:

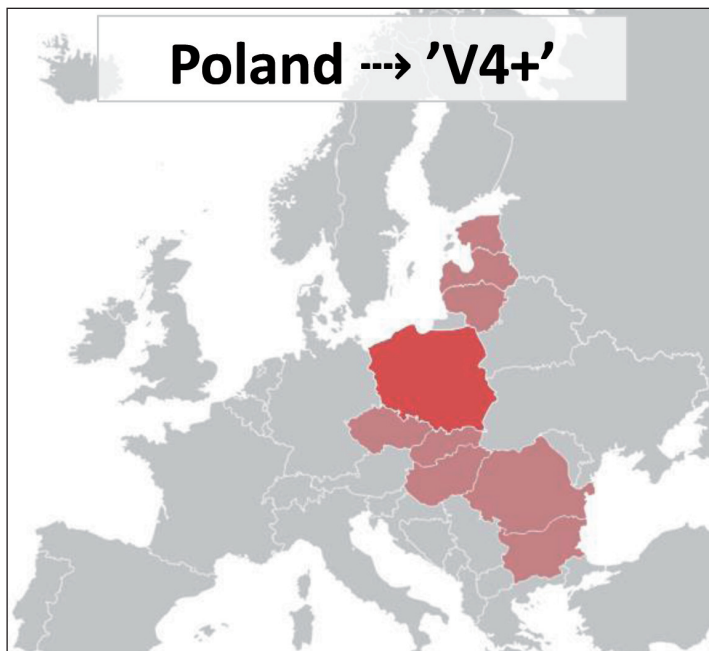
- purchases of armaments products made in Polish industrial entities under loans;
- studies and training in military schools, centers and training centers of the Polish Armed Forces (PAF);
- promotion of armed forces and Polish military equipment;
- transfer of military equipment free of charge to the allied neighboring armed forces (recognized by the MoND as unnecessary, subject to rotation or indicated by a decision of the Minister of National Defense).

The support was to be based on contracts concluded by the Polish government with the governments of the aforementioned states. The purchases would be carried out in Polish companies on the basis of government, export and bank credits for the purchase of military equipment. Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa SA was to finance the sale of equipment manufactured by the companies of the Group.

The implementation of the program meant increasing the number of orders for the Polish industry, reducing the costs of qualification and certification of products, the development of research and development works. All this together was supposed to contribute to strengthening the condition and competitiveness of the Polish defense industry. The ReSAP program was seen as an important element of Poland's foreign policy, which enhances state security. It was rightly recognized that the close cooperation of the allies of the region was in the interest of Poland and that it could develop transnational military-political cooperation.¹⁴

¹⁴ "Uchwała nr 173 Rady Ministrów z dnia 22 września 2015 r. w sprawie ustanowienia 'Programu Wsparcia Bezpieczeństwa Regionu 2022'", M.P. 2015, poz. 1019; "Uchwała w sprawie ustanowienia 'Programu Wsparcia Bezpieczeństwa Regionu 2022'", Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 22 September 2015, at <<https://www.premier.gov.pl/mobile/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/uchwala-w-sprawie-ustanowienia-programu-wsparcia-bezpieczenstwa-regionu.html>>; "Archiwalny wykaz prac legislacyjnych i programowych Rady Ministrów z okresu 1 września 2011 – 4 grudnia 2015", BIP Rady Ministrów i Kancelarii Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 30 October 2015, at <<https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/form/r1754,Projekt-u>>

Map 1. Geographic and political scope of ReSAP



Source: "Uchwała w sprawie ustanowienia 'Programu Wsparcia Bezpieczeństwa Regionu 2022'", Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 22 September 2015, at <<https://www.premier.gov.pl/mobile/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/uchwala-w-sprawie-ustanowienia-programu-wsparcia-bezpieczenstwa-regionu.html>>.

REGIONAL TERRITORIAL DEFENCE CENTRE INITIATIVE

The Polish Territorial Defence Forces Command (TDC) identified international cooperation in the CEE as one of the most valuable process. Even though the TDC currently possesses a basic level of operational capabilities, international cooperation has been defined by brigadier general Wiesław Kukuła, Territorial Defence Forces (TDF) Commander, as one of his top priorities. Based on the Polish national foreign policy, current geostrategic and security situation in north-eastern Europe, and the TDF Commander's guidance, the TDF staff identified the most important partners for international cooperation, and creating mutual contacts, and cooperation. Identified partners are located not only in region, but they are located also in further security environment. Important international partners working closely with the TDC are Bal-

chwały-Rady-Ministrow-w-sprawie-ustanowienia-programu-pod-nazwa-quotPro.html>; "MON ogłasza Program Wsparcia Bezpieczeństwa Regionu 2022", Defence24, 23 September 2015, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/262977,mon-oglasza-program-wsparcia-bezpieczenstwa-regionu-2022>>, 4 September 2017.

tic countries – currently Estonia, Lithuania,¹⁵ and also Finland and Sweden. TDC is focused mainly on establishing working contacts, and plan cooperation agenda for following years. Mutual visits are also planned – not only on Commander's level – but also mutual trainings and exchange of information and experience. More countries to contact are also expected to include Hungary, and Georgia. These countries either have, or plan to establish Territorial Defence Forces in order to enhance their national defence capabilities.

Establishing working contacts with other nations is certainly a valuable asset for Polish TDF for further formation and development operational capabilities, allowing both parties to share knowledge and experience. One of the future cooperation platform could be Regional Territorial Defence Centre Initiative (for North and East Europe), approved in June 2017 by Mr. Antoni Macierewicz, the Polish Minister of National Defence. Its initial part will consist in organising cyclic (annual, bi-annual) meetings of all countries interested in enhancing territorial defence capabilities, and share their experience on territorial defence in order to strengthen regional security cooperation. The first meetings is planned to be held in October 2018, and further actions could be undertaken following the results of the initial meeting. First official invitations to participate in that initiative will be addressed soon to all Polish TDF partners.¹⁶

POLISH SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES – SPECIALIZED MILITARY PLATFORM FOR REGIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION

The bilateral cooperation programs continued for several years, which lead Polish SOF with the countries of the eastern flank of NATO and Central Europe, as well as countries lying to the east of this flank, are implemented as part of NATO initiatives. In 2005, four NATO countries, the United States, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland, presented a joint initiative to the rest of the NATO countries about intensifying the development of the capacity of their forces to conduct special operations. The joint proposal included the creation in NATO of a coordination body for the development of Special Forces of NATO countries. NATO leaders at the Riga Summit in November 2006 decided to approve the proposal for the development of an Alliance special operations capability, leading the way for the NATO Special Operation Transformation Initiatives (NSTI). In the meantime, Poland effectively worked in the area of development for national SOF capabilities. On 25 October 2006, the Polish Minister of Defence, Radosław Sikorski, signed decisions for the formation the Dowództwo Wojsk

¹⁵ Lithuanian equivalent for the Polish TDF are National Defence Volunteer Forces (NDVF), while in Estonia is Estonian Defense League (EDL).

¹⁶ Based on unpublished text "The Polish Territorial Defence Forces. Effective Tool in a Dynamic Security Environment" by M. Klisz and H. Królikowski.

Specjalnych¹⁷ – DWS (Polish Special Operation Command – POLSOCOM) and the first POLSOCOM Commander was appointed in the person of Major-General Edward Gruszka.¹⁸

On 24 May 2007, the Polish Parliament adopted an amendment to the law regulating the functioning of Polish Armed Forces indicating that POLSOCOM does not pass subordinate organizational units for other commands. The POLSOCOM Commander is the only one who serves as a force provider and force user during war, crisis and peace time. Additionally, the Polish Special Forces received service a status which was unique in the world, and the POLSOCOM commander received a dedicated budget thereby providing significant opportunity and flexibility to the POLSOCOM.

On 15th August 2007, the President of Poland, based on Minister of Defence Aleksander Szczygło's recommendation, appointed Major-General Włodzimierz Potasiński to the POLSOCOM Commander position; former commander Major-General Gruszka was appointed to the position of commander of the 2 Mechanized Corps. The main tasks of Polish Special Operations Command include:

- Compiling a concept of development and use of military forces intended to carry out special operations and supervising a process of training soldiers from special units;
- Implementing and coordinating activities related to the use of special units in and outside the country and preparation Polish special forces to cooperate within Joint Multinational Special Operations NATO and European Union;
- Supervising the level of combat capability of forces and resources allocated to special operations and identifying needs in the area of armaments, equipment, training and exercises' conduction;
- Developing rules for recruitment to special units, as well as establishing education and improvement guidelines for staff of these units; and
- Planning, organizing and conducting inspections in the Special Forces units.¹⁹

On 13 May 2008, Poland declared in NATO that it will take until 2012 to reach the level of capabilities described as Special Operations Forces Framework Nation (FN), and that, at this time, only the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Turkey have reached that level. The situation has not changed until today. POLSOCOM was created as part of the accomplishment of national ambition of Poland to become leader in the area of special operations not only within NATO but also in the European Union (EU), and especially in Central Europe and Eastern Flank of NATO.

According to the NATO developed Special Operations Coordination Center documents, NATO SOF capability levels are divided into four levels (level four being the

¹⁷ In exact translation Special Troops Command.

¹⁸ In the same year, the Canadian Special Operations Command (CANSOFCOM) was created. Also, on 1 January 2007, the NATO Special Operation Coordination Center (NSCC) was established and the first commander of the NSCC, the Special Operations Command Europe Commander, RAdm William McRaven, was appointed.

¹⁹ H. Królikowski, *Genez a i rozwój polskich operacji oraz sił specjalnych*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 205-209.

highest and level one being the lowest).²⁰ The level four requires *effective and deployable tactical capability to perform all three NATO SOF missions sets special reconnaissance, direct action and military assistance and proficient in the sustained and command and control elements to multiple Special Operations Task Groups (SOTGs) and Special Operations Air Task Groups (SOATGs) in a complex dynamic coalition environment, able to establish a Combined Joint Force Special Operations Component Command*.²¹ Further, it is to provide tactical SOF enabling elements to the following capabilities: land, air and maritime mobility, countering chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons (CBRN), liaison, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), all sources of intelligence, medical, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), logistic, psychological and information operations, air ground personnel for SOF.

Likewise, Poland set up its national ambitions and declared that it desires to be the leading nation in the area of Special Operations for all countries wishing to develop that kind of force in Eastern Europe including Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Romania. This was the Polish response from some suggestions coming from the above mentioned countries. It shows that Poland presented a cohesive and coherent approach to the development of Special Forces capabilities in order to achieve national goals and, at the same time, become a leading nation within NATO in the area of special operations.

What has to be underlined is that the development of the Polish Special Operations Forces structure and capabilities would not have been possible without the support of the United States Special Operational Command (USSOCOM). A very good cooperation between the Polish and US SOF units at the tactical level resulted with immense US support in the process of establishing and developing the POLSOCOM. From the very beginning, many USSOCOM officers supported the creation and development of the Polish Special Operations Command structure by giving advice, sharing expertise, training personnel, preparing evaluation reports and arranging specific training for Polish SOF personnel at all levels from tactical to strategic. Additionally, the American supported Polish initiatives such as the creation POLSCOM and declaration of achieving status NATO FN through the production of special training program under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) initiative and the Counter Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) led mainly by Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). Moreover, Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), as regional command, provided support and advice to the Polish side.

The most important fact that must be mentioned as support for the thesis mentioned above is the Memorandum of Understanding regarding cooperation between Polish and US Special Operations Forces signed in Kraków on 19th of February 2009 by the US Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Polish Ministry of National Defense

²⁰ *North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Force Study*, Mons: NSCC 2008.

²¹ *Ibid.*, annex C, p. C-1.

Bogdan Klich.²² Poland, as the only nation that has signed the memorandum with the US, shows an important and significant commitment to the development and solving of SOF and also demonstrates the magnitude of Special Operations capabilities in that part of Europe. This also proves a strong attempt to the problem of development SOF capabilities. POLSOCOM is probably the only SOF institution in Europe and in the World where US and French liaison officers are working. Consequently, it also shows that Poland has good relations with USSOCOM and French Special Forces Operational Command.

Instead of all the steps taken to develop SOF capabilities, Poland also, like other countries, faced the negative impact of the economic crisis. In 2009, based on economic problems and cuts in the budget of the Polish MOD, Poland asked for an extension regarding the achievement of combat readiness as NATO FN until 2014. The Polish request was approved. Personnel from POLSOCOM by using the USSOCOM expertise and support started training personnel that will be able to work as a part of CJF-SOCC staff in different branches; additionally the same officers are working in NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ) in Mons and in NATO Special Operations Coordination Element working in Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) Afghanistan. The selection process for the Air Special Operations Squadron has been continued and the procedure of training selected air personnel has begun.

During joint exercises "Shamrock Key 2006", POLSOCOM staff operated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, while during "Jackal Stone 2009" they worked in Croatia. Finally, during "Jackal Stone 2010", they operated in Poland and now have been successfully trained to conduct advanced crisis response and time sensitive operational planning. Additionally, especially during the exercise "Jackal Stone 2010" conducted in Poland, the Polish capability as a Host Nation was also examined. Members of the support unit have begun their training to be able to conduct HUMINT, SIGINT/IMINT missions and support other units with intelligence, surveillance and other assets. Also new equipment is needed to conduct the above mentioned missions have been bought. The selection process as well as the training process to fully enable the Polish Special Operations Units and POLSOCOM are permanently ongoing. Moreover, Poland stepped up cooperation with SOF units from Croatia, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary in order to achieve intended national objectives. Furthermore, Poland contributed a Special Operations Task Force to NATO Response Forces component almost every second year since year 2004 mainly from the Military Units Komandosi and GROM. The Polish components were prepared and worked under US, France and Turkey SOF Command and always received very good reviews during preparation and operational phases. All the facts show the Polish involvement and effectiveness as a leading nation in the area of development of national and alliance SOF capabilities.

From 4th to 30th November Cobra-13 maneuvers took place. They were the largest exercise of NATO SOF in 2013, the main goal of which was to check the preparation

²² J. Garamone, "U.S., Poland Sign Special Ops Memo of Understanding", U.S. Department of Defense, 19 February 2009, at <<http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=53141>>, 29 September 2017.

of Allied SOF Command to the implementation and coordination of the activities of the member countries SOF units and training of interoperability of these units. Soldiers from fifteen NATO and European Union countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, the USA, Hungary and United Kingdom, as well as military observers from Sweden and Turkey) attended Cobra-13 SOF exercises. Cobra-13 exercises were supposed to be the last stage of allowing POLSOCOM to command special operations component within the structure of NATO command. However, in accordance with the provisions of the reform of the Polish command system POLSOCOM was to cease to exist.

After changes in the Polish Office of Minister of National Defense Law on January 1st, 2014 POLSOCOM was disbanded. It was an element of national command system reform consisted in consolidation of the existing elements of command system (forces commands, and operational command) into more cohesive organization. In the result of reform created Dowództwo Generalne Rodzajów Sił Zbrojnych (Armed Forces General Command)²³ and Dowództwo Operacyjne Rodzajów Sił Zbrojnych (Armed Forces Operational Command)²⁴ with Inspektorat Wojsk Specjalnych (Special Opera-

²³ The Armed Forces General Command, subordinate to the Minister of National Defence, is a joint command, responsible for commanding military units of the branches of the Armed Forces at peacetime and crisis and other units, after assigning for Operational Command, during war. Its responsibilities include training commanders and staffs, forces, personnel reserve as well as professional education. It also functions as a holder of equipment that is it indicates the features and specificity of the equipment that will be necessary for particular group of soldiers for achieving their indicated operational capabilities. Quotation from "Armed Forces General Command", Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland, at <<http://en.mon.gov.pl/polish-armed-forces/wojsko-polskie/armed-forces-general-command-1032598/>>, 24 July 2015.

²⁴ Armed Forces Operational Command is the main commanding body responsible for operational command of the Armed Forces handed over under its subordination on the basis of decision of Minister of National Defence. Operational Command is responsible for planning and commanding forces and assigned non-military elements during joint, peacekeeping, rescue and humanitarian operations as well as in anti-terrorist activities or during terrorist attack-disaster relief. It is also responsible for planning and commanding forces assigned for supporting state and local administration in case of non-military crises. The Armed Forces Operational Command plans, organizes and conducts exercises and makes assessment of capability of forces and resources declared for conducting operations. It controls maintaining capabilities by the standby forces and resources and those assigned for fulfilling tasks abroad; realizes national command for them and supervises special operations. The Armed Forces Operational Command prepares necessary planning and organizational data pertaining to ensuring functioning of Air Defence System of the Republic of Poland and fulfilling tasks of the Minister of National Defence within border protection in the air space of the Republic of Poland. During military crisis and war the Operational Command is an institution responsible for preparing the Command Post of the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces and realizes operational command of Armed Forces and non-military elements assigned to the subordination of the Commander on the basis of decision of Minister of National Defence for conducting joint defence operation. At peacetime the Operational Command commands, through Air Operations Centre and Maritime Operations Centre, the forces and means assigned for combat stand by for border protection in the air space of the Republic of Poland, and for support for Border Guard Maritime Unit for protection of maritime territory. Quotation from "Armed Forces Operational Command", Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland, at <<http://en.mon.gov.pl/polish-armed-forces/wojsko-polskie/armed-forces-operational-command-102698/>>, 24 July 2015.

tions Forces Inspectorate) in its structure. The reform was prepared very quickly. In February 2013 team created by Minister of National Defense started to work to prepare new command system for the Polish Armed Forces and already in June 2013 Polish Parliament accepted the changes. The speed of the reform, lack of consultation, and especially breaking the rules underlying the activities of the POLSOCOM to maintain the status of *de facto* autonomous 'force user-force provider'. The fact that the POLSOCOM was supposed to be responsible for the training (preparation) of special forces soldiers, but also continue to lead them raised a lot of criticism.

As a result of criticism, discussion and probably lack of concept Dowództwo Sił Specjalnych (Special Forces Command) came into being 1st January 2014. The core of the new Special Forces Command was the staff who served in the POLSOCOM until the end of December 2013. The new Command was subordinated to the Armed Forces General Commander.

Special Forces Command was supposed to be an organizational unit responsible *inter alia* for the command of military units of the SOF. Special Forces Command was supposed to take part in determining the directions of development of SOF, planning to use them, and the preparation of forces and means of SOF to combat operations and operations in crisis situations in the national, coalition and the alliance operations. It also had to act as special operations component command (Special Operations Component Command, SOCC) within the framework of the NATO response force (NATO Response Force, NRF). One word was to be retained – the principle underlying the operation of Special Forces Command 'force user-force provider'.

Special Operations Forces Inspectorate was responsible for creating the conditions for achieving and maintaining operational capacity and for the preparation and conduct of training projects to be determined with the commands and staff of units subordinated to the Armed Forces General Command. The Inspectorate had also pointed to the need for training soldiers in military skills Special Operations Forces Corps specializations. It also had to meet the challenges resulting from the features of the sponsor of arms and military equipment in the area of the Special Operations Forces.

But, after ten days, on 10th of January 2014 Special Forces Command was disbanded. Its activities were taken over by Centrum Operacji Specjalnych – Dowództwo Komponentu Wojsk Specjalnych (Special Operations Centre – Special Operations Forces Component Command), subordinated to the Armed Forces Operational Command. Abide by the same rules for the appointment of the Special Forces Command sources at-maintain the status of *de facto* autonomy 'force user-force provider'.

Special Operations Centre – Special Operations Forces Component Command replaced Special Forces Command subordinated to the Armed Forces General Commander. The same current oversight of training and equipment on all special units was taken over by the Special Operations Forces Inspectorate, commanded by Brigadier General Piotr Patalong. While commanded by General Brigadier Jerzy Gut Special Operations Center – Special Operations Forces Component Command became a component command of the Polish Special Operations Forces took authority over SOF units or their components only for the duration of the operational tasks (time of operation).

From 17th July 2015 SOF command structure has changed again and returned to the conceptual solution of the 2013. Armed Forces General Commander proves SOF units through Special Forces Component Command. The Command of the Special Forces Component Command commands the forces and prepares them to be used, which means the preservation of the identity of 'force provider-force user'. Special Forces training is to be subordinated to the plans, which are prepared by the Armed Forces General Staff and Armed Forces Operational Command. Polish MOD admitted that the reform of SOF command system was unsuccessful, and the command structure was not consistent. Therefore, MOD gradually and without publicity came back to the state from before January 10th, 2014.²⁵ The MoND, by decision of 13th November 2017 on organizational changes of the SOF, reformed the existing structure of the Special Forces, combining SOF Inspectorate of the with the Special Forces Component Command and thus merging all competences of both institutions.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS ON AND OFF THE EASTERN FLANK OF NATO

Little thought out changes in the system of command at national level did not prevent the conduct of planned activities by Polish and NATO SOF. The good example of it is allied Field Training Exercise (FTX) "Noble Sword-14" which took place on military training areas in Poland and Lithuania in September this year. It was a certification for NATO Special Operations Component (SOC) before taking over combat readiness duties within the NATO Response Forces in 2015 (NRF 2015). Altogether, about 1700 soldiers from 15 countries took part in the exercise. For more than three weeks soldiers practiced on military training areas in Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic Sea areas. Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) staff, which was the main exercise player, based on soldiers from Polish Special Operations Centre – the Special Forces Component Command (SOC-SFCC) in Krakow. 5 Special Operation

²⁵ "Polska: trwają ćwiczenia komandosów NATO Cobra-13", *Defence24*, 12 November 2013, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/28871,polska-trwaja-cwiczenia-komandosow-nato-cobra-13>>; M. Dura, "Likwidacja Dowództwa Wojsk Specjalnych. Tylko teoretyczna", *Defence24*, 31 December 2013, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/44229,likwidacja-dowodztwa-wojsk-specjalnych-tylko-teoretyczna>>; "MON likwiduje Dowództwo Sił Specjalnych. Po 10 dniach działalności", *Defence24*, 7 January 2014, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/45515,mon-likwiduje-dowodztwo-sil-specjalnych-po-10-dniach-dzialalnosci>>; J. Sabak, "Centrum Operacji Specjalnych rozpoczęło działalność", *Defence24*, 11 January 2014, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/46209,centrum-operacji-specjalnych-rozpoczelo-dzialalnosc>>; M. Dura, "Reset systemu dowodzenia Wojskami Specjalnymi?", *Defence24*, 9 March 2015, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/201111,reset-systemu-dowodzenia-wojskami-specjalnymi>>; idem, "MON cofa reformę systemu dowodzenia. Na razie w Wojskach Specjalnych", *Defence24*, 20 May 2015, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/228109,mon-cofa-reforme-systemu-dowodzenia-na-razie-w-wojskach-specjalnych>>; "Wojska Specjalne podporządkowane DGRSZ. Zmiana dowodzenia", *Defence24*, 17 July 2015, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/239103,wojska-specjalne-podporzadkowane-dgrsz-zmiana-dowodzenia>>, 24 July 2015; M. Kowalska-Sendek, "W elitarnym klubie", *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 11 (2014), pp. 38-41.

Task Groups (SOTG's): 3 land SOTG's (Polish, Dutch and Lithuanian) 1 maritime and 1 air (both Polish) took responsibility for conducting practical tasks assigned by SOCC. Planning and conducting special operations by Special Operations Component Command and Special Operation Task Groups as a part of allied article 5 Collective Defense is the core subject of the exercise. The main goal of "Noble Sword-14" was to confirm the NATO Special Operations Component ability to planning and conducting special operations, verification of SOCC multinational structure and procedures and combining the chosen elements of combat systems. Fifteen countries participated in "Noble Sword-14": Croatia, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the USA, Turkey, Hungary, Great Britain and Italy. The exercise was supported by conventional forces and several institutions: the Border Guard, the Police and the Customs Service. SOTG's activity was also supported by helicopters, fighter jets, transport aircrafts and the Polish Navy ships.

NATO Special Operations Component combat readiness before taking over duties within the NRF 2015 had to be certificated by Multinational Certification Team consisting of specialists from Allied Joint Force Command (Naples, Italy) and the Operational Command of Polish Armed Forces. Major General Piotr Patalong, the Inspector of Special Forces to General Command of the Polish Armed Forces held the post of "Noble Sword-14" Exercise Director. In 2015 Poland played the role of the framework nation in the area of NATO Special Operations Component. It means that the Polish Special Forces soldiers created the main part of NATO Special Operations Component. Polish Special Forces units started their combat readiness duties from 1st January till 31st December, 2015.²⁶ For Poland, as the seventh state in the world, besides countries such as U.S., United Kingdom or France gained the status of a framework nation in the field of conducting allied special operations and became an unquestionable leader in Central-Eastern Europe.

Active cooperation in the region of CEE based on Polish SOF is maintained. Between 11th and 15th April 2015 several special forces officers hailing from eight NATO member states and partner nations, including Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia, were enhancing their skills, during the course which was scheduled to take place in Krakow. Officers from Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Germany and the United States of America also took part in the training session. The course participants had a chance to get acquainted with the NATO special operations doctrine, structure of the Allied special operations command and the basic terminology and procedures, widely applied during the staff's operational activities.²⁷

Polish and Lithuanian SOF partnership dates from 2001. Currently, cooperation is conducted on the basis of Memorandum of Understanding between SOFs of Poland and Lithuania, which was signed in Vilnius on 11th April 2013. Based on the capabili-

²⁶ "Noble Sword-14", Defence24, 29 August 2014, at <<http://www.defence24.com//noble-sword-14>>, 25 July 2015.

²⁷ "NATO Special Forces – Commanders Training in Cracow", Defence24, 17 April 2016, at <<http://www.defence24.com/350166,nato-special-forces-commanders-training-in-cracow>>, 24 September 2017.

ties achieved so far (NATO member state in commanding the component of special forces), Poland engage in cooperation of the region's states, including Lithuania. The Commander of the Special Forces Component invited the commanders of the SOFs of all three Baltic States to consider participation in the NATO Special Forces NATO for the 2020 NATO Response Force. Poland will be a framework state responsible for the preparation and certification of the SOF multinational component.

In May 2016, Polish SOF soldiers participated in Lithuania in the exercise called "Flaming Sword 16". It was a multinational exercise testing special operations forces. This exercise involved forces from NATO nations and partners, including expect Lithuania and Poland, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

After one year in May 2017, Polish SOF soldiers in the vicinity of Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipeda participated in the tactical exercise of SOF units of the Baltic states under the multi-party tactical exercise "Flaming Sword 2017". The goal of the undertaking was to improve the skills of conducting special operations in various field conditions. The exercise strengthened the cooperation of Polish special units with the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas the Great Jeger Battalion, and detached Ukrainian SOF.²⁸

Today Polish SOF soldiers also support the ongoing development of Georgian and Ukrainian SOF. These two programs are conducted with different aims and intensity. Partnership with Georgian partners was initiated in December 2013, and 8th of April 2016 was signed an memorandum of understanding between Georgia and Poland concerning SOF cooperation. The cooperation of Polish and Georgian SOFs has been initiated by decisions made during the NATO summits in Bucharest in 2008, and after in Newport in 2014 and Warsaw in 2016. The goal in Georgia is to assist in achieving their interoperability with NATO allies. Polish SOF experts assessed Georgian SOF capability and training schedules in 2014. Subsequently, two years have been spend on assistance rendered on three levels: strategic advice, operational mentoring and tactical partnering, combined exercises and drills in Poland. This MA involved shaping of structures and doctrine as well as practical training of Georgian soldiers in different skills²⁹.

The undertaking brought results and Georgians appeared in Poland to confirm their competences. During the exercises "Kobra-17" in September 2017, the test of NATO procedures under the supervision of Poles successfully passed Georgian SOF soldiers. During the exercise, under the supervision of the Special Forces Component

²⁸ "Dowódca Wojsk Specjalnych na Litwie", Dziennik Zbrojny, 12 February 2010, at <<http://dziennikzbrojny.pl/aktualnosci/news,4,9876,z-zycia-wojska,dowodca-wojsk-specjalnych-na-litwie>>; *Key NATO & Allied Exercises*, NATO, July 2016, at <https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160704_1607-factsheet_exercises_en.pdf>; "Flaming Sword 2017: Силы специальных операций ВСУ на учениях НАТО", Информационное сопротивление, 5 July 2017, at <<http://sprotyv.info/ru/news/kiiev/flaming-sword-2017-sily-specialnyh-operaciy-vsu-na-ucheniayah-nato-video-foto>>, 18 January 2018.

²⁹ A. White, "Interview – Brigadier General Wojciech Marchwica", *SOF Special Operations Forum*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2017), p. 26; "Współpraca wojsk specjalnych Polski i Gruzji", Dowództwo Komponentu Wojsk Specjalnych, 8 April 2016, at <http://wojskaspjecjalne.wp.mil.pl/pl/1_31.html>, 24 September 2017.

Command, the procedures and practical tactical skills were trained: *During the exercises "Kobra-17", the Georgians passed the test, but it does not mean that we finish our joint training. We will continue to practice in Poland and Georgia, support the development of Georgian special forces, so that in the near future we will jointly prepare a Task Force Special Group that could take part in the NATO mission*, said Gen. Brig. Wojciech Marchwica, Commander of the Special Forces Component, congratulating the soldiers from Georgia on the positive passing of another exam bringing Georgia's SOF closer to joining the North Atlantic Alliance.³⁰ Cooperation with Georgians is still continuing. In December 2017, Gen. Brig. Wojciech Marchwica stayed with an official visit to Georgia at the invitation of the Chief of General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces two stars general Vladimir Chachibia. The generals talked about the current state and prospects for the development of cooperation between special forces of Georgia and Poland. The Georgian Chief of Staff thanked for the involvement of Polish SOF in the process of implementing the NATO-Georgia program dedicated to the Georgian army. The generals also shared the conclusions and experiences that result from the joint participation of Georgian and Polish SOF units in international military exercises. The meeting in Tbilisi was also attended by Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, Gen. Brig. Zaza Chkhaidze and Commander of Georgian SOF Col. Dimitri Kiknadze.³¹

In Ukraine the special operations component has been deployed for the training purposes in the area of the town of Kropyvnytskyi (until July 14th this year under the name of Kirovohrad), located around 500 kilometres from Donetsk and 700 kilometres from Luhansk. They are conducting a training session for a 50 persons strong, company sized element of the 3rd Special Forces Regiment of the Ukrainian Army, within the scope of tactics for the infantry, firearms training and battlefield medicine.

The presence of the component is a part of the Joint Multinational Training Group – Ukraine (JMTG-U) initiative, which is a multinational undertaking coordinated by the United States of America. The goal of the programme is to improve the operational capabilities of the Ukrainian Armed Forces through provision of training and transfer of military hardware.

Besides the United States and Poland, Great Britain, Lithuania, Canada and Estonia are also involved in the undertaking, they are also a part of the NATO Special Operations HQ structures. It is worth to note the fact that the Polish Rzeszów based 21st Highland Brigade has also been involved in the JMTG-U initiative in Ukraine.³²

³⁰ "Międzynarodowe ćwiczenia wojsk specjalnych Kobra-17", Dowództwo Komponentu Wojsk Specjalnych, 10 October 2017, at <http://wojskaspecjalne.wp.mil.pl/pl/1_89.html>; "Międzynarodowe ćwiczenia wojsk specjalnych", *Polska Zbrojna*, 2 October 2017, at <<http://polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/23761?t=Miedzynarodowe-cwiczenia-wojsk-specjalnych>>, 17 January 2017.

³¹ "W Tbilisi o współpracy polskich i gruzińskich specjalsów", Dowództwo Komponentu Wojsk Specjalnych, 15 December 2017, at <http://wojskaspecjalne.wp.mil.pl/pl/1_91.html>, 17 January 2017.

³² A. White, "Interview...", p. 26; "Polish Commandos Deployed to Ukraine to Conduct Training Activities", *Defence24*, 18 October 2016, at <<http://www.defence24.com/473499,polish-commandos-deployed-to-ukraine-to-conduct-training-activities>>, 24 September 2017.

Polish SOF, among others, also cooperate with Croatian SOF formal sanctioning of cooperation took place in 2011, Estonians since 2012, Latvians since 2017, Hungarians since 2016, Romanians since 2009, and also Czechs and Slovaks.³³

SUMMARY

Programs implemented by Polish Special Operation Command refer to the Jagiellonian idea, and what is important, they are also effective. It is true that these are actions conducted under the auspices of NATO, but the Polish component is crucial, and the experience and acknowledged reputation of the Polish SOF makes that POLSOCOM is an undisputed center of excellence in this field.

One can hope that the Regional Territorial Defence Centre Initiative inculcated by The Polish Territorial Defence Forces Command will be equally effective. It seems that this program on TDF, which is the original idea of the Polish MoND, is very close to the Jagiellonian idea, even more so than SOF activities in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. It appeals not only to purely military aspects – professional in its dimension and subjected to standardization within NATO – but also to the patriotism and military heritage of states being part of the Jagiellonian monarchy and its neighborhood.

Unfortunately an interesting idea, the Regional Security Assistance Program has not brought expected effects to date. This has been exacerbated by the fierce competition of European states and US, but also by the formal reasons resulting from the complexity of international trade rules, in particular arms trade. In particular, the example of POLSOCOM's actions shows that militaristic forms of cooperation are an effective means of exchanging not only combat skills, but also a vehicle for common ideas, which can be used to build mutual respect and trust and reciprocal learning.

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³³ “Wspólne działania polskich i chorwackich sił specjalnych w Afganistanie”, Defence24, 26 March 2014, at <<http://www.defence24.pl/70213,wspolne-dzialania-polskich-i-chorwackich-sil-specjalnych-w-afganistanie>>, 24 September 2017.

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