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## Poland's Defence and Security: The Same Priorities, Different Approaches

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Poland, the largest and geostrategically the most important of the three NATO candidate members, started the new year with one clear defence and security goal -to join NATO. In June 1997, together with the Czech Republic and Hungary, Poland was officially invited to join. The main questions facing the three countries at this stage were, and to some degree still are: -how to become NATO compatible? -how long will it take? -how much will it cost? and -who will pay for it?The candidate governments' enthusiasm for the enlargement is unquestionable, but their military capabilities, their ability and the will to modernise their armed forces, or their future role in the alliance had not been properly looked at before they were officially invited to join.. As the answers to many questions which had to be asked could have been embarrassing for all concerned in the pre-enlargement campaign, so the new members were asked to fill in the Defence Planning Questionnaire after the official invitation had been issued.Poland, potentially the most attractive new asset for the alliance, could also become a liability if it fails to modernise and reform its defence and security structures. The first, mainly political, stage of the enlargement process was fuelled largely by enthusiasm and positive, although not always clear, thinking in Warsaw, Prague and Budapest and a couple of Western capitals. The second stage is far more difficult. In Poland, the right of centre ruling coalition is as enthusiastic about the enlargement as their left of centre predecessors, now in opposition, and all the other parties in the parliament of the present and previous convocations. They all agree as to the need to join the alliance but few are willing to admit, and none of them publicly, that the road ahead is bumpy and uphill.

### **TURNING RIGHT**

The September 1997 parliamentary elections brought to power a coalition of two right of centre parties. The coalition commands a comfortable majority in the parliament and in theory should be able to lead the country into the next millennium. In practice the Polish political landscape looks more complex.The right of centre parties in post-communist Poland have not a very good track record of pulling together in the same direction. There have been many conflicts among those responsible for defence and security matters in the previous right of centre governments. Many of the defence and security problems of these governments, in the early 1990s, were the result of the communist inheritance, and later of the policies of the then President Walesa, who treated defence and security issues as his personal domain. The significance of these conflicts lies not only in Lech Walesa's five year manipulation campaign of the top officials in the power structures, for his sole benefit, but also in the subsequent selection of

"safe" inexperienced politicians to lead the Polish MOD and the politicisation of the security structures. Some of those who took part, or were the victims, in the conflicts in the defence and security structures of the early 1990s are now back in power. Those who recently returned to the power structures are politically clean but with their credibility as leaders, organisers or political managers dented. The fact that it took the present leadership almost a month to create a coalition and that its leading personalities were still preoccupied with job allocation along party lines three months later rather than with the running of the country is not encouraging. The biggest political party in the parliament, the AWS, consists of almost 40 political groups including elements with strongly religious and nationalist views. These groups might attempt to push the present ruling alliance far right on political and religious issues, hanging on at the same time to the traditionally left of centre trade unionist economic views. These element within the AWS also argue that the smaller partner, the UW, is the proverbial tail wagging the governmental dog. The junior partner in the coalition, the UW, with less than one-third of the seats of the AWS, was given some of the most prestigious ministries, such as Defence, Foreign Affairs and Justice. Were the UW ministers to fail to deal with the modernisations and reforms for which they are responsible and which their large partner, the AWS, promised during the electoral campaign, the present small discords between the two parties could widen to become an unbridgeable gap and spell the end of the ruling coalition. The leaders of the two parties cannot expect much help from President Kwasniewski who, although pragmatic and impartial, cannot be expected to assist those who were, until recently, his political opponents, who amid internal disagreements found enough time to reduce his budget by 10%, in comparison with the previous year and reinstate the man directly responsible for his security, who was "retired" by the previous government for failing to protect the President during his official trip to France. On the other hand President Kwasniewski's legal and timely intervention in case of protracted difficulties in the present coalition would only benefit him and his former party, the Democratic Left Alliance, SLD, now in opposition. If the present coalition was to fall apart and one of the factions within the AWS decided to create an independent party, a new election and a new left of centre coalition could not be entirely excluded. Another factor which could shake the present coalition is the return to politics of former president Lech Walesa with his new "Lech Walesa's Party". So far he has been an AWS ally but if the party experiences difficulties he might decide to step in as a ready made and time tested saviour of the party and the country. His increasing influence in the AWS would almost certainly divide the party and strain the coalition to breaking point. Any other challenge to the leadership of the present AWS leader, Marian Krzaklewski, could have a similar result. In case of defections of a small number of the AWS deputies the coalition might survive by seeking the help of the small (5 seats) right wing Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP). If the present coalition falls apart no other alliance could be possible with the present configuration of political parties in the parliament. The left leaning Polish Agrarian Party (PSL) is on many issues close to the AWS but its possible willingness to cooperate would be controversial because of its participation in the previous left of centre government. The unfinished reforms of the Ministry of Defence and the internal security bodies might also damage the ruling alliance. Both ministries were misused in post-communist Poland by the leadership of the day, and as a result, political cupboards are full of skeletons, clutching compromising files on their opponents. As the present government is committed

to large scale reforms of the military and security structures the war of the files could be difficult to avoid.

## **IN SEARCH OF A THREAT**

Fear of Russia has, with some historical justification, been an important element in Polish foreign policy and defence planning. This is why the Polish post-communist governments have been enthusiastically pro-NATO and pro-WEU although the latter's inconsequential political performance in the former Yugoslavia undermined its standing in Central Europe as a whole. Very few political and defence analysts in the countries bordering Russia believe that its present difficulties will have a happy ending. And this is why by the time the present power struggle in Russia reaches its not necessarily happy conclusion Poland, the only new NATO member bordering Russia, wants to be a part of a viable defence structure. With its modest financial resources Warsaw has conducted a successful foreign policy charm campaign in most NATO member countries and especially in Washington. The USA is seen in Warsaw as the most important of its many defence and security partners. For a number of reasons Washington sees Warsaw as a distant, small but nevertheless natural ally: -The Polish community in the USA is numerically strong. This may not be reflected by its economic and political muscle but before every presidential election its numerical strength begins to matter. -Wedged between Russia and Germany, Poland will always seek strong links with Washington, London and Paris even if its relations with Bonn/Berlin are good and with Moscow correct. -Poland's contribution to the Gulf War was much bigger than the size of its armed forces and its physical presence in the Gulf might suggest and this has been acknowledged by Washington on many occasions. -Poland's good relations with the USA will not be weakened by the Polish attempt to join the EU as long as the EU is unable to coordinate its defence effort. Poland has also good bilateral military links with many individual NATO members and at the same time Warsaw makes all the right noises when it comes to closer cooperation with the European pillar of NATO.

## **THE NEIGHBOURS**

Germany Poland's relations with Germany are good and will probably remain so, even with Bonn's as yet unofficial questions concerning Warsaw's attempt to join the EU. With one quarter of Poland's working population employed in the inefficient agriculture sector, Warsaw would become a major burden on the already strained EU budget. As the principal contributor to the EU coffers Bonn is understandably concerned. The Czech Republic NATO membership is bound to strengthen already good relations between Warsaw and Prague and a mild competition between the two countries could benefit both sides and NATO. The only issue which could spoil relations between the two capitals is Poland's failure to treat its smaller neighbour as an equal partner. Slovakia Slovakia's political landscape has been dominated by Vladimir Meciar, the democratically elected, charismatic Prime Minister, who tends to use dictatorial methods to fight his political opponents and sees Russia as his country's closest ally. With Meciar in power and given Slovakia's Moscow-oriented foreign policy Bratislava will not find much understanding among its neighbours. Poland could become Slovakia's much needed friend if at some future date the Slovaks decide to vote Vladimir Meciar out. Polish-Slovak relations are not clogged with the historical, ethnic,

economic and/or political controversies which Bratislava shares with Prague and Budapest. However, inviting Slovakia to join Western military or security alliances would be difficult as long as Moscow remains Bratislava's closest ally. This is also the main reason why cooperation with Bratislava could become an increasingly distant item on Warsaw's foreign policy agenda. Poland might be willing to improve its contacts with Slovakia but it could not be seen to be getting too close to the controversial Prime Minister and his Russian allies.

Ukraine Ukraine is seen in Poland as its most important Eastern neighbour. Many Poles believe that as long as Kiev is free Russia will not even think of threatening Warsaw. The political good relations between Kiev and Warsaw are not, however, reflected in economic cooperation between the two countries, partly because Poland sees its future in the EU and partly because Ukraine's economic problems reduce its attractiveness as a trading partner. In the military sphere, the creation of the Joint Polish-Ukrainian battalion appears to be at advanced stage. At the moment this initiative has support at the highest level in both countries, but any serious political problems in Kiev or its closer cooperation with Moscow will make the Poles rethink their Eastern commitments. Belarus Polish relations with Belarus will continue to be frosty as long as the dogmatic but popular President Lukashenko is keeping his country firmly in the Russian orbit with no viable democratic opposition with a chance of electoral victory in sight. Lithuania With Lithuania Poland shares a long history, remembered fondly in Warsaw and not always so in Vilnius, and the short common border with the Russian Federation Kaliningrad Oblast wedged almost completely in between the two countries. As long as the Kaliningrad Oblast is, or is seen in Warsaw and Vilnius to be Russia's military outpost in the region, military and security cooperation between the two capitals will remain very strong irrespective of any other differences the countries may have. Poland's NATO membership will only improve already strong links between the two countries, especially if Lithuania tries to move closer to the alliance either formally or informally. The success of the Polish-Lithuanian Battalion will largely depend on political will and funding from both capitals. It could become a very successful venture, considering traditionally close links between the two countries. Kaliningrad Oblast Detached from Mother Russia, the Kaliningrad Oblast might in the future, remotely controlled from Moscow, become an unstable and sensitive point for Europe. Overloaded with military hardware and economic and social problems, the Kaliningrad region reflects some of the most burning problems of Russia. The region has little economic value for Russia but as a military foothold in Central Europe it is of great importance for Moscow. Irrespective of whether it remains Russia's Puerto Rico rather than becoming its Hong Kong, any outside attempts of the region to loosen the links with Moscow could galvanise Russia's most nationalistic elements, with grave implications for the whole area. In this case Poland would be particularly happy with its new NATO membership.

## **PAYING FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP**

In the pre-enlargement fever several think-tanks produced cost-assessments of the enlargement ranging from 3 to 120 billion USD. On 2nd December 1997 NATO defence ministers agreed that the expansion of the Alliance would cost \$1.5 bn and that this would be shared by the present members over the next ten years. NATO officials gave the following explanations for their reduction of the costs of expansion: -the existing infrastructure in the candidate member

countries is better than originally expected, -the more expensive enlargement projects envisaged five new members, -no foreign troops or nuclear weapons will be stationed in the new member states, -the three new member states could be defended using NATO's existing capabilities, and, -the envisaged sum is to cover only ground based elements of air defence and unspecified military infrastructure. The dramatic reduction of assessed enlargement costs was welcomed by all three new member states. After all, none of the present members is expected to have any misgivings about the expansion of the alliance on financial grounds. No eyebrows were raised as to the logic of the excuses or NATO's commitment to modernise its future extended Central European flank. - Does the reduction of the enlargement costs mean that the inclusion of two more members would cost more than 10 to 20 times more? - Have there ever been any plans to station nuclear weapons in Central Europe and what was this share of the total expansion costs? But the announced figures do not cover procurement costs and that makes the seemingly good news much less attractive for the new members. They will have to foot the bill. This is not welcome news in Warsaw. Poland faces the biggest potential threat of the three new members and so far Polish taxpayers are not ready to accept increased defence expenditure, although they could probably be swayed if the leadership in Moscow changed to a more competent and assertive one and/or if the Kaliningrad region began to simmer. In the meantime the Polish Armed Forces should not expect a substantial increase in their defence budget. Poland 38,492,000 inhabitants Spain 39,144,000 inhabitants Polish GDP \$ 85.9bn (1994) Spanish GDP \$482.5bn (1994) Polish Defence Budget \$ 2.58bn (1995) Spanish Defence Budget \$ 6.59bn (1995)[The Military Balance, 95/96, IISS]Although the gap between the two countries' GDP and their defence budgets has been reduced during the last few years it still remains very large.

## **FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE**

Until the end of 1995 President Walesa controlled the Ministry of Defence partly by using constitutional powers and partly by undermining the authority of the top civilians in charge of the ministry and supporting the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Wilecki, against them. In October 1994, at the test range in Drawsko, Walesa expressed his dissatisfaction with the then Defence Minister, former commander of the Polish Navy, Adm (Retd) Kolodziejczyk, in front of the top Generals, forcing an on the spot no-confidence vote and the minister's subsequent resignation. The civilians' input into the reform and modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces increased only when Walesa's successor President Kwasniewski removed Gen Wilecki, in March 1997, fifteen months after his own accession to power. The NATO enlargement boosted the reforms and benefited many talented and motivated officers in Poland although it seems that at the higher level many promotions and important functions are handed out in accordance with the "who-do-you-know" principle. This is bound to perpetuate the system in which many younger officers will not be promoted because their drive and efficiency could, by contrast, show their superiors in an unfavourable light in a NATO environment. None of the Polish post-communist administrations were able to introduce significantly more civilian personnel into the Ministry of National Defence structures, for four main reasons. Firstly, the last nine years of communist rule in Poland, in contrast with other Warsaw Pact Member countries, were dominated, not by the Communist Party, but by generals who successfully monitored and subdued the opposition and as a result knew its every move and weakness. When the political changes in Poland came about as a result of lengthy round-table talks between the opposition and the ruling communists, dominated

by Generals Jaruzelski, Kiszczak and Siwicki, the organisers and the implementors of the 1981 coup, several of their former prisoners, soon to become democratically elected leaders of Poland, approached the talks with a mild version of the "Stockholm syndrome", in some cases developing friendly links with their former captors. Secondly, new politicians who wanted to change the armed forces had neither the qualifications nor the experience which would allow them to do so. They were unwilling to learn from what they regarded as the alien, communism-perpetuating force. Many were willing to give orders from their new ivory towers but were not prepared to work with or alongside the men in uniform. Third, at the end of the 1980s the military salaries and perks compared favourably with most of the salaries in the state economy. As time went by, the purchasing power of military salaries diminished markedly, making it difficult to find civilian personnel (qualifications aside) who were willing to take a low salary to replace officers dealing with non-combat issues in the Polish MOD and who were able to operate in highly disciplined and regimented structures. Fourth, NATO enlargement seems to be regarded in Warsaw as a strictly military affair starting and ending with interoperability. This perception has been reinforced with the original priority given to the Partnership for Peace in cooperation between NATO and its potential new members. Because joining NATO was seen in Poland by all political parties as a patriotic duty there were no informative public debates about the enlargement and the organisation is seen as a purely military guard of Polish sovereignty. One of the main factors influencing the selection of military personnel to work with NATO partners is the knowledge of English. Poland, together with the Czech Republic and Hungary, has a shortage of English speaking officers and NCOs. With the number of NATO related jobs rising dramatically, practically every Polish officer with good command of a foreign language, and especially of English, can be expected to be sent abroad, either to work or to study. In the contest between language and military competence the linguistic factor always wins. It is true that the value of the best commander will be of modest relevance if he is not able to communicate with NATO officers and does not understand either spoken or written English but the reverse situation, when linguistic skills are not matched by ability to command, to plan and to analyse, is yet to be addressed by selection boards in the Polish MOD.

## **DECISION MAKING AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Armed Forces are divided into three Services: the Land Forces, the Air and Air Defence Force and the Navy. In accordance with Article 134 of the Polish Constitution the President is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, with the Minister of Defence being in charge of the Ministry in peacetime. The "Small Constitution" adopted by the first post-communist parliament in October 1992 as a democratic supplement to the old pre-1989 Constitution gave the President the right to appoint the Minister of Defence. The new constitution reduces presidential powers and allows him to appoint only the Chief of the General Staff and the Chiefs of Services (Land Forces, Air Force/Air Defence Forces and the Navy). This alters the balance of power between the President and both the Prime Minister and the Parliament, which has considerable powers through the legislative process and through control over the execution of acts and regulations as well as over the defence budget. The Minister of Defence is assisted by a Deputy Defence Minister/Secretary of State, three Undersecretaries of State and

the Chief of the General Staff with three Deputies, responsible for Strategic Planning, Command and Training, and Logistics.

## **THE ARMED FORCES 2012**

Poland's long term plan to reform its Armed Forces, called "ARMIA 2012", envisages the reduction of the total number of troops from 241,830 (as of 1 July 1997) to 180,000 in 2004.. The conscription system is to remain but the number of contractual soldiers is to reach 61% in 2012 from the present 44%. The terms of conscription will be reduced from the present 18 months to 12 months by the end of the century. The percentage of officers in the Polish Armed Forces will be reduced to 30% in 2004 from the present 46%. During the same period the percentage of NCOs will go up from 23% to 40%. However, the plan does not seem to be addressing the two most important problems facing the Polish armed forces at the moment: the shortage of money and personnel. About 10,000 soldiers extended their service in 1997, either by signing their first professional contract or by renewing the old one. This seemingly impressive figure looks far less so if one bears in mind that twice as many contractual soldiers and NCOs will be needed in the Polish armed forces as a result of reforms and there is no indication that the recruitment and retention figures will improve. The results of an experiment undertaken in the 12th Mechanised Division, one of the future NATO compatible units, shows that training costs in the shortened term of conscription are twice as high as in the present system. This is unavoidable in the initial stages of training. In addition to this, if the conscription term is shortened, demographic trends mean that the human resources will be exhausted even with the planned reductions. The ease with which potential conscripts can opt for alternatives to military service means that draft-dodging is not a problem. The Polish Armed Forces will have to convince the new candidate soldiers that they, and in most cases their families, will be taken care of. Strapped for cash, the Polish Ministry of National Defence may be forced to create a two tier system, ie units which would be trained to standards acceptable by NATO, and the rest. This could be a politically, and for a while militarily, acceptable situation, but the long term potential for internal frictions within the Armed Forces could be very high with correspondingly unpleasant consequences.

## **THE GROUND FORCES**

The Polish Ground Forces were formed in accordance with the Decision of the Defence Minister issued on 4 April 1997. The main work on the formation of the Ground Forces was completed in January 1998 but it still remains one of the biggest challenges for the Polish Ministry of National Defence, and will continue to be so. The numerical strength of the Ground Forces is 168,850, with officers representing 45% of the professional cadre. The percentage of officers is to be reduced to 30%, with a corresponding increase in warrant officers and NCOs. The Ground Forces are commanded by 42 Generals, including one General Broni/General of Arms (three star), four General Dywizji/Division Generals (two star) and 37 General Brigady/Brigade Generals (one star). The Commander of the Ground Forces has four deputies responsible for: -The Staff Planning and Command Department (also holds the position of(Chief of Staff), which includes communication, reconnaissance and electronic warfare, -The Training Department, responsible also for training of air mobile units, -The Logistics Department, responsible, among many other things, for standardisation, -

The General Affairs Department, in charge of finances, preparation and execution of peace keeping operations, non combat education and cooperation with allies. The Commander of the Ground Forces is in direct command of four formations: -The Artillery and Missile Corps, -The Ground Forces' Air and Air Defence Forces, -The Engineering Corps, and, -Chemical Defence Troops. The ground forces which include operational and territorial defence units are located in four military districts.

The Warsaw Military District (HQ -Warsaw) contains: -The 1st Warszawska Mechanised Division, -The 15th Warminsko-Mazurska Mechanised Division, -The 16th Pomorska Mechanised Division, -The 1st Mazurska Artillery Brigade, -The 2nd Mazowiecka Engineers Brigade, The district has a training centre in Orzysz. The Warsaw Military District borders three countries with a total 737km of common borders. Belarus 407km Lithuania 120km Russia (Kaliningrad Region) 210km Coastline 60km The 1st Mechanised Division cooperates with the Lithuanian Iron Wolf Brigade and has contacts with subunits of the Belorussian Corps in Grodno. In addition the 49th Combat Helicopter Regiment in Pruszcz Gdanski cooperates with the 1st French Combat Helicopter Regiment.

The Cracow Military District (HQ -Cracow) contains: -The 25th Air Cavalry Division, -The 3rd Legionow Mechanised Brigade, -The 6th Air Assault Brigade, -The 14th Ziemi Przemyskiej Armoured Brigade, -The 21st Podhale Riflemen Brigade. The district has a training centre in Nowa Deba. The Cracow Military District was established in 1993 as a result of the changes in Poland's defence priorities. The Warsaw Military District was divided in two and both eastern military districts (Warsaw and Cracow) are being restructured, modernised and developed as much as the defence budget allows. The Cracow Military District borders four countries, sharing with them 1299km of common borders. Belarus 60km Ukraine 465km Slovakia 674km The Czech Republic 100km The district has a well developed cooperation programme with various foreign military units. In addition to the Polish-Ukrainian battalion the Command of the district works with the Command of the Ukrainian Transcarpathian Military District. The Polish 14th Armoured Brigade has developed strong links with the Ukrainian 24th Mechanised Division. The Polish 6th Air Assault Brigade cooperates with the Ukrainian 6th Assault Brigade and the British Air Mobile Brigade. The Polish 3rd Mechanised Brigade has contacts with the Ukrainian 251st Mechanised Training Brigade. The Command of the districts has also established contacts with the Slovak 2nd Army and the Hungarian 4th Mechanised Corps. The 21st Podhale Riflemen Brigade has established contacts with the French 27th Alpine Riflemen Division.

The Silesian Military District (HQ -Wroclaw) contains: -The 4th Lubuska Mechanised Division, -The 5th Kresowa Mechanised Division, -The 10th Sudecka Mechanised Division, -The 11th Armoured Cavalry Division, -The 1st Brzeska Engineering Brigade, -The 4th Nadwarcianska Engineering Brigade, -The 5th Tube Artillery Brigade, -The 23rd Slaska Tube Artillery Brigade. The district has three large Land Forces Training Centres at Zagan-Swietoszow, Wedrzyn and in Biedrusko. The Silesian Military District's external borders are 795km, with: The Czech Republic 535km Germany 260km The District Command cooperates closely with the German 4th Corps and the Czech 2nd Army Corps. The 11th Armoured Cavalry Division established contacts with the German 13th Mechanised Division and the 22nd Mountain Battalion from Nysa has been cooperating with the German 1st Mountain Infantry Division and, like their colleagues from the Cracow Military District, with the French 27th Alpine Riflemen Division.

The Pomeranian Military District (HQ -Bydgoszcz) contains: -The 2nd Pomorska Mechanised Division, -The 8th Baltycka Coastal Defence Division, -The 12th Szczecinska Mechanised Division, -The 2nd Signals Brigade, -The 5th Engineer Brigade, -The 6th Torunska Artillery Brigade. The Pomeranian District has three large training centres: Drawsko Pomorskie (the largest in Poland), Okonek and Ustka (this last seems to be shared with Air Defence and the Navy). The District shares a 195km border with Germany and has a 465km coastline. The District has established the following foreign military contacts: -The German 4th Corps, as in the case of the Silesian MD, at the Command level, -The Danish Command on the Zealand Island, at the Command level, -The 12th Szczecinska Mechanised Division with the German 14th Mechanised Division and a Mechanised Division from Denmark, -The 8th Coastal Defence Division with the forces on the Zealand Island, -The 2nd Mechanised Division with the French 2nd Armoured Division, and -The 2nd Mechanised Brigade with the French 6th Armoured Regiment of Cuirassiers. In addition to the above the Land Forces Command also took over two regiments of combat helicopters. The decision to create the Ground Forces Command is a necessary but very expensive undertaking for a country, which although successful in reforming its economy, is bound to experience many budgetary difficulties in the years to come. In this situation the understandable preferential treatment which the new service is receiving will create friction in the Polish MOD as the resulting financial difficulties are already having a negative impact on the Air Force and the Navy. The need to "invest" in the Land Forces is especially important now as several units are expected to be fully NATO compatible by 1999. These are: -The 12th Mechanised Division, -The 11th Armoured Cavalry Division, -The 25th Air Cavalry Division, -The 6th Air Assault Brigade, -The Military Hospital in Bydgoszcz, and -Two Search & Rescue Squadrons. The present four Military Districts fulfil four main functions: -Operational, -Administrative, -Logistical and -Territorial Defence. The Polish MOD plans to abolish the present four small military districts replacing them with two large ones: the Southern Military District (SMD) with the HQ in Bydgoszcz and the Northern Military District (NMD) with the HQ in Wroclaw. The Land Forces will rely on three new Corps. The SMD will have one Mechanised Corps with the HQ in Bydgoszcz. The NMD will house one Mechanised Corps with the HQ in Wroclaw and one Mechanised Airmobile Corps with the HQ in Cracow. It has been announced that both Mechanised Corps will have a divisional structure and the Mechanised Airmobile Corps a brigade structure. This probably means that the new corps will be little different from the old-style divisions. Both Military Districts are to serve as the administrative and logistical support for the three formations.

The Land Forces Educational Establishments At the higher command level selected Polish officers are sent to the National Defence Academy in Warsaw. Before this, they are expected to graduate from one of the Higher Officers' Schools. The Tadeusz Kosciuszko Higher Officers' School in Wroclaw trains specialists for the following formations: infantry/mechanised, reconnaissance, engineering, NBC and special purpose troops. The Stefan Czarniecki Higher Officers' School in Poznan trains armoured troops, reconnaissance, logistics, military police and special purpose troops. The Jozef Bem Higher Officers' School in Torun trains artillery and rocket specialists. The three schools also train warrant officers and NCOs. The Military Technical Academy in Warsaw trains military scientists. The Military Medical Academy provides the Armed Forces with medical doctors. There are also a number of Training Centres subordinated to the Land

Command: -The Tank and Vehicle Training Centre in Pila, -The Signals and Information Technology Training Centre in Zegrze, -The Air Defence Training Centre in Koszalin, and -The Chemical Defence Troops Training Centre in Biskupiec. The Military Language School in Lodz is shared with other services. Until conscript service is reformed and possibly shortened to 12 months from the present 18 months, the training for conscripts is divided into four main stages: - basic training (1 month), - squad level training (4 months), - platoon level training (4 months), - company level training (3 months), - work in subunits and weapons' maintenance (the remaining time).

## **AIR FORCE AND AIR DEFENCE FORCE (WLiOP)**

The Polish Air Force and Air Defence Force were merged into one command in the post 1989 reforms and are still undergoing reduction and restructuring, experiencing at the same time constant problems with funding. By the year 2005 the Polish Air Force and Air Defence: - will have 240 combat aircraft (412 in 1996), - will reduce the number of units by 30% in comparison with 1996, and - will have 42,000 soldiers (72,000 in 1996). At the moment the service is struggling with the Air Force element, which is bound to experience more difficulties than its Air Defence partner, mainly because of its small share of the defence budget. The top priority is given to the newly created Land Forces and their air defence protection. Supporters of a strict prioritisation of defence needs argue that Poland will have NATO air cover in any conflict in which Polish armed forces might be taking part in and that a purchase of any modern combat aircraft, with the possible exception of the politically unacceptable MiG-29, would have a negative impact on the whole defence budget. On the other hand the Air Force argues that Poland, as a sovereign country, should not rely on foreign, albeit allied, air forces because their availability might depend on the political will of foreign leaders rather than military requirements. The present atrophy of the Polish Air Force will soon leave it without not only qualified flying and ground personnel, but also without teaching and technical support staff. Hoping that politicians will accept the need to buy a modern combat aircraft, the Air Force is reluctant to plug increasingly large financial holes. Most Polish Air Force equipment is outdated and there is a serious problem with spare parts, even for the most modern and widely used MiG-29. Russia and Belarus offer spare parts for that type of aircraft for 50% of the original price. The Military Aviation Enterprise Nr 2 in Bydgoszcz, which won the maintenance contact for the MiG-29s of the 1st Interceptor Regiment in Minsk Mazowiecki, not only needs spare parts but was also forced to use its funds to repair the aircraft. According to Gen Kazimierz Dziok, the commander of the Polish Air and Air Defence Forces, the amount of money available for aircraft maintenance is kept at the 1996 level and this will allow it to repair, between 1998 and 2000, 45% of Su-22 or 50% of MiG-29. With all types of ground equipment, including flight safety equipment and auxiliary vehicles breaking down, the Polish air force might be forced to seek intermediate solutions. For the time being the reductions go on. In 1998 Poland intends to disband two fighter bomber divisions in Swidwin and Pila and also contemplates disbanding two air regiments. At the end of 1997 Poland's Air and Air Defence Forces had: -combat aircraft 248 -trainer combat aircraft 62 -trainer aircraft 275 -stationary AD missile systems 42 -AD radars 360 The Air and Air Defence Forces had 56,100 men and women, of which 20,588 were officers. The Commander of the Air and Air Defence Forces has six deputies: -Chief of Staff, -

Chief of the Air Force, -Chief of the Air Defence Force, -Chief of Radio-Engineering Troops, -Chief of Logistics, and -Chief of Training. The Commander of the service, in his Warsaw HQ, is in direct command of: -two Air Defence Corps (The 2nd Air Defence Corps -HQ Bydgoszcz and the 3rd Air Defence Corps -HQ Wroclaw), -one Air Corps (HQ -Poznan), -Air Force Academy (Deblin), -three training centres (the Radioelectronic Training Centre in Jelenia Gora, the Air Defence Training Centre in Koszalin and the Aviation Engineering Training Centre in Olesnica), -support units. Locations of the Polish Air Force and Air Defence aviation units are as follows: -the 7th Recce Bomber Air Regiment (Powidz) -the 40th Fighter-Bomber Air Regiment (Swidwin) -the 8th Fighter-Bomber Regiment (Miroslawiec) -the 3rd Fighter-Bomber Division (Swidwin) -the 6th Fighter-Bomber Air Regiment (Pila-Koszyce) -the 2nd Fighter-Bomber Air Division (Pila) -the 13th Air Transport Regiment (Cracow) -the 32nd Tactical Recce Air Regiment (Sochaczew) -the 3rd Fighter Air Regiment (Poznan-Krzesiny) -the 11th Fighter Air Regiment (Wroclaw) -the 41st Fighter Air Regiment (Malbork) -the 28th Fighter Air Regiment (Slupsk-Redzikowo) -the 9th Fighter Air Regiment (Zegrze Pomorskie) -the 10th Fighter Air Regiment (Lask) -the 1st Fighter Air Regiment (Minsk Mazowiecki) -the 36th Special Air Transport Regiment (Warsaw) -the 47th Helicopter Training Regiment (Nowe Miasto) -the 58th Training Air Regiment (Deblin) -the 60th Training Air Regiment (Radom) -the 61st Training Air Regiment (Biala Podlaska). Locations of the Polish Air Defence units are: -the 1st Air Defence Missile Brigade (Bytom) -the 3rd Air Defence Missile Brigade (Warsaw) -the 4th Air Defence Missile Brigade (Gdynia) -the 26th Air Defence Missile Brigade (Gryfice) -the 61st Air Defence Missile Brigade (Skwierzyna) -the 78th Independent Air Defence Missile Regiment (Mrzezyno) -the 79th Independent Missile Regiment (Poznan). The third component of the Polish air defence system, responsible for the service's communications and intelligence, the Radioengineering service, is based on three brigades in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Bydgoszcz. The multi-role combat aircraft will be the most controversial single issue with which Polish defence decision makers will have to deal in the years to come. The decision to begin the procedure which would result in a competitive tender to buy such aircraft was taken in October 1997. There is no indication, however, as to when the tender will be issued. The contenders include F-16, F/A18, JAS39, Mirage 2000-5, Rafale, Eurofighter [sic], MiG-29M and Su-35/37 and 39. Poland intends to buy 96-150 of them, depending on the offers, with the first delivery taking place in 2003 and the final delivery somewhere between 2011-2013. At present, the Eurofighter appears to be a political statement of intention rather than a realistic ambition. The Russian and French contenders might not be acceptable for various political reasons. Of the remaining three the F-18 would probably be the most interesting for the Polish Air and Air Defence Forces. Its disadvantages are the high price, complicated technology, high maintenance and personnel training costs. The F-16 still remains a viable option although its "sell by date" is increasingly becoming an issue. The youngest of the three, JAS-39, is less sophisticated than F-18 but it also costs less, with far cheaper and simpler maintenance procedures. However, Warsaw may have doubts as to the JAS producer's ability to meet the delivery deadlines, especially if the Czech Republic and Hungary decide to buy the same model, and of Swedish reactions to political pressures, which could in the future adversely influence the supply of spare parts. Most of the Polish Air Defence missile systems will probably be replaced or modernised. The first to go, the S-75M "Volokhov" medium-range system, is to be phased out by 1999. The mobile 2K11M1 "Krug" will probably share its fate. The modernised, Polish

version of the short-range S-125M "Neva" will remain in service and the long-range S-200 "Vega" is to be modernised. Poland will need new long range air defence missiles by the year 2005. At the moment the front-runners appear to be the Russian S-300 and the American "Patriot". The Air Defence Radioengineering Services are also undergoing a major overhaul. The new, fully integrated system is to provide the relevant information to all services, will be NATO compatible, will work together with the civilian air traffic control system and is expected to be completed by the end of 1998. The new system will be based mainly on the Polish mobile NUR-123D radar and will allow a considerable reduction of the number of forward radar and related posts from the present 360 to 120. The Polish Air and Air Defence Forces have taken part in various joint exercises in Denmark, Hungary and Norway. In September 1997 the US Air Force and the Polish Air and Air Defence Forces took part in a joint exercise over the Wielkopolska region, with the Poles playing the role of the enemy.

## **THE NAVY**

At the time of severe defence budget cuts the Polish Navy has been reduced to a coastal defence force with an occasional participation in international undertakings. The Navy has 71 combat ships and 87 other vessels. It employs 17,080 people, including conscripts. The Polish Naval Command has at its disposal: -The 3rd Flotilla, -The 8th Flotilla, -The 9th Flotilla, -The Naval Air Wing, -Operational support units, -Logistics support units, -The Naval Training Centres, and -The Naval Academy. The 3rd Flotilla (based in Gdynia-Okasywie) consists of a missile ship squadron, a submarine squadron, a missile destroyer, logistic support units and support and special vessels. This, the most powerful of the three flotillas, has nine modern ships, including one Kilo class submarine, an ASW corvette Kaszub and three small missile ships, of the Orkan class, partly build by the GDR. The 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla, based in Swinoujscie, is divided into: -ASW ships, -mine laying ships, -anti-mine defence units, -engineering support units, -chemical defence units, -air defence units, -logistic support units, -territorial defence units, -shore observers. The Flotilla has 19 mine-layers/sweepers and 11 small ASW cutters. The composition of the 9th Coastal Defence Flotilla is similar to that of the 8th with the mine laying capabilities replaced by anti-surface ship defences. The Flotilla has 8 large ASW chasers and 22 minesweepers. The Naval Air Wing has 3 Air Squadrons, with support units, and is based in Gdynia-Babie Doly, Darlowo and Siemirowice. The wing has: -22 MiG-21bis fighters, - 5 MiG-21UM combat-trainers, -18 TS-11 Iskra of various types, - 5 An-2, - 3 An-28 transport aircraft, - 2 An-28RM Search & Rescue aircraft, -25 helicopters of various types. There are two main centres training naval personnel: -The Naval Academy in Gdynia Okasywie. The Academy also trains naval NCOs. -The Naval Training Centre in Ustka teaches naval NCOs and various vocational skills. The Polish Navy will be the main victim of the defence cuts, especially now that the Russian Baltic Fleet has been dramatically reduced by financial constraints and the loss of many naval bases in the former GDR, Poland and the Baltic Republics. Since 1989 the strength of the Polish Navy has declined by 30%. Almost half of the remaining ships are not in working order. The capabilities of mine-sweepers and the ASW ships are basically those of coastal defence vessels. The navy has no funds to recruit and train professional naval personnel and as a result relatively complex naval equipment is operated by conscripts, accelerating its wear and tear. To perform its defensive task the Polish Navy claims to need, among others, 8 submarines (at the moment

Poland has 3 submarines of which 2 are of the old Foxtrot type) and 4 destroyers as opposed to 1 now. The chance of obtaining even a small percentage of these ships is at the moment nil. To be able to introduce a minimum modernisation plan the Polish navy would have to double its present 6% share of the defence budget. Romuald Szeremietiew, the new State Minister responsible for procurement, argued, as a member of the opposition, in May 1997 that the Navy's share of the defence budget should be about 14%. The supporters of the modernisation of the Polish Navy are vague as to where the new capital ships would come from and if the planned costs cover only "sail-away" vessels, ie spare parts and training are not included. So far Admiral Ryszard Lukasik, the Commander of the Polish Navy, has announced a modest, although for the time being still too costly modernisation plan which is to include 7 corvettes, 5 destroyers and 1 ASW ship. All ships are probably to be built in Polish shipyards. Polish naval aviation is in an equally difficult situation. The two Naval Air squadrons have outdated MiG-21s equipped inadequately to fight naval targets. Originally, the Polish Ministry of National Defence planned to equip Naval Aviation with the Polish made "Iryda", yet to be tested successfully. After a crash of an Iryda aircraft in January 1996 the decision to use it in Naval Aviation was postponed indefinitely.

## **PROCUREMENT**

As will be obvious from the aviation examples noted above, one of the most delicate issues still facing the Polish leadership is the armament procurement system. None of the post communist administrations were able to radically reform the old armament industry, well entrenched behind local politicians, trade unions and traditional nationalism, and deal with: -dramatic reduction of the armed forces and the defence budget, -new defence priorities and new economic alliances regulated by market forces, -competitive tendering of foreign arms producers. The result was a number of overpriced products of questionable battlefield value. The Polish "Twardy" tank, based on the Russian T-72, was at the beginning as cheap as it was outdated. When its modernisation began its price went up dramatically. The debate as to the tank's capabilities is dominated by its supporters, who successfully sidetracked it from the main defence issues. Three vital issues are missing from the debate: -Is it possible to buy a tank with similar capabilities cheaper? -How does "Twardy" compare with other new NATO, Russian, Czech, Slovak and Ukrainian tanks? -Could the money allocated for "Twardy" be given to a more worthy defence cause? Similar questions could be asked about the Polish helicopter "Huzar", a spiced-up version of the civilian model "Sokol". "Huzar" is underpowered, relatively large and not armoured. With the helicopter playing an increasingly important role on the future battlefield, Polish decision makers will have to ask themselves whether "Huzar" could become a weak link in any NATO airborne operations and whether the lives of those depending on its performance could be at greater risk when compared with the "users" of other types of helicopters. Poland has only recently stopped sinking money in the "Iryda" project, so far an unsuccessful attempt to build locally a ground attack/trainer aircraft. All the post-communist governments, right and left, accepted the delays and excuses of the producer and invested substantial sums of money in the project. "Iryda" has to undergo various, and not yet final tests, and the producer is again short of money. The aircraft will fly in the end but its combat value is uncertain. Similarly the purchase of French (Thomson)

rather than a German tactical communication equipment has more to do with unemployment figures than the needs of the Polish Army, as part of the deal was that some of the work should be done in Poland. The Polish Ministry of National Defence has been occasionally acting as the Ministry of the Defence of the National Armament Industry. It is true that a similar phenomenon exists in other NATO countries. The difference is that similar issues are usually debated by their parliaments and the media. There are few Defence Ministries in NATO so short of funds and which are having to deal with so many reforms and changes at the same time.

## **POLISH SPECIAL SERVICES AND NATO**

The Polish Special Services, like those of the two other new members, are becoming a part of the large NATO network. Dogged by many controversies during the last seven years and undergoing occasional and incomplete cleansing, the Poles have now to comply with strict NATO security standards. A delegation of the Polish State Protection Office and the Military Information Office visited NATO between 14 and 16 January 1997 to discuss the steps which have been taken and those which Warsaw will still have to take make the handling and storing of confidential information delivered by NATO secure. The access to confidential information will be on a need to know basis, not by virtue of rank or position held. NATO has recently decided that Poland fulfils its basic security requirements. Both civilian and the military Special Services have vetted 200 people who are to handle NATO confidential papers. The Czech Republic and Hungary conducted similar talks at an earlier stage. Of all the former Warsaw Pact countries only the Czechs conducted an in-depth cleansing of their special services. A debate as to the necessity of such a move in Poland has been side-tracked by a loose coalition of: -well meaning "forgive and forget" new political activists, -"old professionals" made redundant, skilfully defending their previous activities, -those who for one reason or another did well in the old system, sometimes with the help of the special services, -new security supervisors, very frequently with impeccable moral and intellectual credentials, who upon entering the secret world which they were to lead were overwhelmed by the old timers' professionalism and flattered by their obedience. The new security Tsars retired the highest ranking, politically unacceptable, but often the most dynamic and skilful achievers and left those who achieved less in the past but have well developed office survival skills. When faced with the choice between retaining the short term competence of these second league old timers to impress future allies, and the need to undertake a non ideological but a substantial cleansing of the relevant ministries and organisations, with almost certain temporary reduction of their effectiveness, the appropriate Polish decision makers always chose the "impress your partners today" option. The considerable Polish intelligence contribution in the Gulf War was seen as proof that the reforms should not go too deep. Until the end of 1995 the Polish special services were also under the protection of President Walesa, who treated them like his own private security organisation. Feeling victimised, not without reason, the left of centre coalition, with the tacit support of the new President Kwasniewski, himself a former communist activist, replaced all but one top echelon of the Polish special services with those who began their careers in the old pre-1989 structures. The present government has reversed the trend but proper reform of the special services is yet to take place. The threat to NATO lies not so much in a possible betrayal by

individual members of the Polish special services, although no service in the world can ignore a such possibility. The biggest problem facing the services which are undergoing profound changes, seven years after the first democratic reforms, are: -old thinking and old methods used when dealing with security problems, - continuous temptation to become involved in internal political issues, -possible vulnerabilities when dealing with former, pre-1989, "allies", -adverse educational influence on the new intake, -slowing down the career prospect of the new generation.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the last few years Poland has achieved spectacular successes in reforming and modernising various State and Governmental organisations. This should be, and frequently is, acknowledged by its allies and partners. The best proof of this is the invitation to join NATO. The difficulties which all the post communist governments in Warsaw have encountered in the course of reforming the power ministries are not uniquely a Polish phenomenon but are more visible than those of the Czech Republic and Hungary. This is mainly because of Poland's geostrategic position, the size and deployment of the Polish Armed Forces requiring the most radical and costly military reforms in Central Europe, and political infighting which has delayed reform of the Polish armed forces. Some of these problems have been dealt with, others, such as widening the scope of civilian control, competitive selection of appropriate personnel (both uniformed and civilian), competitive tendering for military hardware and efficient financial management at every level are yet to be solved. Poland's willingness to take part in various NATO undertakings and the unquestionable competence of the Polish units in many hot spots should not distract the decision makers in Warsaw from their main task, ie modernising their armed forces at home. Polish decision makers tend also to rely on NATO in cases when problems can and should be solved in Warsaw. This tendency, which Poland shares with Hungary and the Czech Republic, could make the present enlargement the last one.

## **ENDNOTES**

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