

THE INSTALLATION OF THE ANTI-MISSILE SHIELD IN POLAND – AN OPPORTUNITY, A THREAT OR A CHALLENGE?

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Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to present the potential effects of an anti-missile defense shield in Poland. The publication addresses selected political, military, financial and social aspects that affect building of the shield. In addition, the position of Poland in the NATO missile defense system was characterized, as was the concept of air defense in Europe. The authors also discuss the issue of Polish – Russian relationships against the background of creating of the anti-missile shield within the territory of our country.

Keywords:

shield, system, security, threat, project

INTRODUCTION

In May 2016 we celebrated the 71st anniversary of the end of World War II that was the most tragic and bloodiest military action in the history of mankind. These acts of war claimed millions of lives and led to huge material losses in many countries. This was partly due to the fact that during the greatest conflict in human history many countries introduced entirely new combat systems to their equipment, particularly guided missiles (Germany) and the US weapons of mass destruction. Notably, this tragic lesson for humanity neither ended the ongoing arms race nor resulted in the cessation of all armed conflicts. Moreover, even the fall of the Berlin Wall, which heralded



warming in international relations, did not stop aggressive actions in the international arena.

In the twenty-first century mankind has experienced catastrophic armed conflicts. Although they often have local scope, their effects are of global nature. It is worth recalling here the combat operations in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and, neighboring with Poland, Ukraine. Furthermore, North Korea and the Islamic State (ISIS), which threatens Europe, have been still unpredictable in their armed reactions. These threats relate to the Polish defense, which generates the need for permanent increased funding for national security and development of the Armed Forces (SZ). One of numerous projects for the modernization of the Polish Armed Forces concerns the air defense system of the country, including in particular the implementation of the project to build a missile defense shield in NATO frameworks. Creating the shield has now become a priority project in carrying out our cooperation within the Alliance. It is the intention that constitutes a huge challenge for our country. Its proper realization will not only strengthen the Polish – American cooperation, but also increase our sense of security.

In relation to this issue, the authors attempted to present in the article the geopolitical context of creating the missile defense shield on the Polish territory, and potential consequences and risks stemming from this fact. Among them there were presented political, military, social and financial aspects. What is more, the authors described the circumstances determining the development of the missile defense system within NATO, and the chronology of events that led to signing the Polish – American agreement in terms of installing the shield on the Polish territory.

1. THE PROJECT OF THE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM IN NATO

In 1991, during the NATO summit hosted by Rome (7-8 November), there was highlighted the need to create a modern system of missile defense within the Alliance [5]. This was due to conditions related to the growing global threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In addition, it was determined that one of the most important tasks for NATO would be the cooperation with the still existing USSR, as well as the new democracies of Central – Eastern Europe [19]. At the next meeting, which was held in the capital of Belgium – Brussels on 10 January 1994, it was agreed that it was necessary to intensify activities, both military and political, to combat the WMD proliferation. This decision resulted in the establishment of a special group for drafting a document, which was to clarify the NATO position with regard to the proliferation of WMD. It was agreed that regardless of political and legal measures undertaken in support of non-proliferation of ballistic missiles, the strengthening of the military potential of the Alliance was required [1]. Moreover, the protection of the NATO territory and its population was considered a priority challenge for Member States.

Another important event took place in Washington, DC, on 24-25 April 1999, when the Strategic Concept for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was adopted [5]. The declaration considered WMD as the most dangerous threat and a challenge for all members of the Alliance. The authors of the Concept presented the NATO firm position in

countering threats that might arise from the use or the proliferation of a variety of ballistic means. The essential preventive requirements included the following ventures [5]:

- the use of diplomatic tools during disarmament talks;
- political support for agreements banning the proliferation of WMD and means for their delivery;
- the improvement of information exchange systems of Member States in the field of WMD;
- continuous development of projects and systems to counter dangerous ballistic means.

The abovementioned preventive measures, in particular the continuous improvement of projects and systems to counter dangerous ballistic means, found themselves at the center of attention during the next summits, which took place in Prague (21 November 2002), Istanbul (28 June 2004) and Riga (29 November 2006). The final outcome of these meetings was the establishment of the American-European Consortium, the main task of which was to evaluate the advisability of creating the NATO anti-missile system [1]. The arrangements of the Member States' summit in Bucharest on 2-4 April 2008 were the consequence of works carried out by the said Consortium. The representatives of the Alliance approved of the concept initiated by the USA related to the installation of the missile defense shield in Europe. During the meeting the parties referred to the threats arising from the nuclear technology possessed by Iran and North Korea [5].

The meeting in Lisbon held on 19-20 November 2010 proved to be the breakthrough summit for NATO in the decision-making process of creating the BMD (Ballistic Missile Defense) system. The missile defense system was for the first time recognized as a joint mission of the Alliance. Such a system would be improved on the basis of existing components of the US air defense. Its elements would be deployed in Poland and Romania, as well as on American warships basing on the Mediterranean Sea. The end result of this installation should be the creation of a joint complex of ballistic protection of the Alliance enhancing the security of all its Members. The costs were initially estimated at EUR 83-147 million [20].

At the next summit in Chicago on 20-21 May 2012, the Alliance announced the interim operational readiness for self-defense (*Interim Ballistic Missile Defence Capability*), which was to rely on the allies' common commitment in the joint NATO command and control system. The interim readiness would allow the Alliance the incomplete, however from the operational point of view essential, ability for immediate and decisive response to potential missile attacks. In addition, NATO Secretary General A. Rasmussen emphasized that the creation of the shield could not be stopped by the Russian Federation [21]. Also, what is worth stressing, this summit was another important step towards ensuring the full protection of NATO for the civilian population, the territory and the Armed Forces of European allies [22]. At this meeting, the Heads of States announced that the deployment of the anti-missile system installation (Figure 1) would



take place in Romania until 2015, while in Poland the completion has been planned for the year 2018 [2].

In addition to the joint meetings within the Alliance, Poland also conducted its own bilateral negotiations with the US government. They concerned mainly the installation of the missile defense system in our country. The result of these talks were the following agreements signed between Poland and the USA [5]:

- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the United States concerning the deployment of the anti-ballistic defense interceptor missiles on the territory of the Republic of Poland (signed in Warsaw on 20 August 2008).
- The Protocol amending the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the United States concerning the deployment of the anti-ballistic defense interceptor missiles on the territory of the Republic of Poland, drawn up in Warsaw on 20 August 2008 (signed in Krakow on 03 July 2010).

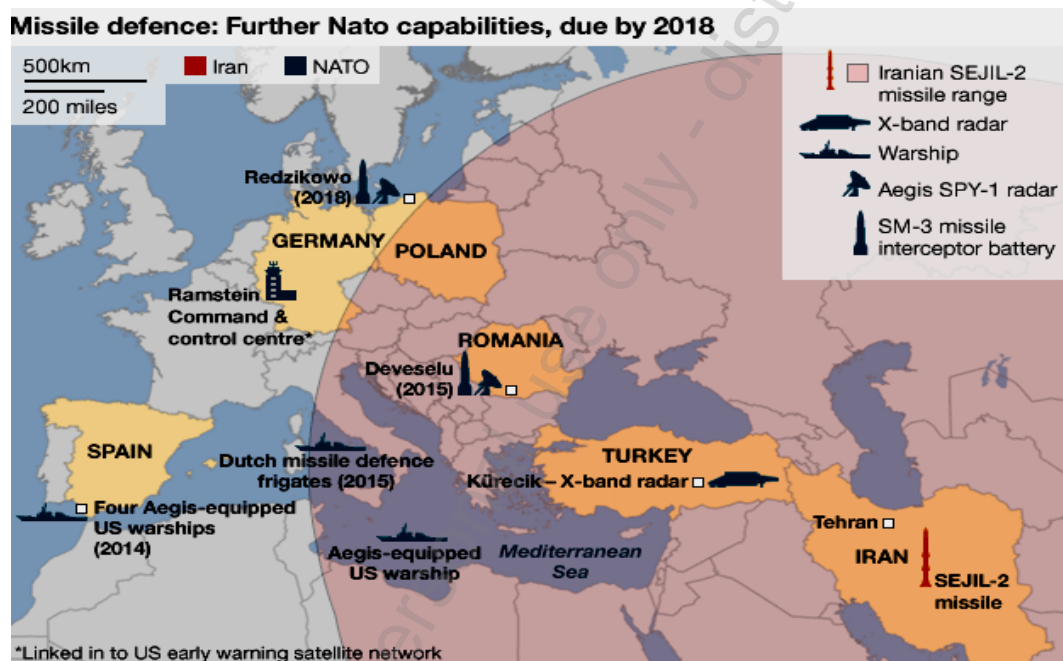


Fig. 1. The plan of the US segment of the NATO ballistic missile defense

Source: S. Koziej [4].

This Agreement paved the way for the practical implementation of the project, and at the same time it marked the beginning of intense debates of supporters and opponents of the joint investment not only in Poland but also internationally. During various conducted discussions and analyzes, NATO politicians, security experts and other specialists in the field of state defense expressed their views on the need for the creation of such a shield. Some of them criticized the idea, some considered it as relevant and necessary, and, what is worth emphasizing, particularly the Russian Federation objected to the signed Agreement.

2. POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT OF THE SHIELD INSTALLATION

The integration of our country in the allied missile defense system must change the assessment of the country in the eyes of any potential opponents, and should also reinforce the importance of Poland in the international arena. It is worth noting that it is not going to be one-stage but multi-stage process. The MD¹ system located in Poland will not only strengthen security guarantees, which are defined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty², but also consolidate our position in the Alliance [3].

Other added values resulting from the USA's involvement in creating the missile shield in Redzikowo may be the consolidation of bilateral relations between Poland and the USA, as well as increasing the chance to transfer modern weaponry and military technologies from overseas to our country, possible due to greater confidence on the part of the American ally. Such operation will enable Poland to become one of the bridges between the United States and other NATO members. In addition, a greater interest of US companies in Polish commercial outlets can be expected. Obviously, this is not a simple task, as the US policy is characterized by a certain reticence, an example of which may be problems occurred during the implementation of the project of a multi-purpose aircraft by companies from the USA and the UK [3]. On the other hand, the achievement of operational readiness by installing the American system in Poland will not contribute to reducing the threat of the proliferation of WMD, as none of its 'owners' intends to dispose of the weapon. What is more, P. Coyle, one of the experts of the Washington Defense Information Center, states that the anti-missile installation will be ineffective against asymmetric actions, especially ordinary bomb cars or suicide bombers. Further, he considers that another American base in Europe may be of interest to potential terrorists. The Polish military analyst, General B. Balcerowicz, thinks alike [3]. According to other special geopolitical analyzes, a ballistic missile attack on our country launched from the territory of the so-called 'rogue state' is unlikely. It should be noted, however, that the minor threat should not be a 'brake' for the implementation of this project, as the withdrawal will reduce the role of Poland in shaping global security [5].

Another negative effect of the Polish involvement in the joint project related to the shield construction together with the United States may be more cautious approach to our activities on the side of the European allies. Poland can be recognized as too close partner of the United States. It should not be forgotten that despite the common allied line there are differences in the perception of the missile defense system between the USA and Europe, because the European partners give priority to political and legal measures over armed ones in combating military and non-military threats [6]. Moreover, from the military point of view, our Armed Forces have much to gain from the cooperation with the USA, because the Polish Army will acquire modern anti-missile armaments. Nevertheless, no assurance can be given in the light of the occurrence of

¹ MD (Missile Defense) – the anti-missile defense system.

² Article 5 of the Treaty stipulates that an armed attack against one or more of the parties of the Alliance in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against all its Members.

political effects, because approaching of our country to the main world power may result in the isolation of other partners and European countries not belonging to the Alliance.

To sum up, it should be explicitly stated that the creation of the Polish-American base in Redzikowo as the NATO allied component largely depends on the decision of the US authorities. Poland's role in this project to a small extent complements activities of our overseas allies. It should be emphasized that the creation of the shield does not refer only to our security, but primarily affects the functioning of the joint NATO missile defense system, which should be an important determinant in the policy realized by the Alliance.

Regardless of the joint Polish-American project, the authorities of our country have to implement the plan of the modernization of the Polish Armed Forces in the years 2013-2022, which largely covers the modernization and reconstruction of the air defense system under the 'Wisła' (Eng. 'Vistula') program [23]. Its main element should be the purchase of air defense missiles, which are supposed to fully replace the Soviet rocket systems, which have been permanently withdrawn from use. Thus, Poland, notwithstanding the cooperation in carrying out the project of the NATO missile defense, must pursue its independent plan to strengthen air defense, because only in this way we can contribute to the reinforcement of our security. It will be possible to evaluate its effects as early as within the next few or several years. As long as it proves possible to modernize the air defense units, it will be a specific contribution to the strengthening of the NATO system as well, regardless of the base in Redzikowo. Therefore, it can be concluded that the 'Wisła' program will not only strengthen our sense of security in the event of an air attack but also enhance the air defense system, especially its eastern flank. The already finalized purchase of the multi-purpose aircrafts F-16 in some way contributed to this state of affairs, as the aircrafts significantly increased the safety of the Polish and allied sky.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that all the Polish activities in the framework of NATO, aimed at strengthening air defense, in particular the alliance project to build a missile defense shield, raise strong reactions on the part of our eastern neighbor – Russia. The Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, General J. Baluyevsky, said that the USA have led very aggressive international policy. In his opinion, Poland's consent to install the anti-missile system within its territory may create a situation in which Russia's strategic forces will attack our country, and thus we will become a potential target of an attack [16]. According to the current information and press reports, the Russian side has undertaken its own activities in connection with the construction of the shield on the Polish territory. One such measure of our eastern neighbor seems to be the deployment of missile launchers ISKANDER in the Kaliningrad region, although the Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry did not confirm clearly whether these reports are true [12]. Taking into account the possibility of the deployment of Russian launchers in the Kaliningrad region, a potential threat arises, since the distance between the base in Redzikowo and Kaliningrad is only about 180 km. It is a short distance for the Russian missiles, as the time during which they reach the tar-

get is only a few minutes (it is estimated that 2-3' on the northern part of our country, including both the initial and the cruise speed [10]).

Negative attitude to the creation of the shield on the territory of our country is manifested not only by the Russian officers, but also prominent politicians. During one of numerous conferences held in Moscow, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S. Lavrov announced that Russia would maintain its position in relation to the anti-missile shield, and therefore it would always express opposition to its creation in the European continent [9]. Moscow considers the missile shield as a potential threat. The dialogue between Poland, Russia and the United States concerning the deployment of the shield is going to be very difficult and challenging for each party. Probably tense negotiations and diplomatic efforts will last until the full finalization of the project [12]. Thus, it is foreseeable that our relations with the eastern neighbor may be exacerbated. Referring to the argument that placing the shield in Central Europe aims to protect NATO against a potential attack, e.g. from North Korea, can always be insufficient for Russia [12].

In conclusion it should be explicitly stated that the installation of the anti-missile defense in Redzikowo is in the phase of practical implementation and has not yet reached combat readiness. However, it has existed in the minds of the media and in broad political discussions. Periodically, it is criticized by the Russian side, which sees this as a potential threat to its national security. In addition, it is worth noting that not only political and military factors determine this project but also the financial aspects, which less frequently appear in the media. The implementation of this project will require certain expenditures from both the Polish and American taxpayers for its construction, as well as significant funds from the budget of the Ministry of Defense for functioning of the created shield.

1. PROJECT FUNDING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLISH INVESTORS

The creation of the missile defense shield requires large financial outlays. Unfortunately, the overall finalization of the project is not dependent solely on our country. It is mainly conditioned by the financial abilities of the United States Department of Defense. It is very important due to the fact that over the next 10 years the Pentagon's spending may be reduced by about \$500 billion, where approximately 10-15% of the amount is to address Europe [12]. The USA intend to spend about \$7.5 billion on the Polish-Czech missile defense element [31]. When analyzing substantial financing needs arising from the implementation of this project, both the US contribution and own contribution should be considered. Moreover, the extension of the NATO anti-missile system on the Polish territory will also be part of carrying out a plan of technological and armament modernization of the Polish Armed Forces. It is worth emphasizing that while the project of the anti-missile shield installation is a task with the determined completion term, the functioning of units using modern equipment will be probably a long-lasting period, since the system installation itself is not enough, but its subsequent operation, current service, functioning and maintenance are also of great importance.



In the years 2014-2023 Poland's expenditures on missile defense are projected depending on the annual growth of GDP. Assuming that the rate for the budget of the Ministry of Defense will be maintained at 1.95% of GDP, it can be expected that approximately PLN 8-12 billion (max. PLN 14 billion) will be spent for this purpose (Figure 2) [4].

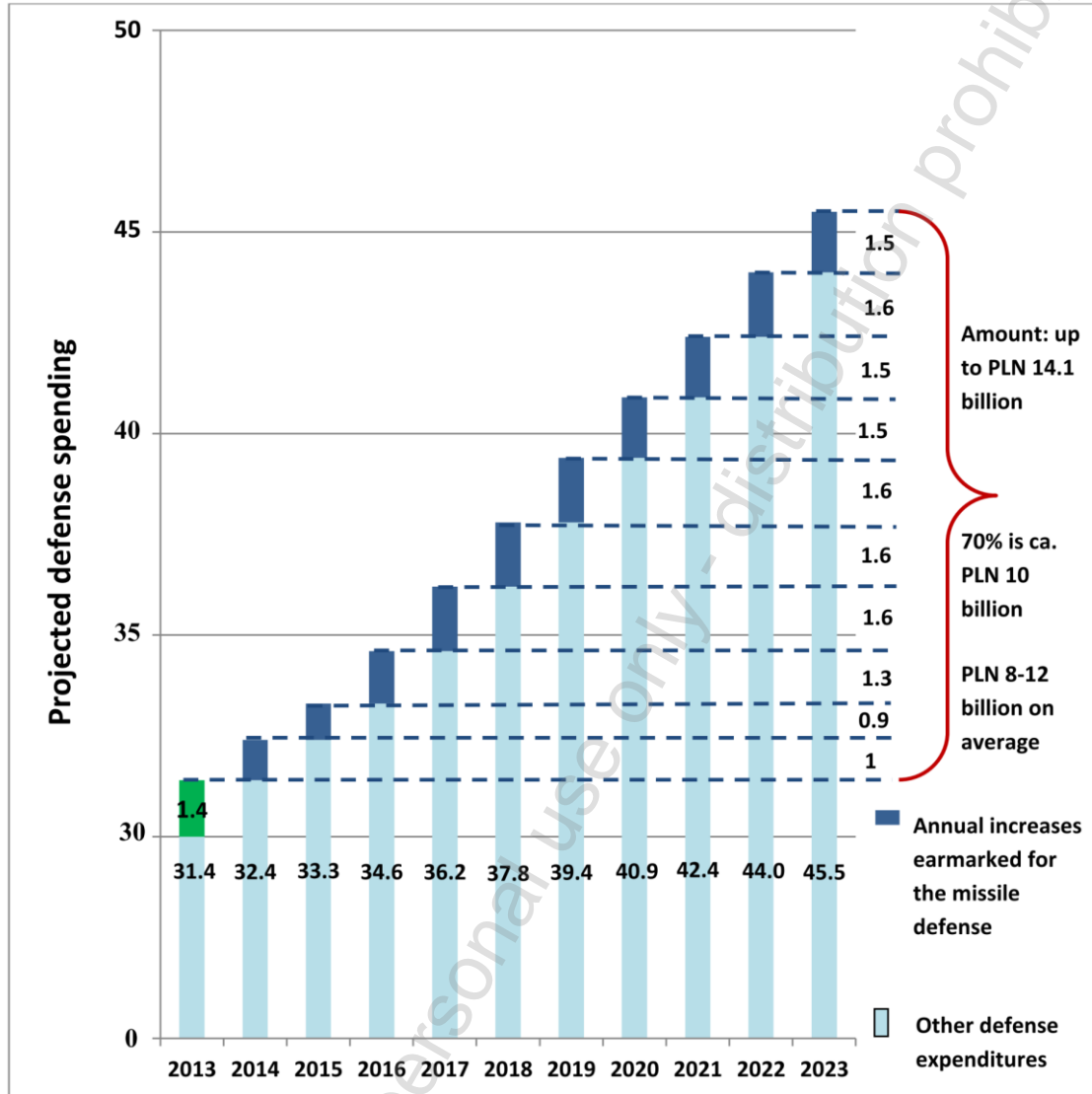


Fig. 2. The funds for the installation of the anti-missile defense.

Source: S. Koziej [4].

Unfortunately, at the moment it is difficult to determine what amount will be allocated to the investment of the base in Redzikowo, because it depends largely on the arrangements with the American side. The Americans did not say the last word in this regard, because the current situation in the eastern flank of NATO (the armed conflict in Ukraine) forces the flexible approach to the prioritization of projects, and then their financing. However, the current events in Europe and the Middle East (the fight against an Islamic state) cause that currently the findings of the Polish-American governmental agreement on the deployment of the anti-ballistic interceptor missiles in Poland have

not been changed. Thus, it is clear that the already begun process of the shield construction is an opportunity for the local market and the Polish defense companies.

The Americans are looking forward to cooperate on the installation of the shield with our national subcontractors. The most serious investor to get involved in this project is the company Bumar Łabędy from Gliwice (which currently awaits the full range of works and detailed offer of cooperation). According to many experts, the Polish-American military cooperation could step even further. An example to support such a thesis is Wojskowe Zakłady Uzbrojenia (*Eng. Armament Military Plant*) in Grudziadz, which has already undertaken works on designing the system, which aims to identify air targets [15]. In addition, it should be emphasized that the Polish armaments holdings are to provide the Armed Forces with different rocket systems. This will result in the increased employment in these factories. In addition, continuous modernization of the air defense system will require persistent scientific and research works. The first steps towards this extension have already been made, because the Polish Defensive Holding is already producing rocket and artillery systems [13].

There was established the Program "Shield of Poland"³, which is to be carried out by the Polish Defense Holding, in order to meet the expectations that are faced by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland. The aim of this Program is to obtain financial support for the Polish defense industry [13]. The entire realization of this project in the economic aspect will create new opportunities for the defense industry. This is a huge challenge for military specialists, politicians and those involved in procurement procedures, as the increase of public procurement in the defense industry will trigger employment in this sector of economy and will offer the chance for new technologies to inflow, which involves the possibility to receive contracts in cooperation with other countries. However, it is worth stressing that the implementation of the project, in addition to a very important financial aspect, will also be associated with certain risks for the region and the local community.

2. LOCAL ASPECTS OF THE INSTALLATION OF THE ANTI-MISSILE SHIELD

The creation of the US base in Redzikowo is a controversial issue not only for its residents and local government officials, but also for the rest of the population outside the region. The creation of the shield whips up the concern among the residents of the Słupsk region (Fig. 3). This is the result of failed information policy on the stages related to building the shield [11]. For this reason, the protests of inhabitants have occurred in Słupsk. One of such 'anti-shield' movements took place on 29 March 2008, when demonstrators from all over the country gathered in Słupsk. Approximately 1,000 people took part in that demonstration [24]. It is a project that raises a lot of controversy among the public as well, both in positive as well as negative aspects. Undoubtedly, the installation of the shield has its opponents and supporters.

³ The Program "Shield of Poland" is a project that envisages the modernization of the current air defense of our country. Under the government plans, a three-tier system of the Polish sky defense, consisting of three subsystems of different range, is to be created until 2023.



Fig. 3. The inhabitants of the Słupsk region against the creation of the shield

Source: [24].

Within the positive aspect there is mentioned the increasing tourist interest in the Słupsk region shown by the Americans. In addition, many residents of Redzikowo accept the shield installation project. They count on increased local investments, such as the expansion of the technical infrastructure, the development of new housing estates, shops and other public facilities (e.g. community centers, sports centers, etc.), which is connected with the stationing of American soldiers [25]. On the other hand, opponents of the shield are concerned about the stationing of foreign troops on the territory of the northern Poland. Local residents fear that the installation deployed may have a negative impact on their health (e.g. through radiation generated radar). This is obviously not true, but the failure to provide the public with information about the creation of the shield results in such misunderstandings. In addition, local self-government officials' intentions regarding the development of Redzikowo are different from plans of the US authorities. Local authorities are planning to begin works related to the construction of a civil airport, which would certainly contribute to the dynamic development of the region [25].

Another counter-argument for the creation of the base is a little prospect of the improvement of the quality of life in the region. Some sources say that the Americans will have their own residential estates, kindergartens, shops, etc. Thus, local entrepreneurs or those involved in the trade probably will not benefit financially on the stationing of soldiers from overseas. Moreover, owners of land plots fear the decrease in their value after the finalization of the Polish - American project [26]. These arguments do not yet constitute a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of the shield construction. At present the project is under clarification of its various aspects. At the moment it is hard to predict what the life of residents from Redzikowo and Słupsk will be like after the base has been built and the American troops have been deployed. However, the overall discussion on Redzikowo affects quite widely the interest of the international public opinion in that region. For example, in 2007 reporters from the Arab TV channel

Al Jazeera came to the municipality of Słupsk to analyze the area directly at the place, where the American system is to be installed, as well as find out what the attitude of local residents to the project was. Later, the teams from other TV stations, such as CNN, ABC, BBC, NHK and Russia Today, arrived [11]. The presence of journalists from the world's most famous TV stations gave much more publicity to the creation of the shield in Poland. The effect of this action was the participation of people from abroad in demonstrations against the installation, which took place in Słupsk in 2008 [18]. Therefore, it is clear that the finalization of the shield project may intensify protests, as the attitude of residents to the stationing American troops is difficult to predict. Perhaps their presence will result in the manifestation of negative attitudes towards the military of the United States. Only the full finalization of this project will allow for a thorough assessment of the above issues.

Many fears can be dispelled through the development of local technical infrastructure. In 2008, the then Head of the Polish government, Mr. Donald Tusk, met with residents of Redzikowo. He made them the promises that the standard of living in their area would rise significantly and the interest in the region would be increased on the part of the government [11]. One of the priority goals would be the improvement of the technical condition of the national road No. 21 connecting Słupsk and Ustka. In addition, the local community was promised that more land would be acquired in order to fall within the so-called Słupsk Economic Zone and large funds would be allocated for the Słupsk region development.

It should also be highlighted that not only American soldiers will be stationed in Redzikowo, but also Polish soldiers are intended to be deployed there. At the moment, the Polish Force Protection Battalion of the Base has been created there, which is the unit dealing with ensuring security and protection for the Americans. Its purpose is to be performing tasks in the field of the defense system protection against ballistic missiles [27]. Thus, new official positions for soldiers and jobs for the military personnel in the region with the relatively high unemployment rate are going to be created. It is obvious that the new unit in Redzikowo will not solve the employment problems in the county of Słupsk. It should be noted, however, that after the completion of the base in Redzikowo, American soldiers would be permanently stationed on the Polish territory. Their presence would both improve the defense system of the Polish airspace, as well as affect the overall level of national security of our country.

5. THE SHIELD INSTALLATION AND THE SECURITY OF POLAND

It is worth remembering that the construction of the missile defense shield in Central-Eastern Europe is a project of global scale. Its elementary purpose will be the protection of NATO states, and Poland as a geopolitical area. It should be noted that the shield is to merely have a defensive dimension, i.e. its main task will be protecting against launched missiles with the continental range (the shield is to detect missiles and then shoot them down). On the one hand, it is a very important determinant because defining the shield (e.g. by Russia) as a means for generating international threat is untrue and incorrect. On the other hand, the completion of the project is largely controversial. Many analysts and experts believe that creating the shield will not bring

any military advantages to our country. One of numerous experts who oppose the Polish-American project is O. Osika (a specialist from the European Center from Warsaw). He argues that the shield will not protect Poland against the threat from the east, because its technical conditions only allow for the protection against a possible attack, for example from North Korea (the state hostile mainly to the USA) [14]. Additionally some often argue that countries, which do not currently pose a threat to Poland, may become potential enemies because of the deployment of the US base and shield elements on our territory [17]. This is due to the fact that the USA have many opponents to the security policy led by them, since the US concept of national security is very broad, and at this point Poland will become a part of it. Will it be the right solution for our country? Global politics is becoming more and more unpredictable and constantly exacerbated and this is why it is difficult to give an unambiguous answer to the above question. Furthermore, it seems impossible to clearly answer: how and to what extent will the American side finance the project? Numerous economic problems faced by the USA do not allow for the explicit statement [17]. In the opinion of another expert in the military affairs, T. Hypka, Poland will not benefit from the missile shield. According to the author, our country is not a strategic partner for the USA, and, what is more, relations with Europe and Russia may deteriorate. Moreover, he adds that the influx of modern technologies from overseas is limited due to strict procedures in force in the USA [28].

However, it would be a mistake to rule out the role and importance of the shield in the creation of our common national security. Firstly, it would strengthen our alliance with the USA, which would increase the importance of Poland in the international arena, and the shield does not seem to be a very attractive target for potential aggressors, as confirmed by many experts rejecting the thesis of the attack on Poland [8], since the Americans have deployed their military bases throughout almost the entire globe, and attacks on them are extremely rare. On the other hand, the project is very important, and its implementation will certainly affect the Polish military system, because currently our country does not have any missile system to counter ballistic means. Do our Armed Forces need such a system? Everything suggests the positive answer to the question, but, in fact, it is largely dependent on the situation on the international arena. Perhaps the threat of a missile attack on Poland seems to be unlikely, but a conflict in Ukraine appeared equally impossible even a few years ago. Therefore, our country should be prepared to respond to any event. Moreover, the main benefit will be not so much the installation of the missile defense shield, but declarations of military cooperation resulting from agreements concluded between the Polish and American Governments. This may be demonstrated by the continuous technological development of weapons and military equipment, and the participation in various joint military exercises (e.g. Anaconda-16). Therefore, the project of creating the shield is certainly something needed and reasonable for our Armed Forces both in terms of the acquisition of modern weaponry, as well as the establishment of interesting military contacts with American experts. In addition, the cooperation between NATO countries, which have also been involved and participate in the above project, would increase.

In conclusion it is worth stating that nothing is able to guarantee complete internal and external security. Neither the Alliance nor any most modern equipment and training of troops do this. Therefore, the aim of each country must be to build such a defense system, which will provide the sense of security. Can the shield raise the sense a little bit? At the moment, it seems impossible to answer this question.

CONCLUSIONS

Certainly the installation of the missile defense system in Poland will significantly increase the perception of our country on the international arena. Firstly, the approximation in our relations with the USA will be possible, but on the other hand, it can cause the opposite effect in relations with Russia. The Russian authorities may take retaliatory measures and undertake action to create their own project in the Kalinin-grad region. What is more, the realization of the American system on the Polish territory will not improve our relationships with the neighbors (e.g. Belarus). Secondly, owing to the cooperation with the Americans, our country can count on additional investments in the domestic arms industry. It should however be borne in mind that the profit and loss statement for the Polish Defense Holding cannot be assumed in the current situation.

Thirdly, the installation of the missile defense element in Redzikowo will have local repercussions. On the one hand, this town will return to the Polish military map, because both Polish and American soldiers will be stationed there. The county of Słupsk can count on the greater engagement of not only the Polish but also the American Government. This was confirmed by, among others, the US ambassador during the last visit to Słupsk in November 2015 [29]. Such events may lead to the increased interest in the Central Pomerania on the part of the media, which, in turn, may result in the incentives for entrepreneurs to invest money in local businesses. The attention should be drawn to the aspect of new jobs as well. The base will employ several hundred soldiers and military employees from the USA, along with their families. It will certainly generate the need to hire services that will deal with the issues of infrastructure and the daily lives of American families. On the other hand, we must remember that the anti-missile system in Redzikowo can bring some negative effects for the region due to the reluctance of local residents to the US involvement in the construction of the project. Local developers predict a fall in the value of land plots in the vicinity of the planned installation, and thus the limitation to single-family or multi-family housing.

Fourth, the creation of the shield will make overall political climate between the Polish and the USA more dynamic, which can be a positive stimulus for example for abolishing the visa regime for Polish citizens by the US Government. This climate has already received a new dimension after Poland got involved in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The defense investment in Redzikowo will be the continuation of the direction towards strengthening mutual relations between Warsaw and Washington. Obviously, it would be a very positive change, but the real future is difficult to precisely predict.



Fifth, the creation of installation of components of the anti-missile system on the Polish territory is primarily the undertaking of military nature. Its most important task will be the ability to destroy missiles of a potential enemy, which should be a priority task for the Ministry of Defense in terms of increasing the security of our country. Certainly, it should be kept in mind that each weapon system must first be tested in military field conditions or through repelling a surprise attack in practice. At the moment in Europe there is no experience that could verify the defense effectiveness of such an anti-missile system.

At the end it is worth noting that the finalization of the project (the year 2018) on the one hand will bring quite substantial benefits in terms of strengthening the American presence in Poland and our commitment to NATO. It will positively affect the investments provided for in our national defense industry, help to increase employment in the region and strengthen the Polish air defense system. On the other hand, the installation in Redzikowo may increase the reluctance of Moscow to improve relations with Warsaw, and even contribute to retaliation. For the region of Słupsk the presence of the Americans may have negative effects in the form of a decline in land prices. It is not ruled out that tensions between the local population and the American personnel will appear, and propaganda centers hostile to Poland will take advantage of them. Such a situation took place in Łódź in 2014, when a group of Polish hooligans attacked American soldiers stationed temporarily at the air base in Łask. In fact, the full verification of the military, political and economic consequences will be possible only after a certain time

In reference to the question raised in the title of the article, it can be unequivocally stated that the creation of the missile defense shield in Poland will be an opportunity, a challenge and a threat at the same time. Opportunities for Poland should be primarily seen in the acquisition of US technologies, the improvement of air safety of our country, as well as strengthening the position of Poland in the Alliance, which will positively affect the development and modernization of the Armed Forces. Unfortunately, the project of creating the anti-missile system in our country has certain challenges attached. It is unique in Europe because of the technological advancement and application, but, what is worth stressing, it has not been tested in practice and hence its usefulness cannot be unambiguously determined. Nor can the fact be ignored that this project itself constitutes a significant financial cost. In turn, the biggest threat related to the project implementation seems to be the negative attitude of the Russian side and its obscure operation in the Kaliningrad region. The recent events in Ukraine only confirm this thesis. Thus, it is clear that any threats from Russia cannot be ignored or marginalized and they must be taken into consideration when creating the shield, since Russia is quite an 'erratic' state with a significant military force.

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