

THE CRIMEAN CRISIS AND THE POLISH SECURITY

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Abstract:

The events taking place in Ukraine have stirred a lot of emotions among our citizens. Questions about the security of the country, the possibility of direct threats related to the political situation in Eastern Europe and the relationship between Russia and Ukraine are asked. Undoubtedly, this situation causes that there frequently appear issues concerning the state of national security and combat capabilities of our armed forces, especially in the context of the geographical location of Poland, which is still the easternmost external frontier of the EU and NATO. The aggression of Russia against Ukraine meant that the vast majority of Polish people stopped dealing only with "our" problems and they began to keep a very close watch and follow "Crimean events". In hundreds of Polish households people discuss mainly what the Russian President Vladimir Putin is going to do: "How far will he go in his imperialistic ambitions and will it end just with the annexation of Crimea? How will this conflict affect the economic functioning of Poland? These ones and a great number of other questions will remain unanswered for a long period of time.

Keywords:

security, the Crimean Crisis- the background of the conflict, the chronology of Crimean events, the impact of the Crimean situation on the Polish security

INTRODUCTION

Documents concerning the security and defence of the Republic of Poland say that no armed conflict on a large scale is expected in the foreseeable future. The prospect of its outbreak is unlikely, nevertheless conflicts at regional or local levels, which Poland can be directly involved in, are possible to occur. The course and consequences of such actions may, however, create crisis situations including the risk of being spread and transformed into a war. When developing these documents (such as National Security

Strategy of the Republic of Poland of 2007) the authors assumed that our country is safe and the security environment in which we live and work does not constitute any threat to us. However, for example, the Russia's withdrawal from the CFE Treaty in November 2007 was not taken into account as well as the increase in defence spending.

"The Vision of the Polish Armed Forces - 2030" slightly expands the range of international threats among others by¹:

- the progressive globalisation;
- the demographic growth in African countries and the Middle East;
- climate changes;
- the limited access to natural resources;
- disparities in living standards of countries;
- the growth of activity of international terrorism;
- increasing waves of refugees and population migrations within a state or a group of states;
- the uncontrolled arms and technologies trade;
- the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means.

"The Vision ..." emphasises that threats on the European theatre of operation are not expected. The nature of future threats will be closely linked to specific geopolitical areas. Conflicts and wars between states will be characteristic mainly for the regions of South and East Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, in situations threatening the security of any of Member States, the EU will have the military instrument in the form of the Euro Army ... *constituting a strong European pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance. It will be established on the basis of military components posted by individual Member States and operationally subordinated to a supranational Union command. It will also include units and sub-units formed based on the direct recruitment carried out by the EU institutions. Within 20-25 years the Euro Army will have operational capabilities necessary for autonomous planning and conducting the full spectrum of military operations ranging from peacekeeping and stabilisation ones to full-scale high-intensity military operations performed throughout and beyond the European territory*². The Euro Army is to be created in the course of several or a dozen of years, but its forerunner have been already formed the EU Battle Groups executing the Petersberg tasks³ and activities un-

¹ The Vision of the Polish Armed Forces - 2030, Warszawa 2008, p. 6.

² *Ibidem*, p. 8.

³ The Petersberg tasks - tasks performed in the field of security policy. They were adopted for realisation by the Western European Union at the conference in Petersberg in 1992. These are humanitarian tasks, including rescue ones, peacekeeping and crisis management missions. The Petersberg tasks were included in the tasks of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union by the Treaty of Amsterdam. After that, when signatories of the modified Brussels Treaty decided in 2010 on the dissolution of the Western European Union ^[1], the EU took over its tangible assets and com-

der the European Security Strategy. Furthermore, their task may be medical assistance, support in the reconstruction and transport functions⁴.

Relations with Russia are considered an important issue that will have a strong bearing on the Europe's, and thus the Poland's, sense of security. These relations have never been good and the recent events in Ukraine are not going to improve them in any way. Today it is difficult to unequivocally determine whether Russia will aim towards rebuilding its superpower notwithstanding other countries' opinions or it will cooperate with them in developing global security. While observing current events, one can assume that Vladimir Putin is not interested in anything apart from the implementation and achievement of his own goals and perhaps restoring Russia's great power which obviously does not seem to benefit Poland.

1. THE BACKGROUND OF THE CRIMEAN CONFLICT

The Crimean conflict must be considered in many aspects. Certainly one of them is the historical background and conditions arising from it. One should remember that Crimea⁵, which has belonged to Ukraine since 1954, differs from it in historical, cultural, ethnical and language terms. The Crimea's territory consists of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the special status city of Sevastopol. The vast majority of inhabitants living in the Crimea are the Russians - 58.5%, then the Ukrainians - 24.4%, the Crimean Tatars - 12.1% and the Belarusians - 1.5%. It should be noted that even in Sevastopol the Russians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population - as many as 71.6%, whereas the Ukrainians 22,4% and the Belarusians 1.6% of the citizens.⁶ On the Crimean Peninsula Russian is declared by more than 79% of citizens as their native language, and only slightly more than 9% of them indicated the Ukrainian language.

Historical sources mention that already before modern times the Crimean territory was inhabited by tribes, first of all the Tauri nomadic tribe who gave the name of the peninsula - Tauris (Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia had to sacrifice all foreigners arriving in Tauris to Artemis). Later, the area was inhabited by, among others, the Scythians and the Greeks. The favourable climate of the Black Sea Basin as well as the ease of sailing meant that there were a lot of people willing to settle in Crimea. In the first century BC the Romans got there, followed by the Sarmatians, the Goths and the Huns and finally, after the fall of Rome, Crimea came under the influence of Byzantium.

petences. The Petersberg tasks are still legal basis for the decision deploying CSDP missions, [online]. [available: 20.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misje_petersberskie.

⁴ A. Konarzewska, *Grupy bojowe UE. Zaczqtek euroarmii?*, [online]. [available: 20.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: www.bbn.gov.pl/download/1/934/rap9grupybojoweue.pdf.

⁵ Crimea-the Crimean Peninsula (Ukr. Крим, Russ. Крым, Crimean Tatar Qırım, Къырым) – the Black Sea Peninsula, known in ancient times as Tauric Chersonese or Tauris, connected to the mainland only by the narrow Isthmus of Perekop, between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. It is separated from Russia with the Kerch Strait. The area of Crimea is over 27 000 km [online]. [available: 19.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krym>.

⁶ *National composition of population*, (Eng.). [online]. [available: 19.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: 2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua.

These influences weakened as a result of the incursions of the Khazars who stayed there for several hundred years. However, it was Crimea where, in Chersonesos, the great Prince of Kiev was baptised by the Byzantine Emperor in 988. In the thirteenth century Crimea fell under the Tartars' rule and since then their presence as the rightful inhabitants of Crimea has been recognised. The Tatars were in Crimea until 1944 when Stalin decided to deport them to Central Asia, mainly to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. The probable reason for the deportation of Tatars was their alleged cooperation with Germany⁷.



Fig. 1. The Sevastopol Fleet

Source: own study based on the Internet materials

The 16th century was a period of wars of the Crimean Khanate against the Grand Duchy of Moscow and in the 17th century Turkey joined these wars. The 18th century - due to infighting in the Khanate - the army of Catherine the Great entered it with fraternal assistance. Crimea was torn by subsequent wars, for example the Crimean War in the years of 1853 - 1856, between Russia and England on one side and France and Turkey on the other. In Sevastopol the Orthodox church was built on the redoubt of the battle of 1855 where there are numerous graves of the Poles serving in the Russian army who were killed in the war⁸. It is also worth to know that not only foreigners but even Russians and Ukrainians did not have the right of access to some cities of the Crimea only a couple of years ago, as there were located secret naval bases Today, ships are adjacent in the same harbour basins to the yachts waiting for tourists and enabling them trips around the port just for a few Hryvnias, of course with the possibility of

⁷ [online]. [available: 19.08.2014]. Available on the Internet:<http://www.krymik.republika.pl/Krotka%20historia%20Krymu.htm>.

⁸ *Ibidem.*

filming and photographing literally everything that hovers over the water⁹. But it should be remembered that it is in Crimea, Yalta, where leaders of Russia, England and the USA decided in February 1945 on the fate of the world.

Returning to the contemporary Ukrainian - Russian relations (as far as the Crimean Peninsula is concerned) one must bear in mind that they were definitely stronger with the later ones. Only the Ukrainian minority, the Crimea Tatars, was opposed to the secessionism of Crimea. The fact of stationing (since the collapse of the Soviet Union) the aforementioned Black Sea Fleet consisting of at least several thousands soldiers is of great importance. It is a serious force which may prove a decisive factor in the events beyond our eastern border. The stationing of the Black Sea Fleet has been regulated by the interstate agreement which was to be in force until 2017. However, after taking office the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich - in return for the reduction on gas prices – it has been extended until 2042.

According to Prof. Kłoczowski¹⁰ the background of the Ukrainian – Russian conflict are ... *far-reaching historical factors related to two opposing concepts on the roots of modern Ukraine: Ukrainian and Russian ones. Ukraine derives from the Byzantine tradition and the Western one that reached east by the Republic of Poland. It is a concept contradicting the Moscow concept which, in turn, emphasises Holy Rus. It encompasses Russia, Belarus and Ukraine - as one Russian nation.* Prof. Kłoczowski adds that ... *the current conflict is hardly surprising and the fundamental question is whether the Russians will continue to strive for restoring Holy Rus.* In Professor's opinion ... *they are too weak due to the economic and demographic crises*¹¹.

The only right course of action for Ukraine is to make the return towards the west. Joining the EU, particularly the agreement to deepen the free trade area, means a few thousand regulations that Kiev will have to accept. It is the consistent, slow but effective implementation of the EU's legal and political acquis¹². According to Andrzej Talaga the attention should be paid to the importance of Kiev's pro-western policy and its membership in the EU for Moscow... *without Ukraine - the second largest economy of the former USSR – the Customs Union built by the Kremlin and then the Eurasian Union will cease to be an attractive collector of post-Soviet states. Putin will no longer appear to be almost like the omnipotent tsar, because he is going to lose his greatest geopolitical battle, whereas the Union will gain respect in the East as an organisation able to work efficiently and offering better conditions for cooperation than Moscow. Finally, Russia will be pushed out politically from Europe to Asia where it has been, moreover, nibbling by China.* Most of all, Russia will lose markets for its goods for the benefit of goods imported from EU countries, that quite significantly can affect its economy. Rus-

⁹ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰ Prof. Jerzy Kłoczowski – Director of the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe in Lublin.

¹¹ Prof. J. Kłoczowski, the statement of March 5th 2014 for Onet.pl Internet portal [online]. [available: 19.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/lublin/historyczna-przyczyna-konfliktu-na-ukrainie/d3qsb>.

¹² A. Talaga, *Konflikt o Ukrainę dopiero się zaczyna*, wydanie internetowe Rzeczpospolita, [online]. [available: 19.08.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.rp.pl/arttykul/1056192.htm>.

sia would be deprived of another sphere of influence that it cannot afford to lose. Therefore, it will try to - through various actions - hinder this process at any price. The conflict in Crimea could be, among other issues, just such an attempt.



Fig. 2. The Black Sea Fleet

Source: own study based on the Internet materials

2. THE COURSE OF EVENTS

The demonstrations that took place in the Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev initiated by the Ukrainians demanding the signing of an association agreement with the European Union launched a serious crisis in the countries of our eastern neighbours. These events (bloody pacification of demonstrators) sparked riots in other parts of Ukraine and eventually brought about (in February 2015) the overthrow of the President Viktor Yanukovich's government. As of this date the Ukrainians began the difficult development of a democratic state aspiring to join the EU on the one hand, while on the other heavily economically tied and dependent on Russia. Originally, association documents concerning the free trade were to be signed at the end of last year, nevertheless the Ukrainian side had concerns that this agreement would affect trade relations with Russia and would not compensate the incurred losses. At the same time they established the Tripartite Commission (Russia, Ukraine and the EU) whose task was to maintain good trade relations with Russia as well as equal ones between Ukraine and the EU.

The end of 2013 is a period of turbulent demonstrations not only in Kiev. The government is trying to "extinguish" rising waves of discontent and frustration. While pro-European Maidan protesters demand the signing of the association agreement with the EU. The pro-EU manifestation begins to definitely change its character into anti-government. Riots break out. The militia in a determined and brutal way disperse the

demonstrators from the Maidan Nezalezhnosti. More than 30 protesters are arrested, which also results in the appointment of the staff of the National Opposition, the task of which was to prepare a plan of a countrywide strike.

The year of 2014 started with the announcement by the Prime Minister of Ukraine of the immediate launching the industrial cooperation with Russia. At the same time there are riots taking place between the strikers and the militia. There are more and more injured demonstrators, among them the former head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Yuriy Lutsenko and journalists. In total, a dozen of people were injured.

The breakthrough day of the crisis in Ukraine seems to be February 21st 2014, when the signed agreement provides for early elections and the formation of a national unity government and the return to the constitution of 2004. They begin searching for Viktor Yanukovich who opens the list of the wanted for mass murders of civilians. By contrast, pro-Russian activists postulate joining Crimea to Russia and demand the convening of an extraordinary session and the referendum on the Crimea's independence on Ukraine. On February 27th 2014, in the morning, an armed group of people attacked and took the seat of authority of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The operation had been organised by - as they called themselves - "representatives of the self-defence of Russian citizens of Crimea."¹³ In view of the situation the Ukrainian army were put on standby. The perpetrators of the attack hung Russian flags on occupied buildings.

After the fall of the Viktor Yanukovich's government, soldiers of the Berkut formation started to return to Crimea. According to Ukraine's security service, a large part of them is suspected of having committed murders and opened gunfire against demonstrators on the order of President Yanukovich and his Russian advisers¹⁴. While welcoming returning soldiers of Berkut, on February 23rd demonstrations were held in Kerch and Sevastopol. In the first one - a rally bringing together several thousand people - in front of the municipal government the Ukrainian flag was removed and in its place the Russian one was hung while demonstrators raised slogans: "Berkut are heroes!", "Fascism shall not pass!", "Crimea wants peace," "No for Maidan downs", "Kerch - Crimea! We want to Russia!". Whereas in Sevastopol, on the central square of the city there were gathered 20,000 people with Russian flags, one of which was installed also on the building of the town hall. At a rally, the Russian Bloc party leader and deputy to the city council Gennady Basov announced the beginning of the formation of the self-defence forces¹⁵.

On February 25th in Simferopol there was held a demonstration where participants requested the convening of an extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of the Cri-

¹³ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3019/Artykul/1058868,Kalendarium-zdarzen-na-Ukrainie>.

¹⁴ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,15734249,Ukraina__Zatrzymano_12_podejrzanych_o_udzial_w_zabijaniu.html, gazeta.pl.

¹⁵ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kryzys_krymski#cite_note-49.

mean Autonomous Republic and a referendum on the independence. In turn, the chairman of the Crimean parliament Vladimir Konstantinov said he did not recognise the rights established by the the Supreme Council in Kiev¹⁶. Although the protests in Crimea against Euromaidan had occurred before the overthrow of the old regime, they intensified and their radicality increased after one of the decisions of the Supreme Council of Ukraine of February 23rd. On that day the Parliament annulled the language law that granted privileges to languages of national minorities in regions of Ukraine of large groups of these minorities. As Crimea - unlike the rest part of Ukraine - is almost entirely Russian-speaking, the people of this region treated the Supreme Council's decision as a breach of their autonomy. Vadim Kolesnichenko, a deputy of the ruling until recently the Party of Regions of the ousted President Viktor Yanukovich, said that Sevastopol -which is his mandate electoral district - would arm and defend against the "fascists", as he called the new Ukrainian authorities.¹⁷ Destabilisation of the situation in Crimea caused that the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationing in Sevastopol was put into high alert.

On February 27th, 2014, armed men in Simferopol took buildings of the parliament and the government of the Crimean Autonomous Republic. They displayed the Russian flag at the same time calling themselves as "representatives of the self-defence of Crimea Russian citizens"¹⁸. The next day Russian soldiers seized the military airport of Belbek at Sevastopol. The Head of the Ministry of the Interior, Arsen Avakov, described it as "the military intervention and occupation"¹⁹. What is more, they captured the airport in Simferopol, Belbek and Russian helicopters were noted in Crimea. The authorities in Moscow announced that they would defend their citizens, and yet they do not intend to use force.

March began with the request of the Prime Minister of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to Vladimir Putin for providing the safety to the residents of Crimea and obtaining the President's of Russia assurance that he fully controls the militia forces and border guards located there. Shortly after the Kremlin informed that Russia was not going to ignore the Prime Minister Aksionov's requests and they would ensure peace and order in Crimea. The local parliament of Crimea announced its intention to carry out the regional referendum on March 16th, 2014 (unrecognised by the Ukrainian authorities) on the extension of the Crimea's autonomy, but already on March 11th the joined meeting of councilors of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and of the Sevastopol City Council adopted the declaration of independence of these

¹⁶ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-krym-lokalny-parlament-zablokowany,nId,1111898,fakty.interia.pl>.

¹⁷ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-prorosyjski-deputowany-z-krymu-wojna-dopiero-sie-zaczyna,nId,1112262?parametr=fakty_wntt.

¹⁸ [online]. [available: 27.02.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/437807/Krym-Uzbrojeni-napastnicy-okupuja-parlament-Nad-budynkiem-powiewa-flaga-Rosji/Kryml>.

¹⁹ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,15540684,Krym_Rosyjscy_zolnierze_zajeli_lotnisko_wojskowe.html.

two entities as the Republic of Crimea²⁰. On March 17th 2014, not recognised by Ukraine the authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea announced Crimea an independent state and requested Russia to adopt it into its component members. On the same day the Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree recognising Crimea as a sovereign and independent state. On March 18th 2014 the agreement was signed between Russia and the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol city on integrating them into Russia as new entities of the federation²¹. This Agreement entered into force on the date of its ratification, which took place on March 21st 2014. On the same day appropriate changes were made to the Constitution of Russia by adding to it the two new entities of the Federation – the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol - the city of federal significance, which was incorporated into the newly created the Crimean Federal District. Both the declaration of independence of Crimea and the subsequent acts were not recognised by the Ukrainian authorities or the international community²².

The following months brought, among other things:

- the intrusion of pro-Russian separatists to the seat of the authorities of Kharkiv and the Security Service of Ukraine in Lugansk;
- the condemnation of parliamentarians from the EU Member States for the annexation of the Ukrainian Crimea by Russia;
- Barack Obama’s call to cease Russia’s activities related to the destabilisation of Ukraine;
- the German Chancellor’s statement about Russia's violation of international law;
- the attention drew by General Philip Breedlove (the commander of the NATO forces in Europe) on the possibility ... *of sending US troops to the NATO countries in Eastern Europe that feel threatened*²³;
- AWACS aircrafts directed by the French Air Forces into the airspace of Eastern Europe;
- Viktor Yanukovich’s statement, who expressed his regret that Crimea had joined Russia. In his opinion, this happened on the wave of riots that took place in Kiev. He also criticised the haste in presidential elections scheduled for May 25th. According to the former President, such a rush could lead to destabilisation of the country;
- the adoption of a new constitution by the Parliament of the annexed by Russia Crimea on April 11th. The Basic Law, passed by 88 of the 100 deputies, as-

²⁰ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.rmf24.pl/raport-ukraina/fakty/news-parlament-krymu-chcemy-do-rosji-referendum-juz-16-marca,nld,1353099>.

²¹ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://kremlin.ru/news/20604>, 16.03.2014.

²² [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiate,2/zgromadzenie-ogolne-onz-potepia-aneksje-krymu-przeciw-m-in-korea-polnocna-i-syria,412302.html>.

²³ [online]. [available: 03.04.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3019/Artykul/1058868,Kalendarium-zdarzen-na-Ukrainie>.

sumes that the Republic of Crimea is the legal and democratic state being a part of the Russian Federation. In turn, the Republic of Crimea's relations with the Russian Federation are specified in the agreement. A chairman elected by the Parliament for a period of five years will become the head of the Republic of Crimea²⁴;

- Vladimir Putin's admittance (for the first time) that Russian troops were in Crimea before and after the referendum²⁵;
- the Malaysia Airlines plane crash in July 2014 originally admitted by Russian separatists, but later Ukrainian troops were blamed;
- the failed assassination attempt on the life of the head of the Ministry of the Interior, Arsen Avakov. July and August are the next months when the dangerous situation in Ukraine continues;
- the Prime Minister's of Ukraine call for the urgent meeting of the UN Security Council;
- the worsening of the crisis since August 28th 2014. On this day the Russian separatists shot down the helicopter MI-24 and the humanitarian convoy of 150 cars illegally crossed the border with Ukraine. The world and Ukraine say that Russia invaded Ukraine's territory;
- Angela Merkel's request to Vladimir Putin for further clarification on the reasons or Russian troops entering the territory of Ukraine;
- the debate of the United Nations Security Council in New York on the situation in Ukraine. During the extraordinary meeting convened at the request of Lithuania, plenty of harsh words were said about Russia ... *We cannot ignore the alarming reports of Russian involvement in the latest escalation of the conflict. If this information is confirmed, it will be a blatant infringement of international law and the UN Charter* - said the Deputy Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman²⁶ starting the meeting of the Security Council;
- establishing a new front in southern Ukraine to disperse Ukrainian forces occupied in the east taking Donetsk and Lugansk;
- fierce fighting in Donetsk and Lugansk. There are ongoing battles of trench nature. Moreover, shelling, the fight of the Ukrainian army for each of previously taken towns;
- the Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk's announcement on the war in Europe. Convening of the Security Council of Ukraine;
- the call of Ukraine for providing it with assistance;

²⁴ [online]. [available: 15.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kryzys_krymski#cite_note-336.

²⁵ [online]. [available: 15.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1374,title,Putin-przyznal-po-raz-pierwszy-ze-na-Krymie-byly-rosyjskiPwojska,wid,16545902,wiadomosc.html>.

²⁶ [online]. [available: 15.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: [http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1216770,Rosyjskie-wojska-walcza-z-armia-Ukrainy-Sa-zabici-\[relacja-z-28-sierpnia-2014\]](http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1216770,Rosyjskie-wojska-walcza-z-armia-Ukrainy-Sa-zabici-[relacja-z-28-sierpnia-2014]).

- the vote in the European parliament on the ratification of the association agreement with Ukraine;
- the signing of the ceasefire agreement between Ukraine - Russia – the OSCE in Minsk on September 5th 2014. The Prime Minister of Ukraine said that ... *the agreement will be achieved when three points will be met: ceasefire, removal of the Russian army, Russian bandits and terrorists and the renewal of border controls*²⁷.

However, the signed agreement does not, unfortunately, ensure the cessation of war operations. Regular military operations were still carried out. Separatists shot at Ukrainian positions including Debaltseve in eastern Ukraine. In October, this is where the situation was the most difficult. Separatists fired at Ukrainian positions and, what is more, they were directly attacked twice. They used launchers of the Grad type for firing Ukrainian positions. Militants again tried to storm the Donetsk airport with the support of artillery and mortars. Simultaneously with the activities there were still conducted attempts of a political settlement of the conflict in Ukraine. The Presidents of both countries agreed that at the Asia - Europe Meeting the next (hopefully final) peace talks would be reached. However, probably the most important information was the statement released by a spokesperson of the Kremlin on withdrawing Russian troops from the areas of eastern Ukraine.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE CRIMEAN SITUATION ON THE SECURITY OF POLAND

The situation that arose in the neighbour of ours should open a little wider eyes to many of our decision makers, on numerous levels, including the acceleration of the modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces and the increase of expenditure on the army. In spite of records throughout all documents concerning the security and defence of the state that say that no war on a greater scale can be expected, just only local conflicts, it is already known that the World and Poland are not safe. The war may break out at the least expected moment and we have to be by all means prepared for it. In order to achieve such a readiness, one of the priorities is to build the air defence and missile defence systems. Such military capabilities must be developed to be ready to defend the borders and perform defence and delaying operations in the first period of the conflict. The situation in Ukraine in a certain way also showed that it is necessary to put more effort into the work of the existing global procedures in order to avoid a situation that (as it was in a joke read on any Internet website) "Putin takes Crimea – the Union takes a stand on the issue". It would seem that in many situations taking place in Ukraine, more concrete and determined actions of world powers would be desirable.

Certainly, identifying the impact of the Crimean situation on the security of our country should begin with analysing the conflict from its very beginning. One ought to pay attention to many aspects, like the use of the media by the Russians in what was happening in eastern Ukraine to "heat" and manipulate the public. Today such infor-

²⁷ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://telewizjarepublika.pl/podpisano-rozejm-na-ukrainie-realizuje-sie-quotpokojoyquot-plan-putina,11218.html>.

mation operations can greatly affect the course of the conflict. According to the opinion polls, in our country almost 90% of the population followed online the events in Ukraine. Probably the vast majority of them wondered: How will the situation in Ukraine affect my - our safety?

Therefore, let us consider several key threats:

military security - the military security of our country will be affected by several factors such as the armed forces (their condition, equipment, training, readiness and ability to take immediate action), military alliances, access to new technologies as well as maintaining the capacity of repelling attacks of asymmetric nature. Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine shows that in this field we still have much to do. The necessity (already mentioned) of the modernisation of the armed forces and the increase of the financial means has become a fact which has been louder and louder spoken and written about and, moreover, which was also included in the policy statement of the Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz. An important issue - in a threat situation - is our membership to NATO which in the case of inevitable confrontation involves the development on the territory of Poland the Allied Forces of Reinforcement, a part of which would be the Polish Armed Forces. The task of these Forces will be counteracting, repelling aggression and prevent the development of the enemy's activities into the Polish territory. At present, Stanislaw Koziej loudly talks about ... *the possibility (in the long term) of an attack on Poland, emphasising at the same time that currently much more significant for Russia is to stop the march of Ukraine to the West*²⁸. An attack on a member of the North Atlantic Alliance would be unique in the history of NATO.

internal security - is an essential domain of the internal policy of the state, even though the character and kind of threats²⁹ have changed quite considerably. The sense of security of citizens, the protection of national assets, citizens' property as well as external borders are duties of many entities of the state. They can be assigned to almost all central and local government authorities operating in the field of internal security. The role of society functioning in all sorts of groups and communities cannot be diminished as well. The views on the function, purpose and character of the state have changed over years and mafia organisations, terrorist attacks began to appear. There has been an increase in aggression, violence, technical failures, natural disasters which caused the necessity of adopting appropriate measures to eliminate such dangers effectively.³⁰ Ukraine is our neighbour whose activities we have been supporting since 1991 and even though we are not party to the conflict, its autonomy and independence has always been the objective of our activity in the sphere of European security. One could risk a statement that in this are, as of today, there is no risk. Polish state borders are tight and secure. There are not any waves of refugees trying to enter the

²⁸ [online]. [available: 15.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1066096,Konflikt-o-Krym-Koziej-Polska-jest-zagrozona>.

²⁹ [online]. [available: 02.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1066096,Konflikt-o-Krym-Koziej-Polska-jest-zagrozona>.

³⁰ Compare: K. Wojtaszczyk, *Kompendium wiedzy o państwie współczesnym*, Liber, Warszawa 2000, p. 22-24.

territory of our country or terrorist attack attempts observed. As the old saying goes: "if you wish to have peace, then prepare to a war" - vigilance in this regard should be remained. An example of this could be joint exercises of a few uniformed formations on the eastern territory of our country.

economic security - is one of the most important elements of functioning of the state. Its importance in the security architecture is recognised and emphasised by many authors of works in the field of security. One of the most outspoken presentations in the matter reads as follows³¹ *in the tradition of thinking about safety, prosperity and wealth are situated among its conditions. For a long time happiness, prosperity and certainty of efforts undertaken by people for the purpose of realising their own life concepts (prolonging and improving the life) have depended on economic conditions. They have been part of, the pillar, the factor and the condition of security. They are expressed by a component called economic security. It is based on some wealth, prosperity, income (national) or a product (global) both produced and shared. The quite common belief is that wealth and prosperity significantly complement the happiness and safety. Placing this component among the cardinal pillars on which security rests is understood as such a form of existence and life which should ensure duration and survival, increase chances of its development as well as duration, survival certainty and freedom of development.*

The situation in Ukraine in a very adverse way influences the condition of Polish enterprises. Losses incurred at the beginning of the year reach several hundred million dollars. Compared to the same period in 2013, Poland has lost nearly 700 million dollars, and yet Ukraine was one of ten top countries importing goods from Poland. Only in January 2014 the drop in Polish exports to Ukraine reached 4.3 per cent, while in February it was already almost 18 per cent, and Ukraine found itself outside the ten biggest importers of Polish goods. It shows to what extent the Ukrainian economic destabilisation affected the functioning of our state. The lack of export of Polish goods caused big dissatisfaction among entrepreneurs. Particularly important are the issues connected with gas dependence on the East. As can be seen from Lukasz Pokrywka's (economist, Vice President of the Kosciuszko Institute) statement ... *the analysis of gas infrastructure in Poland in the view of future energy challenges and the development of the unconventional gas sector proves that in the years of 2010-2012 Polish energy security in the field of natural gas not only failed to improve but, because of the growing demand, we have been pushed even further into the arms of Russia. In 18 of the EU countries there is a very strong focus on a single source of imports, more than 4.000 points (in most cases it is Russia). The concentration of import in Poland is very high (8.050 points) and a small consolation is the relatively low level of the dependence of the consumption on gas imports (73.8%) due to the existence of domestic production. According to data from the Energy Regulatory Office, in 2012 the extraction of natural gas in Poland corresponded to 28% of annual demand, which only slightly exceeded the*

³¹ J. Świniarski, *Ekonomia wojenna i ekonomia pokojowa w systemie ogólnej teorii bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Ekonomika wojskowa i logistyka wojskowa – podobieństwa i różnice*, Materiały sympozjum, AON, Warszawa 1998 r., p. 29-30.

consumption of this resource by the household sector. Adding to this the capacity of the LNG terminal in Swinoujście (5 billion cubic metres) - the completion of which extended until 2015 - satisfying the annual demand from sources other than Russian ones will be 60%. All this assuming that the demand will not increase. A step towards gaining independence from eastern gas is also a virtual reverse on the Yamal pipeline and the construction of interconnectors, although these activities have been highly insufficient so far. Records in the conclusions of the European Council meeting on March 21st should be vetoed as threatening Polish economy, not only because Poland disagrees with the theory of global warming, but also because of the increased prices of CO2 emission allowances Poland will have to build gas power plants and import more gas from Russia, thus closing the existing cost-effective coal power plants and mines which affects badly the energy-intensive domestic industries³². Many political circles in the country warn our policy-makers against excessive optimism and urge for utmost caution as to "gas issues" that can be a real threat to economic and energy security of Poland.

CONCLUSION

The conflict in Ukraine has brought legitimate concerns about ensuring security in Europe. The recent research by CBOS indicate that 67% of our society fears a negative impact of the Crimean situation on maintaining European security, including of course the security of our country. Are these concerns are justified? Undoubtedly, this is one of the largest conflicts in the post-war history of the Old Continent, which carries war attributes, though it has not been declared directly. This is an international conflict, which includes numerous examples of violation of international law, as well as the annexation of Crimea³³. The Poles feel insecure (as shown by studies) and the threat flows from Russia. Certainly the danger has probably its historical roots.

When analysing the Crimean events one can be tempted to draw some conclusions in order to ensure the security of the country and enhance the potential and capabilities of our Armed Forces:

- more attention should be paid to the modernisation and the necessity to increase funding for the Armed Forces;
- the necessity to increase the size of our army on the eastern borders. This is also confirmed by even one of the last Minister Siemoniak's statements which relates specifically to the improvement of manning of military units stationing in the east up to 70, 80, 90% by 2017;
- the absolute need to build up our combat potential which will definitely deter a potential aggressor;

³² Ł. Pokrywka, the statement of 20.03.2014, [online]. [available: 27.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://instytutkosciuszki.salon24.pl/574931,bezpieczenstwo-ekonomiczne-polski-a-pek-2-0>.

³³ Aneksja (łac. annexio – przyłączenie) – zagarnięcie, przyłączenie przez jedno państwo całości lub części terytorium innego państwa, najczęściej przy użyciu siły lub w wyniku wygranej wojny. Współcześnie zakazana przez prawo międzynarodowe. [online]. [available: 29.10.2014]. Available on the Internet: <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aneksja>.

- the necessity (discontinued for some time) to have trained reserve forces, a territorial defence system;
- the need to address the concern to the Article V of the Washington Treaty, which does not provide *explicite*³⁴ military aid;
- the need for the presence in alliances guaranteeing assistance in crisis situations / a war;
- counteracting the possibility of the growing flow of refugees from territories covered by the war;
- the need for constant readiness of the state to respond to economic and financial emergency situations (crisis), etc.;
- the firm involvement of Poland on the international arena in a peaceful settlement to the conflict;
- the requirement to provide the air defence system;
- the obligation to maintain a high level of combat training of military units of the Polish Armed Forces.

Summarising "the Crimean events" it should be explicitly stated that they are the most serious challenge to our government within political, economic and military issues and directly related to national security. Probably they do not pose a direct war-danger, however, they should pay attention to such a possibility in the future.

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³⁴ Explicite – clear, specified



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