

Original article

Border guard peacetime capacities to counter armed diversionary operations carried out by external entities in the border zone of the Republic of Poland Analysis and proposals

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the possibility of carrying out subversive actions in eastern Poland in the current geopolitical situation. For this purpose, the authors have explained the essence of the undertakings referred to as subversion and diversionary activities. The concept of a new generation war of the Russian Federation and the establishment of the Russia's Special Operations Forces have been briefly described. It also discusses pretexts to take sabotage actions in eastern Poland and identifies potential targets of these actions. A significant part of the article is devoted to the analysis of activities countering subversion on the eastern border of Poland. Moreover, the creation of a new formation, which would take over the tasks related to the protection and defense of the eastern Polish border, has been proposed.

KEYWORDS

subversion, diversionary activities, special operations, Russia, Ukraine, BPC

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Introduction

When the armed conflict¹ broke out between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 2014, no one expected that it would grow into a war² and last for so long. While Cri-

¹ For the needs of the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP), the Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Studies (Sweden) developed a definition of an armed conflict "indicating that this is

mea was annexed by Russia practically with no human casualties, the attempt to separate the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts has claimed nearly 10,000 dead and more than twice as many wounded [1], and there is no apparent end to the war in sight. Ukrainian soldiers and pro-Russian separatists from the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic are "officially" and Russian soldiers [2, 3] "unofficially" involved in this armed confrontation.

Such a rapid annexation of Crimea by Russia, and then the destabilization of the two eastern regions of Ukraine in 2014, is almost a model example of subversion, where the "appearance" of the so-called "little green men" were preceded by actions targeted at the economic slowdown and military weakening of the state.

The questions, therefore, remain whether a similar scenario is likely in Poland, who could act as the fifth column in our country, and whether the existing formation responsible for ensuring security in the border zone has the forces and measures to conduct subversive and anti-subversive activities. At the same time, the authors would like to point out that this article raises the issue of the possibility of performing subversive activities by external entities during peacetime

Subversion – discussion of the issue

In order to explain the meaning of the subversion, we first have to point out that the subversion itself is closely related to the concept of "disinformation", which aims at "providing the enemy intelligence with messages hiding the sender's intentions and forcing it to treat the information given by its own intelligence as genuine or forcing a foreign intelligence to analyze inspired messages for a longer time"³. Disinformation can be strategic and tactical, and the latter, in turn, can be: political, economic and military.

a serious contradiction regarding power (rule) and/or territory involving the use of armed forces of both sides, of which at least one is represented by the state government, and the effect of which is at least 25 people killed as a result of the fighting". After: J. Reginia-Zacharski. *Analityczne definicje wojny*, [online]. Portal geopolitka.org. Available at: <http://www.geopolityka.org/analizy/jacek-reginia-zacharski-analityczne-definicje-wojny> [Accessed: 5 December 2016]. Cf. Uppsala Universitet. Definition of armed conflict, [online]. Available at: http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/definition_of_armed_conflict/ [Accessed: 5 December 2016].

² Researchers from Uppsala also divided conflicts by their intensity: 1) **low-intensity conflict** – at least 25 "people killed as a result of fighting" within one year, but less than 1000 "killed as a result of fighting" during the entire conflict, 2) **medium-intensity conflict** – at least 25 "people killed as a result of fighting" within one year and above 1000 during the entire conflict, but less than 1000 during the given year, 3) **war** – at least 1000 "killed as a result of fighting" within one year. J. Reginia-Zacharski *Analityczne definicje wojny*, [online]. Portal geopolitka.org. Available at: <http://www.geopolityka.org/analizy/jacek-reginia-zacharski-analityczne-definicje-wojny> [Accessed: 5 December 2016]. Cf. K. Eck. *A beginner's Guide to Conflict Data. Finding and Using the Right Dataset*. UCDP Paper, [online]. 2005;1. Available at: http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/15/a_15928-f_UCDP_paper1.pdf [Accessed: 5 December 2016].

³ The definition included in the instructions of the Second Division of the Polish Army Headquarters from May 1926. R. Brzeski. *Dezinformacja (Skrypt)*. Warszawa, [online]. 2011, p. 2. Available at: <https://socjo cybernetyka.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/dezinformacja-skrypt-1.pdf> [Accessed: 12 December 2016].

It is a special obligation of people who are part of the Polish government at given time to ensure both internal and external security to the country and its citizens (this also applies to those in other countries). It may also be related to countering any actions of other countries that harm the security of our state. The threats that our country has already encountered in the past and which may be potentially dangerous for our country include, among others:

- separatist movements (in the past related to, inter alia, the Communist Party of Western Belarus – the CPSU, the Communist Party of Western Ukraine – the CPWU and the Polish Communist Party – the PCP, and their youth wings) [4],
- terrorism⁴,
- espionage,
- subversion (e.g., activities of entities inspired by the USSR in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Republic of Poland),
- military conflict [Cf. 5, p. 101].

It can be stated that all the aforementioned threats share one common element, namely “subversion”. It derives from the Latin word “Diversio” and means the “upheaval”. Generally, most of the society associates subversion with blowing up tracks, bridges, and killing innocent people. This is obviously true, however, as indicated by Arnold Warchal and Przemyslaw Zukowski, subversive actions include sabotage activities, such as economic, propaganda, ideological or psychological ones, undertaken “by diversionary cells, which are qualified and targeted at precise operations, acting independently or through the below-mentioned entities engaged by them:

- agents, ideologically united people (e.g. agents of influence, agents – illegals),
- groups of social dissatisfaction,
- people who are unaware and of a low level of assertiveness,
- special forces” [5, p. 102-3].

When analyzing various definitions of subversion, the authors want to draw attention to five of them, namely, starting from the definition functioning in the 1920s in the General Staff of the Polish Army, through the one provided in the Polish language dictionary, then the definitions by Dr. Danuta Gibas-Krzak and Mr. Warchala and Mr. Zukowski, ending with the concept proposed by Miroslaw Minkin. The first definition defined subversion as “an action of enemy intelligence or special offices, whose task is the systematic destruction, paralysis, and weakening of life of a given state, regardless of the means used. The subversion is carried out by specially trained agents, activists of opposition political parties and people who sympathize with foreign countries” [6].

⁴ The acts of terrorism include the murder of Tadeusz Holowka, a deputy in the Sejm in 1931, and shooting the Minister of Internal Affairs Bronislaw Pieracki on June 15, 1934 in front of the entrance to the Social Club located at 3 Foksal Street in Warsaw. Both attacks were carried out by members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. *Morderstwo ministra Pierackiego. Zabil go ukraiński nacjonalista*, [online]. Portal Historia.org.pl. Available at: <http://historia.org.pl/2013/07/21/morderstwo-ministra-pierackiego-zabil-go-ukraiński-nacjonalista/> [Accessed: 13 December 2016].

The Polish language dictionary defines “a subversion as a sabotage or propaganda action carried out on enemy territory in order to disorganize its war activities, and as actions aimed at disrupting political and economic life of a state conducted with a view to achieving political gains” [7].

The definition by Ms. Gibas-Krzak indicates that it is “an organized activity of an armed or ideological nature conducted by a state or groups of national minorities against another state” [8, p. 174]. According to the authors, the quoted definition could be extended to include religious minorities. At the same time, the authors are convinced that Ms. Gibas-Krzak is right when saying that “the term subversion does not relate solely to actions realized in the period immediately preceding the armed conflict or carried out during its duration. Diversional actions may occur in any period, in relation to various places and areas of social and public life. They have both the character of ideological, propaganda, psychological and armed activities and are usually carried out using irregular forms. However, the goal always remains the same – the internal destabilization of the country, that is, the violation of the internal security system, which leads to the collapse of public order, psychosis of fear, uncertainty and lack of trust in the political system and state administration” [8, p. 174].

Warchal and Zukowski similarly define subversion, namely as “a hostile, autonomous and no-holds-barred activity of enemy special services or deliberately created organizations aimed to achieve the intended goal which is disrupting the functioning of the state” [5, p. 102]. They also believe that subversion does not have to be directly related to an armed conflict, but it can be conducted “at any time, in a longer timeframe, as well as at different levels or aspects of social life” [5, p. 102-3].

According to Miroslaw Minkina sabotage and diversionary operations are “actions aimed at weakening the military, economic or political strength of the state by reducing morale, loyalty, a sense of confidence of its inhabitants and trust in the fundamental state institution. These are often activities that are not easily identified since their effects are difficult to assess and measure” [9, p. 306].

Summing up, it can be concluded from the presented definitions that sabotage activities will always aim at violating the state security system at various levels of its functioning. While measures applicable to implementing diversionary operations will be based on “non-military” forces in the initial phase, and only later, if necessary, military (special) forces will be launched, which may lead, for example, special reconnaissance (providing information on the environment and threats, as well as the impact assessment, etc.), military support (e.g., training, material and technical support, the use of local forces for combat operations – organized crime, separatists), direct actions (e.g., for targets with a significant operational and strategic value), and the combination of previously mentioned activities (e.g., for the purpose of misleading as to the actual aggressor) [10, p. 9].

“The activity of the aggressor’s special forces in the territory of the victim of the attack is the final stage of the act of subversion. Their activity is highly dangerous for the already weakened national security system. The entity submitted to acts of subversion is

not able to withstand perfectly prepared direct actions against personal goals (i.e., people holding important positions), as well as critical infrastructure (i.e., objects essential for security and defense of the state). Operations of special forces consisting in the neutralization of objects valuable from the military, economic, as well as administrative and state point of view constitute a prelude to the invasion of conventional troops and the acquisition of total control over the territory or a part of the country, which is significant for the aggressor" [10, p. 9; 11, p. 14-7; 12, p. 232-52].

The concept of the New Generation War of the Russian Federation – the Special Operations Forces

The length of the Polish border is currently 3409 km [13]. Poland borders with countries together with which it both NATO and the European Union member, i.e., to the west with Germany – 461.58 km [13], to the south with the Czech Republic – 785.66 km and Slovakia – 517.72 km, and to the north-east with Lithuania [13] – the relatively short section of 102.41 km. Therefore, it seems that no acts of subversion are to be expected in the foreseeable future⁵. The length of the state border with those countries amounts to 1867.37 kilometers, which is 54.7% of the total length of the national frontier.

Whereas a different situation can be observed on the eastern and northern borders. In the south-east, Poland's neighbor is the Republic of Ukraine with the land border of the length of 526.24 km [13], whose striving for joining the EU enjoys the considerable support from Poland. That does not mean that in Ukraine there are no political forces hostile to Poland, which can conduct sabotage operations in the border region independently or being inspired by somebody else⁶.

One can also see that the Ukrainian nationalism under the UON-UPA banner, which is dangerous for the Poles, is now recovering slowly but systematically, and revisionist visions about our common border have appeared [See: 14-19]. Another of our neighbors, namely the Russian Federation that together with the Republic of Belarus forms the Union State, may take advantage of the above⁷. In the east, Poland has the land

⁵ However, it cannot be completely ruled out that no subversive activities will be carried out in those areas. According to the authors, if they were to be carried out, for example, in the western part of our country, this could indicate at least final preparations for the entry of conventional forces into our country so as to divert the attention away from the main area of the north-eastern region of Poland.

⁶ A spokesperson for the nationalistic, radical political organization Right Sector Andriy Tarasenko said that "justice would require that Przemysl and a dozen or so districts return to Ukraine". At the same time, he stated that the return of this land should take place "in a diplomatic way. We are not an imperial nation, we do not reach for other people's lands, and we only want what is ours." *Lider banderowcow: ludobojstwo na Wołyniu to brednia*, [online]. Portal Rzeczpospolita.pl. Available at: <http://www.rp.pl/artukul/107684,1083009.html> [Accessed: 10 December 2016].

⁷ The Union State of Russia and Belarus (*Rus. Союзное государство России и Беларуси*) – is also referred to as the **Union of Belarus and Russia** (ZBiR), the **Union of Russia and Belarus** (ZRiB) or simply the Union State – is a confederation of two states, i.e., the Russian Federation and Belarus, aimed at bringing about the economic integration in the future. A. Karbowski. *Panstwo Zwiazkowe Rosji i Bia-*

border of 407.48 km [13] with Belarus, and in the north, our country has the land 209.73 km long border with the Russian Federation and the sea border with a length of 398.4 km [13], a part of which constitutes the Polish-Russian border. The total section of the border with the Union State amounts to 719.62 km, which is 21.1% of the Polish total border, and after the addition of the Polish-Ukrainian border, the length of the Polish eastern border increases to 1245.86 km [13], which gives 36.52% of the total length of the Polish borders. Importantly, it should be noted that our eastern borders are at the same time the external borders of the European Union.

In the authors' opinion, such a long section of the land state border creates a real danger of the possibility for subversive and sabotage groups to penetrate into the territory of Poland, as well as enables providing supplies to groups of social discontent inspired by, for instance, foreign special services.

On March 6, 2013, the Russian side revealed that a new formation under the name of the Special Operations Forces of the Russian Federation (SOF) and was established in the Russian Armed Forces in 2009 under the supervision of the Head of the GRU⁸. Its operations are directed by the Special Operations Forces Command, which is also responsible for the cooperation of the SOF with other military units and the Spetsnaz forces⁹ of internal armies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Security Forces and Foreign Intelligence Service.

The SOF are designed to operate in both peacetime and during a war, and their actions in the vast majority are based on conducting special operations and, to a lesser extent, on intelligence activities. The Russians treat special operations as special subversive actions or as creating, supporting and fighting using irregular forces, thereby including among them:

lorusi, [online]. Portal Geopolityka.pl. Available at: <http://geopolityka.net/panstwo-zwiazkowe-rosji-ibia-lorusi/> [Accessed: 9 November 2016].

⁸ **Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU)** (*Rus.* Главное Разведывательное Управление, *Głównoje Razwiedywatelnoje Uprawlenie*) the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, and after reforms in 2004, the Chief Board of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation). GRU was established on November 5, 1918, and since then it has been widely known as military intelligence.

⁹ Units defined colloquially as **spetsnaz** (*Rus.* спецназ, an acronym derived from the term *подразделение специального назначения*, i.e., a subunit of special purpose forces) have a lot of meanings in Russia. The designation refers to military formations, such as land and maritime special units under the sovereignty of the Main Intelligence Directorate (i.e., the Operational and Tactical Intelligence Directorate), such as the 45th Spetsnaz Regiment of the Airborne Troops of the Russian Federation, the 3rd Guards Warsaw–Berlin Spetsnaz Brigade, and other formations that temporarily perform intelligence and diversional tasks. In addition, they are the formations included in the security bodies and internal troops subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, such as the Directorate “A” also called “Alfa”, the Directorate “B” formerly called “Vypel”, the Special Operations Directorate – subject to the FSB Special Purpose Center, the special purpose unit “Zaslou”, as well as the “Rus”, “Scyt” units – internal troops and Special Rapid Response Squads being part of the Main Directorate for Fighting Organized Crime. M. Wojnowski. *Koncepcja „wojny nowej generacji” w ujeciu strategow Sztabu Generalnego Sil Zbrojnych Federacji Rosyjskiej*. Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego. 2015;13(7), p. 25-6.

- causing panic and disorganization among the military and civilian personnel of the enemy,
- conducting intelligence and diversional activities towards the enemy's critical infra-structure facilities,
- carrying out destructive actions against the enemy's operational potential,
- elimination of military commanders and political leadership of hostile states [20, p. 15-31].

Providing information on the establishment of the Special Operations Forces coincided with the presentation of the concept of a new generation war¹⁰ made by the Head of the General Staff of the Russian Federation General Valery Gerasimov in the first quarter of 2013, in which he gave the following reason for their creation:

“The course of the so-called colorful revolutions in Africa and the Middle East have highlighted the changes that have occurred in the ways of waging war, which poses a serious challenge for military science. The precise determination of the boundary between peace and war have ceased to be possible. General Gerasimov clarified that

¹⁰ In the West, this concept is known as the hybrid warfare. The word “hybrid” is derived from the Latin language and it means crossing or mixing different, unmatched features, elements, objects, resulting in “something or someone” new, different, the so-called “hybrid”. A. Gruszczak. *Hybrydowosc wspolczesnych wojen – analiza krytyczna*. In: W. Sokala, B. Zapala (eds.). *Asymetria i hybrydowosc – stare armie wobec nowych konfliktow*. Warszawa: Biuro Bezpieczenstwa Narodowego; 2011, p. 10-1. Thus, the term *hybrid warfare* determines the state in which the “activity of one of the warring sides would combine methods, forms and means characteristic of various military and non-military activities”. L. Skoneczny. *Wojna hybrydowa – wyzwanie przyszlosci? Wybrane zagadnienia*. Przegląd Bezpieczenstwa Wewnetrznego. 2015; Special Ed., p. 40. Contrary to widespread opinion, the authors wish to point out that the name “hybrid warfare” is not associated with any unprecedented way of waging war. Already in previous decades and even centuries, all possible ways of combating, including the currently fashionable “separatists” who were then referred to as insurgents, partisans, oppressed subjects or defenders of faith, were used during armed conflicts. This can be seen, for example, in the fights during the colonization of Central, Southern and Northern America, when the “white man” was setting one tribe of Indians against other tribes, while promising them some benefits, which were hardly ever fulfilled. Wars were conducted in Europe and the Middle East using faith as a reason, where religious minorities in another country were considered “separatists”, and as is known religious wars are the most bloody – this could be seen, for instance, during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, or even currently in the Middle East. During the Second World War, disinformation, subversion, espionage and various types of partisan groups guided by ideology were also used on a considerable scale. References to a war waged with all available means, including the use of deceit, subversion and disinformation, can be found in the works of some theoreticians such as *Sztuka wojny. Traktaty (Art of War. Treaties)* by Sun Tzu and *O wojnie (About the War)* by Carl von Clausewitz: Sun Tzu. *Sztuka wojny. Traktaty*. Gliwice: Helion; 2004; C. von Clausewitz. *O wojnie. Podrecznik stratega*. Gliwice: Wydawnictwo Helion; 2013. However, it is obvious that technology and technique is currently much more developed and modern. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the authors, these are only measures (forms) of running a war, but the methods of waging war have not changed to such an extent that it would be legitimate to talk about a new generation of war. The only thing one can notice in the new way of leading wars is the departure from the arrangements of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, for example when it comes to the issue of official declaration of war or not attacking civilians – not veterans. Such conduct of conflicts brings, in the authors' opinion, the countries of Western civilization to the way of conducting a battle used by terrorists, and which is commonly considered to be evil, dishonest, uncivilized.

those actions might consist in political isolation, economic sanctions, a blockade of the sea, air and land routes, threatening to use force, and even the introduction of a contingent of international peacekeeping forces under the pretext of defending human rights. **A special place in such a vision regarding conducting military operations was to be occupied by clandestine military undertakings, including activities of special forces** [highlighting added by the authors], and means of information warfare. Moreover, he pointed out that the subsequent phase of the next generation war would follow the implementation of non-military measures. **Armed actions would be initiated during peacetime by using small, mobile armed groups or irregular formations, without a prior declaration of war on the enemy state. The fight would take the form of high-maneuver, non-contact activities carried out by various armed groups, including special forces. The main goal of the war was to destroy the military and economic potential of the country being attacked by using short-term, precise assaults against critical infrastructure** [highlighting added by the authors]. The special operations forces would be widely employed as well. The battle would be fought simultaneously on land, sea and air, while commanding the armed forces and their actions was to be led in one information space. **Furthermore, the so-called military-civilian component, that is, paramilitary and various armed groups participation takes part in the confrontation** [highlighting added by the authors]. The so-called strategy of indirect actions, which results in the transfer of conflict into spheres where the enemy does not have sufficient potential to resolve it (it allows neutralizing its superiority)" [20, p. 14-5].

As is clear from the presented concept of the new generation war, the establishment of the Special Operations Force in 2009 was a deliberate move, since, under this concept, this is special forces that will have a special role in the way of waging wars.

One had the opportunity to see the consequences of these changes and their effectiveness during the Crimean operation, which can be called the first special operation of a strategic type in history. In this successful large-scale operation, special forces supported the activities of "separatists" and irregular paramilitary formations [20, p. 32]. Moreover, if the words of Sierhij Wysoki, a deputy to the Ukrainian Supreme Council, are right – "Vladimir Putin has precise plans for continuing the hybrid war not only on the territory of Ukraine, but also other countries. (...) at the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation at the end of January the Head of the Russian President's Administration, Sergei Ivanov, presented the concept of the so-called Russia's Foreign Legion – a secret paramilitary formation that would break up the national structures of the Baltic States, Poland, Greece and other European countries. The legion would be composed of between 10,000 and 15,000 people, and its full development was to be completed by 2018. The plan of the formation's activities was to anticipate the organization of a military-political underground in the Baltic States, Belarus, Kazakhstan and other countries, and the creation of an underground information network and open actions to establish autonomous regions in the areas inhabited by the Russian-speaking population" [21, p. 22] – this could mean that the war in Ukraine is only the beginning of the process of destabilization of our region, deliberately caused by the Russians. The only question that remains is what the policy of the Russian Fed-

eration aims at and whether it is only about maintaining prestige and returning to the superpower policy of Tsarist Russia and then the Soviet Union.

When it comes to the term “special operations” (SO), they are military operations conducted by specially designated, organized, trained and equipped forces that apply tactics, operational techniques and principles on the use that go beyond the standards adopted in conventional forces. Special operations are conducted in the full spectrum of the conflict independently, in cooperation or in coordination with conventional forces to achieve political, military, information and economic objectives. Political and military reasons may require action without publicity, using secretive or confidential techniques and acceptance of the degree of physical and political risk unacceptable in conventional forces operations [22].

While diversionary activities involve direct destruction, damage to communication objects, means of transport, devices and more important equipment in order to periodically or permanently prevent their use. The impact of a special group can have different intensity. A subversive activity should always be purposeful and carried out by full-time special groups. Any exploratory or subversive activity carried out by a special group may cause intimidation and confusion, and sometimes even panic [23, p. 13-4].

“Special groups may be deployed to the area of their operation on the territory of eastern and south-eastern Poland by land or air. The penetration of the group using the land route is thought to be one of the most commonly used. Nevertheless, this is air transport that is the most suitable means of deployment, because it is not very complicated, it is quick and it allows long-distance transport. Furthermore, with the use of helicopters, it also reduces, among others, losses during landing and enables precise landing of the group even in the forested area” [10, p. 11]. The authors have attempted to indicate the probable goals of the special operations being carried out. These can be as follows:

- strategic military, industrial and energy facilities (e.g., conventional power plants, hydropower plants, high-voltage transmission lines, refineries),
- strategic underground storage of propellants and gas, gas pipelines and pipelines,
- communication facilities such as: bridges, viaducts, railway junctions, harbors, river and sea ferries – destructions are made in places that are difficult to access, which make it impossible to perform quick repair works, for example, in moorlands, wetlands, and places for crossing rivers,
- hydrotechnical devices such as sluices and dams: industrial plants using toxic industrial chemicals (TIC) in the production process – in order to cause, for example, significant damage, prevent heavy equipment from overcoming the area, stop the pursuit, etc.,
- telecommunications devices – aimed at impeding communication between and coordination of forces carrying out anti-diversionary activities,

- carrying out clandestine abductions and killings abroad, as well as exfiltration of persons who may possess state secrets¹¹, modern weapons and documents,
- using “separatists” to conduct armed struggle, related to the delivery of weapons and training [12, p. 20-1, 107],
- activities aimed at obstructing the functioning of the local population may also be carried out, e.g., deprivation of local access to running water and food products combined with propaganda would be a pretext for the local population to turn away from the state authorities, because they cannot ensure their safety.

In the opinion of the authors, the target of special operations may also be the facilities of military units, the Border Guard posts, police stations and field administration facilities located at a short distance from the border, which will allow the safe withdrawal of the subversive group after the operation has been accomplished¹².

The presence of sabotage groups in a given area may be indicated by “the disappearance of food products and, for example, breeding pigs on farms, thefts from shops located in rural or even urban areas. Another way of gaining food can be legal shopping in stores by the ‘plain-clothes’ members of these groups. It is highly likely, because in the border regions of the north, north-east and east of Poland, making purchases in the store by foreigners speaking Russian or broken Polish is not unusual, thus it will not raise any suspicions” [24].¹³

Possible pretexts for diversionary operations in eastern Poland

Potential objectives of these activities

When analyzing the case of Ukraine as well as other news reports about the activities of Russian minorities in the Baltic countries [25; 26] and Transnistria¹⁴, one can try to

¹¹ On September 5, 2014, in the Estonian-Russian border crossing area of Luhamaa, Eston Kohver, an officer of the Estonian Internal Security Service KAPO (counterintelligence and organized crime), was abducted from the territory of Estonia to Moscow by officers of the Federal Security Service (FSB) of the Russian Federation. J. Hyndle-Hussein. *Powazny incydent w stosunkach estonsko-rosyjskich*, [online]. Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia. Available at: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-09-10/powazny-incydent-w-stosunkach-estonsko-rosyjskich> [Accessed: 6 January 2017].

¹² The Border Guard posts are usually located in close proximity to the state border and are not fortified. Moreover, there are objects of the 9th Armored Cavalry Brigade in Braniewo (7.5 km from the state border), the 20th Bartoszycka Mechanized Brigade in Bartoszyce (about 10 km from the state border), the 9th Warminski Reconnaissance Regiment in Lidzbark Warminski (about 30 km from the state border), the 1st Mazurska Artillery Brigade in Węgorzewo (about 15 km from the state border), the 15th Goldap Anti-aircraft Regiment in Goldap (the town area adjoins the state border), and the 18th Białystok Regiment in Białystok (about 50 km from the state border).

¹³ Cf. *Materiały do szkolenia taktycznego zwiadowcy i grupy specjalnej*. Inspektorat Szkolenia, Szkol/455/72. Warszawa: MON; 1972, p. 27: “Sometimes it may turn out that the difficulties – connected with the inability to take all the resources needed by the group to live and act – can be solved by supplementing them with local resources, those gained on the enemy or as a result of air drops.”

¹⁴ On March 18, 2014, after the self-proclaimed, internationally unrecognized Republic of Crimea decided to join the Russian Federation, the Transnistrian parliament requested the Russian parliament for

look for a pretext for conducting military diversionary activities by external entities on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

In the beginning one should consider the use by external entities of the already implemented Ukrainian scenario based on the ethnic background, or “ethnic separatists”. Firstly, the quantitative, percentage and regional composition of the inhabitants of Poland should be determined in order to specify whether such a scenario is possible. The National Census of Population and Housing from 2011 proves helpful. In the Republic of Poland, 46 787 thousand people were members of the Belarusian nationality, which constituted 0.12% of the population of our country [27]. The vast majority of them, i.e., 39 105 000 people, lived in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, which accounted for 83.6% of the total population [27]. There were even less, namely 13 046 thousand persons declaring the national-ethnic Russian origin, which gave 0.03% of the population of Poland. The largest cluster of those people amounting to 3 125 thousand people were in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, which accounted for 24% of all people identifying with national-ethnic Russian backgrounds [27]. Thus, the total population declaring Russian or Belarussian national-ethnic affiliation is 59 833 thousand, which constitutes 0.15 per cent of the total population living in Poland included in the 2011 National Population and Housing Census. It seems, therefore, that such a relatively small number of people of Russian or Belarusian origin is a too weak argument for the implementation of the Ukrainian scenario. Thereby, it is unlikely that Russia would “play” with a nationality card in Poland.

It is interesting to know that over 26% of the 51 000 people indicating their Ukrainian nationality live in the northern part of the Warminsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship [27]. According to the authors, this may also be used when attempting to cause social unrest in the border zone near the Polish-Russian border.

The significant inflow of the Ukrainians to Poland has been noticeable since 2014. Experts, among others of the National Bank of Poland, point out that in “2015, in relation to work (legal and not fully legal), about 1 million Ukrainians resided in Poland for a shorter or longer period. However, the authors of the report emphasize that at the same time, due to the short-term nature of their work, approximately 500 000 citizens of Ukraine were staying in Poland” [28]. It can be speculated that this situation was maintained or even increased in the subsequent years. In a situation of exacerbation of relations with our eastern neighbors such a great number of people may be used as, for example, the column V, and not so much by the Russian Federation as by the Ukrainian authorities. It is obvious that this does not apply to all Ukrainian citizens staying in Poland. However, given that not more than 1 percent of people can be used for this purpose – some of whom may already have gained combat experience in Donbas, we receive from 5 000 to 10 000 thousand potentially dangerous people who can be employed by external entities to conduct subversive activities. The Minister of De-

the same. *Naddniestrze tez chce do Rosji. Separatysci apeluja do Moskwy o zmianę prawa*, [online]. Portal tvn24.pl. Available at: <http://www.tvn24.pl/naddniestrze-tez-chce-do-rosji-separatysci-apeluja-do-moskwy-o-zmiane-prawa,408915,s.html> [Accessed: 9 November 2016].

fense of Ukraine Oleksandr Kuzmiuk pointed in the interview to the possibility of using the Ukrainians as the fifth column [29].

Another pretext for conducting diversionary operations in Poland by foreign entities is the recently appearing in the media information about the so-called “Suwalki Isthmus”. In the authors’ opinion, conducting sabotage operations in the Suwalki Isthmus will aim to cover the left wing of the Russian troops, whose main task will be the occupation of the Baltic states, i.e., Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Suwalki Isthmus is about 100 km long and is located between the tri-border of Russia (the Kaliningrad District)-Lithuania-Poland and the tri-border of Lithuania-Belarus-Poland. It is a hilly area, mostly wooded with numerous lakes and rivers. All this will be conducive to the operation of external subversive groups in this area, for example the SOF of the Russian Federation, and will simultaneously hinder the operation of the regular armored and mechanized troops of the Polish Armed Forces. At the same time, the proximity of the Polish-Russian and Polish-Belarusian borders will provide the Special Operations Forces with artillery support¹⁵ and protection against the air forces¹⁶, without having to send their regular forces to the territory of Poland – likewise, in the case of the east of Ukraine where the firing of Ukrainian forces is carried out from the territory of Russia [30] – and will allow providing supplies for subversive groups operating on the Suwalki Isthmus. However, the authors believe that this scenario will be possible only on the condition that Russia decides to an open conflict with NATO and intends – as in 1940 – to incorporate the Baltic countries in their entirety or part of them into its own country.

A religious reason is the last pretext presented by the authors in this publication. According to the report of the Central Statistical Office on “Religious confessions in Po-

¹⁵ It is enough to mention the 122 mm BM-21 Grad rocket artillery system, the 220 mm BM-27 Uragan rocket artillery system, the 300 mm BM-30 Smerch rocket artillery system, which are undergoing modernization works respectively as Tornado-G, Tornado-U and Tornado-S to increase the range of these systems from the current 90 km to even 200 km after modernization. *Modernizacja rosyjskich systemów rakietowych Smiercz*, [online]. Portal Defence24.pl. Available at: <https://www.defence24.pl/modernizacja-rosyjskich-systemow-rakietowych-smiercz> [Accessed: 15 December 2016].

¹⁶ Currently, after modernization, the Pancyr-S anti-aircraft artillery and missile systems have a range of up to 30 km. *Rosja: Zmodyfikowany system przeciwlotniczy Pancyr jeszcze w tym roku*, [online]. Portal Defence24.pl. Available at: <https://www.defence24.pl/rosja-zmodyfikowany-system-przeciwlotniczy-pancyr-jeszcze-w-tym-roku> [Accessed: 15 December 2016]. However, in the Kaliningrad region and in Belarus there are already S-300 anti-aircraft missiles (the range of up to 200 km), S-400 (the range of up to 400 km), and in the near future the armed forces are to be equipped with the FR S-500 (the range of up to 600 km). *Przeciwrakietowy S-500 dla Rosji. Zestrzeli pociski międzykontynentalne?*, [online]. Portal Defence24.pl. Available at: <https://www.defence24.pl/przeciwrakietowy-s-500-dla-rosji-zestrzeli-pociski-miedzykontynentalne?> [Accessed: 15 December 2016]; *Białorus planuje kupić Iskandery i S-400*, [online]. Portal Defence24.pl. Available at: <http://www.defence24.pl/302809,bialorus-planuje-kupic-iskandery-i-s-400> [Accessed: 15 December 2016]; *Rosja dostarczyła Białorusi dwa rosyjskie systemy rakietowe S-400*, [online]. Portal Sputnik Polska. Available at: <https://pl.sputniknews.com/polityka/201606283279539-Rosja-Bialorus-S-400/> [Accessed: 15 December 2016]. Cf. L. Kosciuk. *Bitwa o Przesmyk Suwalski*, [online]. Portal Wszystko co najważniejsze. Available at: <https://wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl/lech-kosciuk-bitwa-o-przesmyk-suwalski/> [accessed on: 15 December 2016].

land 2012-2014” [31], during the National Census of Population and Housing from 2011 156 thousand people answering the question about belonging to a given religion declared their affiliation to the Orthodox Church, which constituted 0.44% of the population with an established religious status [31, p. 52, 195]. It is more than three times as many people as those declaring Russian or Belarussian nationality. Although the Orthodox Church in Poland achieved the total independence (autocephaly) in 1925, however it does not seem to be completely unfounded to say that it is religiously closer to the Orthodox Church in Russia than to the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. The more so because some of the faithful can identify themselves with the Russian Orthodox Church.

It is widely known that after Joseph Stalin allowed the Orthodox Church to function officially again in 1943 in the USSR, the subsequent highest priests were secret, active collaborators of the NKVD and its successor, the KGB [32, p. 747-78]. Representatives of the Orthodox Church, and thus the masses of the faithful as well as religion itself were an instrument of foreign policy implemented by the USSR [32, p. 747-78; 33]. Therefore, it is highly probable that presently the Russian government also uses the Orthodox Church to pursue policy.

It is noteworthy that the number of followers of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (PAKP) has remained at the level of about 155 thousand followers for 17 years, but the number of clergymen at that time almost doubled, i.e., to the number of 472 [31, p. 51-2]. If one looks at the percentage distribution of the population declaring belonging to churches and religious associations other than the Roman Catholic Church in Poland in 2011, it must be concluded that in the Podlaskie voivodeship, in the Hajnowka powiat, there are above 50% of Orthodox believers, in the Bielski and Siemiatycze powiats – between 25-50%, in the Białostocki powiat and in the city of Białystok from 10 to 25%, and in the Sokolski powiat up to 10% [31, p. 198]. All these powiats are located at the Polish-Belarusian border.

It should also be pointed out that followers of the Islamic faith and tradition also reside in Poland. According to the National Census of 2011, their number fluctuates around 4 700, and there are about 30 priests [31, p. 142-8]. These people mainly live in the vicinity of Białystok and Warsaw and are concentrated around the Muslim Religious Union in the Republic of Poland, the Ahl-ul-Bayt Islamic Assembly and the League of Muslims of the Republic of Poland. The followers of Islam in Poland are, among others, the descendants of the Tatars brought to Poland at the end of the 14th century by Prince Witold [31] and those who came to our country in the last two decades of Chechnya [31]. It is the latter that can be used by outside entities for diversionary activities. It is no secret that the president of the Chechen republic, Ramazan Kadyrov, until recently had control over several special ethnic battalions (Siewier, Jug), as well as the Special Rapid Response Group “Terek” (SOBR “Terek” – special units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to fight the most dangerous organized crime) [34], which he somehow “lent” to operations in, for example, the territory of eastern Ukraine [35]. “The Chechens also share their experience and training with other special units, as evidenced by the establishment of the International Training Center for Special Purpose

Forces in Gudermes” [34]. There was also information that the Chechens who are involved in the conflict in Syria serve in the Russian Military Police appointed by Vladimir Putin in 2006 [36]. As a matter of fact, the appointment of the Rosgvardia, i.e., the National Guard of the Russian Federation, in 2016 led to a change in the subordination of all the power structures subordinate to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [37], including several core Kadyrov units, e.g. the protection regiment (formerly Neft Polk, now the regiment of the so-called “wniewiedomstwiennaja ochrana” (internal national protection) and the SOBR “Terek” Spetsnaz (two companies) [34].

The authors in no way accuse all Orthodox and Muslim believers of acting to the detriment of the Polish state. Nevertheless, the professed faith, a specific nationality, and each of these factors individually or in combination may cause that the actions of Russian-Belarusian diversionary – sabotage groups and agentries may find support – or even broader assistance – in this environment. Such a situation is not a purely theoretical consideration. As was the case in the past during World War II, the Polish partisans in the Eastern Borderlands mostly had support in the civilian population, which was of Polish nationality or belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

Summarizing this part, it cannot be ruled out that external entities may refer to family, ethnic and religious criteria when recruiting their employees [Cf. 9, p. 327-8]. An entity that wants to conduct agentural and subversive activities on a foreign territory should first gain sympathy – or even cooperation – with the population living in the anticipated theater of activities. Such a connecting thread may turn out to be – and it often did in the past – ethnic origin or faith¹⁷.

¹⁷ The ideology was previously present as the link, but nowadays it has ceased to have such a great influence. On the other hand, the connection between special services and organized cross-border crime will play a greater role than the ideology. Boleslaw Piasecki also mentions this possibility in his report. “The issue of border protection is also of particular importance in the context of internal security and counterintelligence. Various studies as well as experts’ statements suggest that in the case of the Russian special services, one can talk about the permeation of structures of the former Soviet and the current Russian special services and organized crime. There is no doubt that Russian organized crime, which is most often of a cross-border nature, is used by the Russian secret services. A large part of the criminal activity takes place with the knowledge of state factors, which are often involved in corruption practices and accept them. It is worth noting that the members of Russian criminal groups, also those involved in border crime, include former special services officers. This constitutes an element integrating the system of services and crime, which guarantees not only additional income, but also increases the recognition and range of available tools. There is no doubt that, if necessary, the Russian special services use the resources of criminal groups that can function as both intermediaries and filters masking the participation of services. It can be seen that such an action coincides with the modus operandi of the tsarist, Soviet and now Russian special services. Deceptive elements (maskirovka) constitute an absolute basis for the activities of not only Russian services or armed forces, but in general Russian statehood. Over the centuries of Russian statehood, the key element of the state’s strategy was not only to prevent the right perception of the state, but also carry out very complicated operations aimed at deceiving the nations and elites of other countries as to the real Russia.” B. Piasecki. *Ochrona granic państwowych RP, a bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne*. Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Studiów Strategicznych; 2015, p. 22-3.

Countering subversion in the eastern borderland of Poland

Consideration should be given to another aspect of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, namely the so-called problem of aggression below the threshold of war. This is even more important because “hybrid war can be used by one of the parties to the conflict for deliberately limiting the scale of conducted military operations in order to make it impossible to clearly determine the state of war and aggressor, and thus prevent the international community’s reaction. This is a substantial issue since it may have an impact on the provision of allied assistance to one of the NATO member states in the future. According to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO countries are **obliged to provide mutual assistance only in the event of an armed attack** [highlighting added by the authors] against one of them. The nature of the hybrid warfare activities, their ambiguity, the mutual interpenetration of the state of war and peace cause that in this case serious legal doubts may arise in relation to what should be understood by the term “armed assault” or whether they are only open military actions. Or whether an armed attack is dealt with already at the time when the so-called little green people are under-taking activity” [38, p. 45].

When analyzing the way in which the conflict in Ukraine was initiated, the conclusion may be drawn that “Russia has carried out a very thorough analysis of the state’s ability to act in a situation of limited armed conflict. Probably as a result of this analysis, there were developed operational schemes using armed military diversionists who, in cooperation with the separatists, led the Ukrainian authorities to lose control over a part of the country’s territory. One of the reasons, apart from the activities of the Russian agency, that made such operations successful was the reform of the border services in Ukraine, i.e., the liquidation of Border Guard Troops and the establishment of the Border Guard Service of Ukraine. The above resulted in the creation of a gap in the state protection system, consisting in the lack of a force formation in the structures, which would be capable of taking immediate action against military subversive groups. The newly established Border Guard Service was deprived of heavy equipment and weapons, as well as tactical training enabling an equal fight against an enemy. The situation was aggravated by the fact of high inertia related to the launch of combat operations by units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the lack of trust towards the senior commanders due to the fact that they were corrupted and infiltrated by special services of a foreign state” [24, p. 165].

Therefore, the Polish state should have the forces and means to independently counteract subversive and sabotage acts. It should be borne in mind that the area of activity of the special group in the strength of one team (6-10 people) is about 50-100 km², while of a platoon (3 teams) it is already 100-200 km² [11, p. 11]. A higher number of diversionary groups will operate on a proportionately larger region.

“The Border Guard is the institution that should physically combat the actions of subversive and sabotage groups while protecting the state border and the border zone during peace-time. Additionally, in the border area it can be supported by Police officers, and in terms of intelligence information also by other institutions conducting operational and reconnaissance activities” [24, p. 160].

In order to be able to execute anti-diversionary actions, the Border Guard and the Police should have an adequate number of properly trained officers as well as equipment and armaments appropriate for this type of activity. However, it is clear from the generally available and author's research that both institutions do not conduct anti-diversionary trainings¹⁸, are not properly equipped¹⁹, and officers of the Bieszczadzki Border Guard Unit do not have firearms while on duty at the crossings the Polish-Ukrainian border²⁰.

In support of the aforementioned claims referring to the failure to prepare the Border Guard for fulfilling its statutory tasks in the field of protection and defense of the state border [39, Art. 1(2); 40, Art. 7 (1) pkt 3], the statement by Senior Warrant Officer Agnieszka Golias, spokesperson of the Commander-in-Chief of the Border Guard, posted on defence24.pl is quoted: "According to the Regulation of the Minister of the Internal Affairs of May 9, 2014, on the arms of the Border Guard, in addition to guns, we also have, among others, (...), carbines, rifles or machine guns. Each officer has small arms as the personal equipment, because the Border Guard, as a border-migration type formation with police powers, has equipment that is adequate for such formations. The basic arming of officers is intended for **personal protection**. In the event of an armed conflict, the defense of the state border with a state that is a party to the conflict is taken over by the Armed Forces, **hence no need to equip the Border Guard with service weapons typical of the battlefield, or heavier defensive armament**" [41] [highlighting added by the authors].

One also learns from this article that "significant amounts of long firearms (mainly timeworn AKs) have been withdrawn from the checkpoints (border crossings) of the Border Guard units in recent years. In place of the retired weapons, the Border Guard Headquarters have not re-supplied the depot. (...) What is the current situation at border posts? Officers have only short arms for personal defense. In the case of attempts

¹⁸ The author of the publication Karol Falandys served in the Border Guard in the years 2004-2013, among others in the Personnel and Training Department and the Service Support Department, and during this period he did not meet with any anti-diversionary training in the Border Guard. Therefore, by way of access to public information, he appealed to the Chief Commander of the Police and the Chief Commander of the Border Guard. with the question: Is anti-diversionary training carried out in the Police/Border Guard? In response from the Police it appears that there are no training courses in the field of fighting subversive groups in the Police. The Border Guard, however, avoided replying to that question. The information obtained by the author proves that selected officers are provided with the so-called "anti-diversionary" training in 2015 in the Border Guard Training Center in Ketrzyn.

¹⁹ The author of the publication Karol Falandys served in the Border Guard in the years 2004-2013, among others in the Personnel and Training Department and the Service Support Department, and during this period the basic training conducted for all persons starting the preparatory service at the Border Guard did not provide for shooting with AK-47 and PK machine guns. In addition, the author also did not meet with the situation that training and shooting using AK-47 and PK machine guns were provided for those already serving in the Border Guard (the exception was only the shooting training carried out for a certain period by the author himself). The information obtained by the author shows that in 2015 the abovementioned training and shooting was resumed for selected officers.

²⁰ This is the effect of a risk analysis carried out by the competent Commanders of the Bieszczadzki Border Guard Department, which has showed that there is no need to collect armaments by serving of-ficers. A letter in the possession of the authors.

to cross the border by any group armed with long weapons, officers present at the border post will be forced to try to protect their own lives with a few dozen short arms with the state of two magazines each (the weapon and one additional magazine).” It is worth noting that at smaller border crossings, at weekends and on holidays, the staff of Border Guard can be reduced to two officers on one shift. The BG officers stationed on the eastern border of Poland alarm in informal conversations that the state of their preparedness for a potential threat is far insufficient. Limited training in firing short arms (which this year has not been significantly increased) and eliminated training in the use of long weapons cause that several thousand officers remain unused in case of threat or real conflict. Currently, the border is not protected well enough. Bringing the role of the Border Guard over the years to executing observation and patrol tasks may turn out to be ineffective and fraught with serious consequences [41].

Also noteworthy is the matter of supplying subversive groups. “During special operations, groups are in constant motion, which implies the necessity of taking a minimal amount of equipment by them, with account taken of transport possibilities. Sometimes the group can be additionally supplied by air” [24, p. 159-60; See also: 23, p. 19].²¹ The example can be the part of the Polish-Ukrainian border between Horyniec and Hwniki (the Bieszczadzki Border Guard Unit), where for more than three years – until 20 March 2015 – the notorious, incompatible with the regulations in force, crossing the state border by a paraglider took place; he took off from the territory of Ukraine and after landing on the territory of Poland he made a drop of transported “packages” and landed again in Ukraine [24; 25].

The “inertia” of the Border Guards provides food for thought, since for three years the formation has not been able to thwart this practice. What is more, aircrafts [44] and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones [45], were used to illegally transport “parcels” on other sections of the state border. Admittedly, all these cases concerned the smuggling of excise goods (mainly cigarettes), but since trafficking groups may in this way smuggle “goods”, it will not be too much of a mistake if it is assumed that both services and special forces may also transfer arms or financial resources, etc., using the same way. As it is reported from the media, the aerial form of transport is still used by unknown people to cross the state border [46]. At this point, one should ask how many not recorded border crossings using air transport means take place contrary to the regulations of the state border?

Therefore, one can attempt to say that the situation that facilitated Russia’s efficient takeover of Crimea and allowed – at the first stage – for taking over Donbas may now apply to Poland. “By definition, the Polish Border Guard is not physically and mentally capable of defending the state border even to a limited extent, but only protects it. The staff of this formation seems to be deprived of the imagination of possible threats that may occur on the border, which was clearly expressed by the decision on the

²¹ It cannot be ruled out that some part of UAV flights is (or may be) carried out for the special services of the Russian Federation and Belarus, including the transfer of funds and weapons for potential enemy sabotage groups or “separatists”. These funds may be collected in specially prepared caches and may be used in the future at the start of special operations in the territory of our country.

withdrawal of military weapons from the BG military equipment and (...) liquidation of 617 positions in 2013. The reference to the possibility of immediate action by the Polish Armed Forces is irresponsible in a situation where the average level of manning is about 40 percent, and the best manned units have a period of one to two weeks to leave the barracks (...). The currently proposed solutions adopting plans of supporting the BG by military units are in fact fictional, as BG officers do not have military training, appropriate equipment and weapons, including communication systems. In addition, there is a discrepancy in the organization of command structures" [24, p. 165; See also: 47, p. 197-8].

It is possible that the lack of verification of soldiers of the Border Protection Troops (Pol. WOP), when they became officers [39, Art. 151(1)] of the Border Guard according to the Act, is one of the reasons for the condition in which the Border Guard finds itself now²². Some of these former WOP soldiers probably held managerial positions in the current Border Guard structures, which may translate into the decisions made²³. It cannot be excluded that a crucial role is also played by the factor of high self-assessment of competences by parts of the officers' corps, however, they may not actually have adequate knowledge and skills to counteract organized unlawful activities carried out by external entities.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the special components of the Border Guard "are not physically capable of fighting against the well-trained and heavily armed troops of military saboteurs, and are only suitable for detaining particularly dangerous criminals. Nonetheless, the problem is the armaments possessed, or rather its lack, and full-time and factual manning states which, in the author's opinion, make it impossible to conduct operations on a vast territory against numerous enemy units" [24, p. 166]. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the establishment of the Territorial Defense Force did not result in depriving the BG of its responsibility for ensuring security in the border zone. The Territorial Defense Force as one of the types of the Armed Forces does not conduct armed operations during peacetime.

Therefore, bearing in mind the forces used to conduct diversionary operations, their equipment and armaments and the ways of conducting special operations, as well as the equipment, armaments and training of the formation, which was established in Poland to protect and defend the state border, i.e., the Border Guard, the authors regret to state that it is not able to cope with the tasks of combating foreign sabotage groups in the border zone.

²² This also applies to the Government Protection Bureau (BOR) and Security Service (SB). Cf.: the statement by the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration Mariusz Blaszczak: "BOR was included in SB – such are historical facts. One of the previous speakers rightly said that the verification was a fiction." *W Sejmie burza o esbeckie emerytury: To nie odwet – to elementarna sprawiedliwosc*, [online]. Portal niezalezna.pl. Available at: <http://niezalezna.pl/90822-w-sejmie-burza-o-esbeckie-emerytury-nie-odwet-elementarna-sprawiedliwosc> [Accessed: 16 December 2016]; G. Wszolek. *Zapomniana rocznica fikcji, czyli weryfikacji SB*, [online]. Portal niezalezna.pl. Available at: <http://niezalezna.pl/86100-zapomniana-rocznica-fikcji-czyli-weryfikacji-sb> [Accessed: 23 August 2017].

²³ According to the authors, this situation should be a contribution to in-depth research.

Therefore, the authors propose that the state authorities should consider the establishment of a new formation, in place of the Border Guard, capable of fulfilling the task of protecting and defending the border itself as well as the borderland of the Republic of Poland, including conducting anti-diversionary activity. The new formation could – similarly to the interwar period of the Border Protection Corps²⁴ – take over the tasks of the Border Guard in the field of protection of the state border in eastern and northern Poland, which is at the same time the external border of the European Union, or take over responsibility for the entire Polish borders. The authors would be personally inclined towards this second solution, because the “dualism” in such an important element of state security as the protection of borders may have a negative impact on the already somewhat inconsistent system of Poland’s national security²⁵.

“Furthermore, the existence of a formation capable of implementing not only the tasks of border protection, but also, in the event of a threat, conducting combat defense operations will secure the time necessary for the Polish Armed Forces to respond” [24, p. 166]. This formation in time of peace should be located within the structures of the ministry responsible for internal affairs, and during the war should go into direct subordination to the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. This situation forces somehow the necessity of having armament and equipment compatible with those possessed by the Armed Forces. At the same time, the authors have put forward the concept of the organizational structure of the BPC, while indicating that the size of the formation would oscillate around 9 000 000 positions [24, p. 166].

Another proposal presented by the authors is the possibility of extending the duties of the newly created State Security Service to tasks related to the protection of the national border, the protection of facilities and equipment of Polish diplomatic missions and conducting operations of getting back Polish citizens who are abroad. Such a solution would allow for the reduction of the number of repeated security positions, i.e. logistics, administrative, etc., presently existing in both formations (the Government Protection Bureau and the Border Guard), thus contributing to optimizing the budget funds spent.

²⁴ The authors tend to adopt the nomenclature for the new formation from the afore-mentioned Border Protection Corps (BPC), although the matter of the specific name remains an open point.

²⁵ As indicated in the White Book of National Security of the Republic of Poland, the national security system of Poland “is in fact the sum of separate operational and support subsystems with various interrelations, with the internal inconsistent subsystem of national security management. This hinders synergy. The competences of individual entities are scattered or duplicated, there are too many planning bodies, and coordination is limited. There is also a lack of consistent law, especially in relation to the subsystem of national security management. On the one hand, this situation poses the risk of creating competence gaps, and on the other hand, it causes unnecessary duplication of efforts, which leads to wasting some of the resources held, and thus determines the uneconomical and inefficient nature of the system.” *Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Warszawa: Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego; 2013, p. 9.

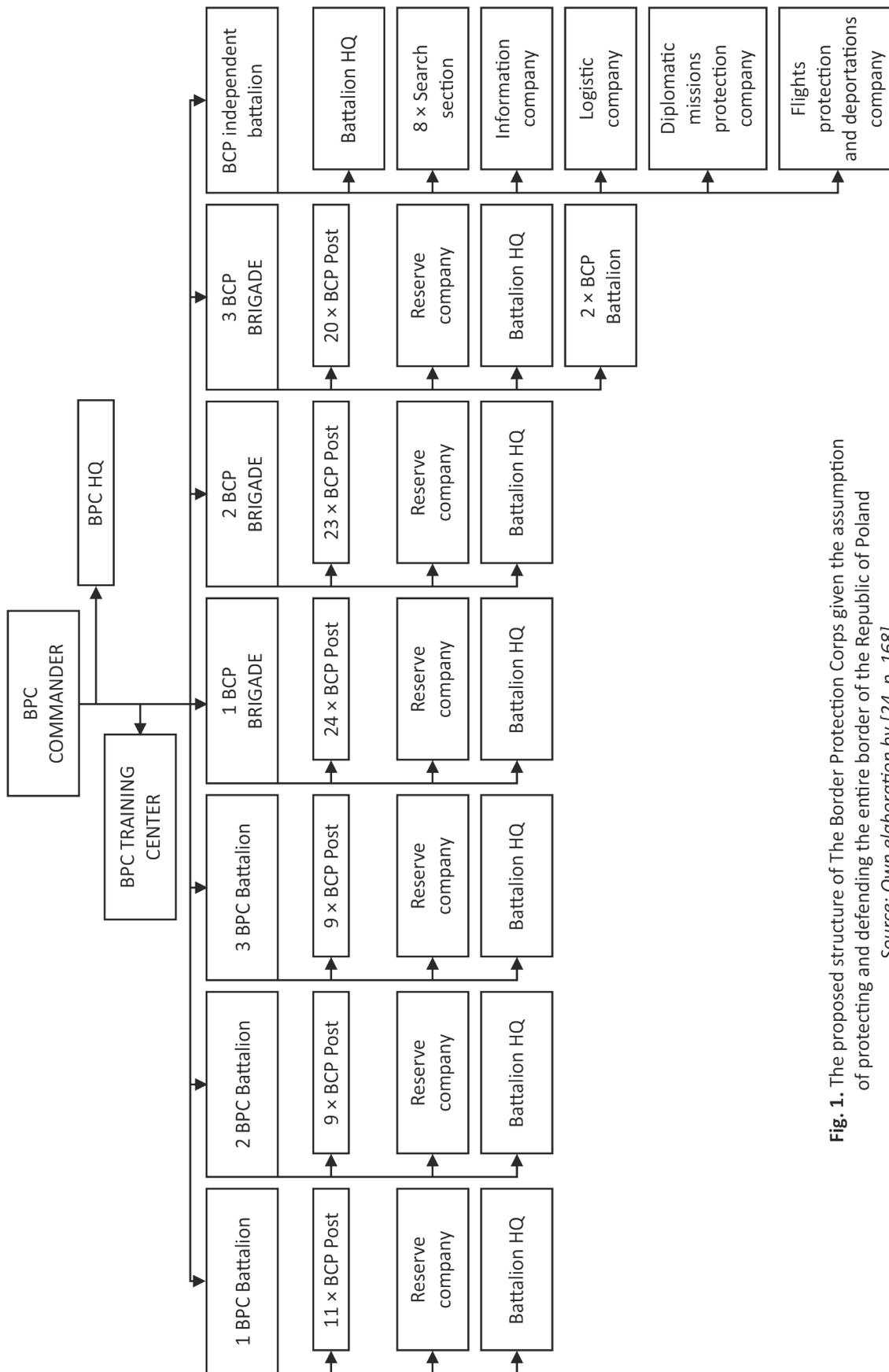


Fig. 1. The proposed structure of The Border Protection Corps given the assumption of protecting and defending the entire border of the Republic of Poland
 Source: Own elaboration by [24, p. 168].

Conclusion

The present, dynamically changing geopolitical situation in which we have been living today poses new challenges, and Poland's membership in NATO and the European Union probably inclines to presume that our country is at the heart of our eastern neighbors' concern. The Russian Federation, using the rhetoric of peace and balance of power, established a new formation called the Special Operations Forces almost 8 years ago. The formation has been designed to fulfill tasks related to conducting special operations, including subversive activities outside the territory of the Russian state. Then, the analysis of the latest armed conflicts was conducted, and the concept of a new generation war has been adopted. Both elements were successfully used in the war with Ukraine, and it appears from publicly available sources that Russia may apply the Ukrainian scenario in other countries, including Poland.

It can be argued with a high probability verging on certainty that both the Belarusian and Russian special services personnel are operating in Poland and in the other EU and NATO member states. These people may be legally resident in our country, e.g., they work or have been pursuing legal business interests [48; 49] for a long time, and at the same time perform activities involving the reconnaissance of facilities and institutions, as well as stoking, escalating, using and antagonizing ethnic and religious minorities staying in the country against the institutions of our country.

As we have seen, the scope of subversive activities is extremely wide, and the diversionary operations are carried out by specially trained and equipped special forces. There is a fear that the formations that in our country are responsible for ensuring security in the border zone, i.e. primarily the Border Guard and, to a lesser extent, the Police, may not be able to cope with such an opponent.

It should be borne in mind that passive waiting for the challenges which are to come is the worst option that can contribute to failure. Showing initiative, adapting to current challenges, or even anticipating them and seeking the best ways to counteract them is the most appropriate way to achieve positive results.

Therefore, a thorough audit of the functioning of all components responsible for Poland's national security should be performed in Poland. If it turns out that any formation does not fulfill its tasks²⁶, it may be worth considering the concept of establishing a new formation taking over some of the most important tasks – from the point of defense of the state – in the regions of the northern and the eastern borderlands of Poland that are the most vulnerable to the influence of foreign diversionary groups.

²⁶ The Border Guard is one of the entities in the field of national security, being responsible for ensuring law and public order in the national security sector. *Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Warszawa: Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego; 2013, p. 19. See also: *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Warszawa: Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego; 2014, p. 14. According to the authors, this entity cannot be allowed not to fulfill its tasks, because it may affect the stability of the entire national security system of Poland.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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STRESZCZENIE

W niniejszym artykule autorzy skupili się na możliwości prowadzenia działań dywersyjnych we wschodniej Polsce w obecnej sytuacji geopolitycznej. W tym celu wyjaśnili istotę przedsięwzięć określanych jako „dywersja” i „działania dywersyjne”. W skrócie przedstawili koncepcję Federacji Rosyjskiej na temat wojny nowej generacji oraz powołanie rosyjskich Sił Operacji Specjalnych. Autorzy omówili również możliwe wytłumaczenia prowadzenia działań dywersyjnych we wschodniej Polsce oraz wskazali potencjalne cele tychże działań. Znaczną część artykułu autorzy poświęcili analizie przeciwdziałania dywersji na wschodnim pograniczu Polski. Przedstawili także propozycję powołania nowej formacji, która przejęłaby zadania związane z ochroną i obroną wschodniego polskiego pogranicza.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE dywersja, działania dywersyjne, operacje specjalne, Rosja, Ukraina, KOP

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