

## **SOLUTIONS ENSURING SAFETY DURING TRANSPORT OF STATE VIPS BY MILITARY AIRCRAFT (PART 1)**

**Assoc. Prof. Ryszard BARTNIK, PhD**

Institute of Civil Aviation Management  
Faculty of Management and Command  
War Studies University, Warsaw

E-mail: r.bartnik@akademia.mil.pl  
ORCID: 0000-0003-2167-5878  
Researcher ID: B-6566-2019

**Dariusz TATAROWSKI, PhD**

Security Management System Manager  
Polish Medical Air Rescue

e-mail: tatarowski.d@op.pl  
ORCID: 0000-0003-4621-1367  
Researcher ID: C-2346-2019

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### **Abstract**

It should be observed that for the sake of national welfare, while transporting state VIPs by military aircraft, the level of risk that is acceptable is lower than in the case of other passengers. Consequently, normative documentation regarding such transport regulates a range of issues that is considerably wider and more precisely defined than when transporting other passengers, relying on the principle “safety above all.” Regulations contained in normative documents concerning the transport of state VIPs by military aircraft are to protect not only against human mistakes, which might cause an air incident during such flights. Normative documents also regulate additional requirements that concern (1) aviation equipment used during transport of state VIPs by military aircraft (so as to limit the risk of mechanical failure) and (2) in-depth analysis of environmental factors (so as to reduce threat to transport safety as a result of adverse weather conditions).

**Key words:** VIPs, transport by military aircraft, normative documents, safety.

### **Introduction**

In order to suggest the changes that should be introduced to normative documents that regulate transport of state VIPs by military aircraft so that transport safety will be ensured, it was necessary to study historical normative documents regulating such transport.

The purpose of the research whose findings were presented in this three-part paper was focused on systematizing knowledge of principles determining transport of state VIPs by military aircraft that have been followed up to now, which was done on the basis of analysis of normative documents. The research problem was as follows: *How has the content of normative documents regulating transport of state VIPs by military aircraft in Poland been changing after World War II?* The following was the verification hypothesis: *the issue indicated above is based on the assumption that in order to transport state VIPs by military aircraft in a safe manner, normative documents were drawn up and implemented on the governmental level as well as the levels of the Ministry of National Defence, the Command of Branches of Armed Forces, and the unit that conducted such transport operations.* Also, it was assumed that the content of these normative documents was subject to alteration as inaccuracies and errors were identified. Another assumption was that the regulations which these documents contain were not complex initially and applied only to selected requirements and responsibilities determining safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft.

According to the research procedure that was adopted, alterations to the content of legally binding normative documents will be analysed, with the analysis covering the periods between specific air incidents that took place during transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. The research findings presented in this paper (part 1) concern normative documents regulating transport of state VIPs by military aircraft which were in effect until 1973.

### **Regulations Concerning Transport of State VIPs by Military Aircraft Which Were in Effect Until 1947**

Although Polish aviation started to be used to transport state VIPs as early as 1944, i.e. after the 4th and 5th independent liaison squadrons had been included in the Polish People's Army, the archives contain no documents concerning the activity of these aviation units, or orders and instructions regulating the entire activity of military aviation between 1944 and 1945. The documents that have been preserved, and are rather fragmentary, concern the activity of the 6th independent transport squadron, which was re-formed as a government transport squadron in 1946. These documents indicate that there were no detailed transport safety regulations related to transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. Furthermore, in the unit's reports, such transport was not distinguished from other types of transport. For example, the dispatch concerning the activity of the government transport squadron in January, 1947,<sup>1</sup> only informed that during that period, as part of its operational tasks, the

<sup>1</sup> *Sprawozdanie z wyszkolenia bojowego rządowej eskadry transportowej za styczeń 1947 roku*, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number IV.115.193.

I. air unit flew 56 sorties altogether, using the S-47<sup>2</sup> and Li-2 aeroplanes, which amounted to 187 hours and 20 minutes in total. Moreover, the dispatches concerning the technical condition of military aircraft which were used to transport state VIPs<sup>3</sup> reveal information indicating that state VIPs had at their exclusive disposal<sup>4</sup> personal aeroplanes. Nevertheless, military aircraft used to transport state VIPs were not treated as a priority as far as maintaining their good technical condition is concerned. For example, for a period of two years during which they were used,<sup>5</sup> they did not undergo necessary repairs due to lack of spare parts. Thus, their technical condition was so bad that they were withdrawn from service because of security threat that they posed.

Direct regulations regarding safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft were also not included in the first essential post-war document which standardized the entire activity of military aviation, i.e. *Ogólna instrukcja lotnicza dla wykonywania lotów*<sup>6</sup> (in English literally: *General Aviation Instruction on Performing Flights*).

The analysis of the above-mentioned instruction shows that it only contains an item determining that “[...] during flight there can be civilian persons transported on military aircraft with the permission of the air forces commander. In extraordinary circumstances, and when special tasks are being performed, the transport of civilian persons can be permitted by the unit commander, on his or her authority.” Although this instruction does not specify what tasks were treated as “special” ones, it is possible to assume that the above wording allowed granting permission, directly by the commander of this unit, to transport state VIPs by aircraft available in the government transport squadron.

To conclude, it should be stated that normative documents regulating the issues related to ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft did not exist until 1947. Organizational solutions which aimed at ensuring such transport consisted mainly in assigning “personal aircraft” for such persons to use. However, no solutions were implemented that would guarantee maintenance of personal aircraft’s adequate technical condition. Furthermore, it should be observed that it was possible for a

2 The name used in the document is probably based on the Russian pronunciation of the name of the Douglas C-47 aeroplane (the military designation of the DC-3 Dakota aeroplane).

3 The dispatch of 4th January 1947 from Minister of National Defence Marshal Michał Żymierski to President of the State National Council Citizen Bolesław Bierut regarding the technical condition of the engines and airframes of the government squadron, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number IV.115.189.

4 In the dispatch, the following wording was used: “[...] the aeroplane belongs to Citizen President, Citizen President’s aeroplane.” It should be observed that Bolesław Bierut did not officially assume the office of the President of Poland until 5th February 1947, *Protokół objęcia władzy przez Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Bolesława Bieruta* (Dziennik Ustaw (Journal of Laws) 1947 no. 9, item 46).

5 During this period, they logged 1127 and 870 flying hours respectively.

6 *Część I. Lotnictwo Lądowe*, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number Lt. 2/46, introduced with the order of the Supreme Commander of the Polish Armed Forces issued on 22nd March 1946.

low-rank officer (i.e. the commander of the government transport squadron) to make decisions concerning the transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. Therefore, being low-rank, such a commander was probably less willing to oppose possible requests, directed to him or her, regarding, for example, transport of state VIPs by military aircraft when weather conditions were not right.

### **Regulations Concerning Transport of State VIPs by Military Aircraft Which Were in Effect Between 1947 and 1973**

Between 1947 and 1973, a need was acknowledged to regulate the problem of transport of state VIPs by military aircraft so as to ensure its safe execution. Such regulations were included in normative documents issued on level of the Command of Branches of Armed Forces (subsequent orders were on the level of air forces commanders), on the level of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces (instructions issued by means of directives of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces), and on the level of the Ministry of National Defence (rules and regulations issued by the Minister of National Defence).

#### ***Orders of the Command of Branches of Armed Forces***

For the first time, the need to introduce regulations necessary to ensure safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft was recognized by the Command of Branches of Armed Forces in March, 1947.<sup>7</sup> According to the dispatch of 11th March 1947 from the Polish Air Forces Commander, a ban was imposed on using Polikarpov Po-2 aeroplanes, which were not suitable for “[...] long blind flights (when the ground cannot be seen through clouds or mists) [...] or flights that do not ensure safety when weather conditions are adverse [...] if important state figures were to be transported.” In addition, it was emphasised that in seasons (autumn and spring) when there was “changeable weather and the surface of unpaved airfields or fields that could be used to land was soft,” important state figures could only be transported by means of Douglas aeroplanes and only airfields whose runways were made of concrete could be used. The dispatch also called for normalizing the procedure of requesting flights for transport of state VIPs by military aircraft, indicating that requests for that should be sent through the General Staff at least 24 hours beforehand. Moreover, any “immediate” requests should be rejected due to the fact that it was impossible to “properly prepare crews or check the readiness of aviation equipment.”

It soon turned out, however, that the procedures aiming to ensure safe transport of state VIPs that were included in the dispatch of 11th March 1947 were not only

<sup>7</sup> After a mechanical failure had occurred on 9th March 1947 in a Polikarpov Po-2 aeroplane, no. 167116, belonging to a special air regiment (wing).

insufficient but also impossible to fully comply with by the personnel of the special air regiment. In *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 017 issued on 12th February 1948*, concerning the irregularities that occurred during the flight that involved completing a special task on 13th January 1948,<sup>8</sup> the commander of the special air regiment was obligated, for instance, to prohibit the special air regiment crews from accepting requests for flights directly from the persons who were entitled to them,<sup>9</sup> to assign crews to individual aeroplanes permanently, to transport state VIPs on aeroplanes only with the permanently assigned crews mentioned above, to install in the aeroplanes the equipment necessary to attend to passengers, to transfer the commander of the above-mentioned plane flying on 13th January 1948 to a different position, to enhance personnel's discipline, and finally to check the readiness of crews and aeroplanes to execute "responsible flights." Furthermore, the Air Forces Command Chief Engineer was obliged to tighten checks on readiness of equipment for "responsible flights."

It might have been the completion of the task received by the Air Forces Command Chief Engineer that was the cause of a subsequent order in which the principles determining the transport of state VIPs on special air regiment aeroplanes were normalised in a considerably more detailed manner. *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 023 issued on 24th February 1948* concerning tighter checks on the level of readiness of equipment and personal aeroplanes' crews in the special air regiment to properly complete special and extremely responsible tasks<sup>10</sup> specified that the procedures aiming to increase safety while transporting state VIPs would be applied when the following VIPs were being transported "in person": "the President of Poland, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence, the minister of Public Security, and the Air Forces Commander." It was specified that the commander of the special air regiment and his or her subordinate personnel were fully responsible for the preparation of aeroplanes and crews for flights, which was to be done in a manner that ensured the "complete safety" of these flights. Also, the special air regiment commander was not allowed to accept

**8** The indicated irregularities include "poor preparation of the crew for the flight, treating the flight purely in a formal manner with no due sense of responsibility, misinforming the transported VIPs about the time of the arrival at the destination airport (40-minute difference), lack of care of the passengers, no complete first-aid kit on board the aeroplane, strong turbulence during the flight, which the crew did not counteract, and the crew's failure to send a dispatch to the air regiment commander informing about the irregularities that occurred during the flight." Also, there were other numerous mechanical failures discovered by a specially established technical committee, such as dripping hydraulics, a faulty voltage converter, wrongly installed fuel filters, water in the fuel, and a faulty mechanism used to control the angle of the blades of one of the propellers. Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/478.

**9** The manner of submitting requests for flights through the Air Forces Command HQ, was specified in the document of the Minister of National Defence no. 0457, issued on 19th November 1947.

**10** Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/478.

requests for flights other than those submitted through the Air Forces Command HQ, at least 24 hours beforehand in the case of domestic flights and 72 hours in advance for foreign flights. Finally, he or she was obliged to assign a permanent crew to each personal aeroplane used to transport state VIPs, without any possibility to re-assign them to a different aeroplane. On behalf of the Air Forces Command, a special inspection committee was established, whose aim was to check the technical condition of the personal aeroplanes and their crews' readiness for special flights before every transport of state VIPs by air. The above-mentioned special committee was to accept for inspection only those aeroplanes that had been "completely prepared and checked by the personnel of the special air regiment," who was obliged not to make any repairs on an aeroplane that had already been inspected and accepted by the committee. Every time, the inspection of a personal aeroplane's readiness was to be completed with a test-flight and with drawing up a special act (a protocol) that asserted the aeroplane's and its crew's complete readiness to perform a special task. It should be noted that personal aeroplanes could be used for other purposes than transport of state VIPs only with permission granted personally by the Air Forces Commander. There was an annex to the order, i.e. *Instrukcja w sprawie kontroli samolotów personalnych w specjalnym pułku lotniczym* (in English literally: *Instruction on Inspecting Personal Aeroplanes in the Special Air Regiment*), which specified detailed procedures for informing the chairperson of the inspection committee by the special air regiment's commander about the readiness of personal aeroplanes, the work of the committee, individuals who were present during inspection activities, repairs carried out to faulty parts and elements, sealing the aeroplane when the inspection was over, unsealing it in order to test-fly it, and drawing up a protocol that asserted "both the aeroplane's and its crew's" complete readiness to perform a special task.

After only nine months, it turned out that the regulations imposed by the order issued on 24th February 1948 were not sufficient. Namely, it still happened in the special air regiment that "the preparation of personal aeroplanes [...] did not comply with the elementary regulations that ensured comfortable transport of passengers. Moreover, it also was not adequate for the needs of flights and their safety."<sup>11</sup> This was the reason why another normative document was prepared that regulated the principles of ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0191 issued on 26th November 1948* concerning tighter checks on the level of readiness of equipment and personal aeroplanes' crews in the special air regiment to properly complete special and extremely responsible tasks introduced additional responsibilities for the commander of the special air regiment. They regarded equipping personal aeroplanes with oxygen devices and parachutes for the crew and all the passengers, as well as taking "the register of the passengers." The membership of the committee was expanded to include a representative of the

<sup>11</sup> *Rozkaz Dowódcy Wojsk Lotniczych nr 0191 z dnia 26.11.1948 roku*, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/478.

Regional Directorate of Information no. IX,<sup>12</sup> who was to be informed whenever a flight request for a personal aeroplane was submitted. He or she also had the right to notify the Air Forces Commander of his or her objections to and reservations about the complete readiness, asserted by the committee, of an aeroplane and its crew to perform a special task. Amendments to Order no. 0191 were introduced in *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 078 issued on 23rd April 1949*.<sup>13</sup> In accordance to this order, the chairperson of the inspection committee who checked the readiness of the aeroplanes and the crews of the special air regiment to transport “the President of Poland, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of National Defence” would be the Air Forces Command Chief Engineer.

Orders no. 023 and 0191 were annulled with *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0164 issued on 20th September 1949* concerning the proper maintenance of flight safety, tighter checks on the readiness of personal aeroplanes and their crews in the special air regiment, and the execution of special and extremely responsible tasks.<sup>14</sup> However, this document did not change any tasks that, in accordance with the previous orders, the commander of the special air regiment and the inspection committee were responsible for. Nevertheless, new tasks were introduced whose completion was the responsibility of the Air Forces Quartermaster. They concerned ensuring the proper storage of petrol and air oil for fuelling personal aeroplanes, controlling their condition every month, assigning special petrol and oil pumps with permanent personnel to fuel personal aeroplanes, and equipping personal aeroplanes with flasks containing drinking liquids. On 18th January 1950, changes were made to Order no. 0164 when *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 012* was issued.<sup>15</sup> In accordance with this order, the commander of the special air regiment was exempted from a requirement to assign a permanent crew to each personal aeroplane, with no possibility to re-assign them to different aircraft. However, he or she was obligated to assign to each personal aeroplane a permanent flight engineer who could not be re-assigned to different aircraft. The special air regiment commander was also instructed to select crew members of personal aeroplanes (except for flight engineers) immediately after a transport request had been submitted concerning state VIPs. Finally, he or she had to submit the selections to the Air Forces Commander for approval.

Crucial changes connected with ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft were introduced in *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0260 issued on 18th October 1951*. The order was to ensure complete safety for execution of special tasks by personal aeroplanes of the 36th Special Air Regiment.<sup>16</sup> This normative

<sup>12</sup> A military counterintelligence body based in Poznań, whose activity covered the Air Forces. Tkaczew W., *Organa Informacji Wojska Polskiego 1943–1956*, Bellona, Warszawa 2007, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/483.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/486.

<sup>16</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/491.

document changed the list of persons whose transport required the application of safety procedures. It did not include the Deputy Prime Minister and the Air Forces Commander. Instead, members of the politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party were added.<sup>17</sup> What is more, the rules were changed of processing requests for personal aeroplanes, which were now to be sent directly to the commander of the 36th Special Air Regiment (whereas previously they had been submitted through the Air Forces Command HQ). Probably due to the fact that the procedure of approving crew members every time by the Air Forces Commander was time-consuming, the previous procedure was restored, i.e. assigning permanent crews to every aeroplane and prohibiting their transfer to other aeroplanes. Furthermore, all members of the inspection committee (so far only the representative of the Regional Directorate of Information had been entitled to do it) could now notify the Air Forces Commander or the Air Forces Chief of Staff of their reservations about the complete readiness, which had been asserted by the committee, of an aeroplane and its crew to perform a special task. The chairperson of the inspection committee was obligated to refer, if a need arose, to the update of *Instruction Concerning the Inspection of Personal Aeroplanes in the Special Air Regiment issued on 24th February 1948*.<sup>18</sup> Also, there were no tasks in Order no. 0260 for the Air Forces Quartermaster related to fuelling personal aeroplanes or storage of petrol and air oil in order to ensure safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft.

Order 0260 was annulled with *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 00300/D.W.L. issued on 9th July 1953* regarding the establishment of new forms of using personal aeroplanes of the 36th Special Air Regiment.<sup>19</sup> This normative document contained a new list of state VIPs whose transport by military aircraft would be executed using procedures aimed to ensure safety. In accordance with the order, C-47 aeroplanes (the order gave their serial numbers and specified that their tail numbers were to be 1 and 2) were designated as "personal" and assigned to be at the exclusive disposal of "the Prime Minister of Poland, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of National Defence." VIPs who also became entitled to use other

<sup>17</sup> This considerably increased the number of people whose transport by military aircraft was to be executed making use of the procedures aimed to enhance transport safety. The Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party elected during the Congress that took place between 15th and 22nd December 1948 consisted of 11 members. A. Kocharński, W. Jankowski, *Informator o strukturze i obsadzie personalnej centralnego aparatu PZPR 1948–1990*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 2000, p. 28. However, considering the fact that there was no increase in the number of aircraft or crews responsible for such transport, an increase in the number of persons entitled to use it could have caused considerable burden that had to be carried by the crews executing such transport missions. This might have had an adverse effect on transport safety as a result of crews' and maintenance personnel's tiredness.

<sup>18</sup> This is not entirely clear, considering the fact that the above-mentioned *Instruction* was an annex to *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 023 issued on 24th February 1948*, and the order was annulled on 20th September 1949 with *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0164*.

<sup>19</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/522.



aeroplanes of the 36th Special Air Regiment were as follows: “all Deputy Prime Ministers, members of the Politburo of the Polish United Workers’ Party, and other persons if a need arose (e.g. ministers).” Changes to the duties of the commander of the 36th Special Air Regiment that were introduced were related to having the aeroplanes which “were performing special tasks (especially personal ones)” equipped with a set of the most essential spare parts approved by the Air Forces Chief Engineer, fresh bedding before each flight, and a sealed flask containing drinking water checked by a doctor. Moreover, the inspection committee was obligated to check the technical condition and the level of readiness of only the personal aeroplanes. The inspection of the readiness of the aeroplanes used to transport the other authorized persons specified in the order was to be carried out only on the express order of the Air Forces Commander. While conducting inspections, making checks, and performing test-flights of personal aeroplanes, the inspection committee was to follow *Instruction Concerning the Preparation and Test-Flights of Personal Aeroplanes issued on 2nd December 1951*,<sup>20</sup> whereas the Air Forces Chief Engineer was obliged to update it and submit it to the Air Forces Commander for approval by 30th July 1953. As a result of changes to the staffing of the posts in the Air Forces Command, *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0317/D.W.L.*,<sup>21</sup> issued on 24th August 1954, contained a supplement to Order no. 00300 issued on 9th July 1953, which provided a new listing of inspection committee members by name.

On 18th November 1955, due to the fact that new types of aeroplanes had been acquired for the 36th Special Air Regiment and the membership of the committee had dwindled, a new normative document was implemented that regulated transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. Once more, *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 00511/DWL*<sup>22</sup> changed the list of persons whose transport by military aircraft was to be executed using procedures aimed to ensure safety. The new list consisted of: “the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers’ Party, the Chairman of the Council of State, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence.” Instead of the aeroplanes mentioned above, which had so far been at the exclusive disposal of individual entitled persons, two Il-14 aeroplanes (their serial numbers were given and their tail numbers were 003 and 004) and two Li-2 reserve aeroplanes (tail numbers 05 and 08) were selected as personal aeroplanes to ensure safe transport of all entitled persons. Another Li-2 aeroplane (tail number 010) was to be used as a reserve aeroplane at the exclusive disposal of the Air Forces Commander. There were also changes to the time limits related to submitting requests for foreign flights executed with personal aeroplanes. Now, the commander of the 36th Special Air Regiment only accepted such requests if they were submitted

<sup>20</sup> The document was created on the basis of an instruction for the chairperson of the inspection committee which was included in *Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 0260 issued on 18th October 1951*. However, it was impossible to find this document in the archives.

<sup>21</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/534.

<sup>22</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/558.

at least 2 days before the execution of the requested flight.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, a requirement was introduced to submit dispatches concerning the readiness of an aeroplane and its crew to perform a flight. They were to be submitted to the Air Forces Commander or the Air Forces Chief of Staff by both the commander of the 36th Special Air Regiment and the chairperson of the inspection committee, who was obligated to draw up the *Instruction Concerning the Preparation, Inspection, and Test-Flights of Personal Aeroplanes*.<sup>24</sup>

The acquisition of additional Il-14 aeroplanes led to the issuing of another order on 7th February 1957, i.e. *Order of the Commander of the Air Forces and the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces no. 0038/DWL*,<sup>25</sup> which specified procedures aimed to ensure safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. Once more, this normative document extended the list of persons entitled to be transported by military aircraft using procedures aimed to ensure safe transport. The following category was added to the list: “Members of the Politburo of the Polish United Workers’ Party.” Furthermore, the list of personal aeroplanes that could be used to perform such flights was extended by adding two Il-14 aeroplanes (tail numbers 005 and 006). The commander of the 36th Independent Special Air Regiment was instructed to assign to these aeroplanes only first-class military pilots.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence of the changes that took place within military counter-intelligence, the composition of the inspection committee was altered by adding a representative of the Internal Military Service, who replaced the representative of the Regional Directorate of Information. Another person assigned to the committee was the Chief of Medical Services of the Air Forces and the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces. He or she was responsible for checking if crews were capable, considering their health, of performing flights with state VIPs. Also, he or she was obliged to check the expiry dates of drinks and foods for passengers and whether they were properly secured, and finally, assess the conditions of the sanitary and medical equipment on board personal aeroplanes. While inspecting the aeroplanes, carrying out checks, and performing test-flights, the inspection committee was to follow *Instruction Concerning the Preparation,*

**23** The amendment was introduced by hand to the text of the order prepared with a typewriter, which implies that it was introduced by Air Forces Commander Lt Gen Iwan Turkiel when he was signing it.

**24** The order does not say anything about a similar instruction that was to be updated by the Air Forces Chief Engineer in accordance with Order no. 00300/D.W.L. issued on 9th July 1953, and was to be submitted for approval to the Air Forces Commander by 30th July 1953, which may mean that such a document was never implemented.

**25** Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/583.

**26** It was impossible to find in the archives any normative documents regarding the requirements that had to be met by flight crews in 1957 in order to obtain the first-class military pilot title. According to the normative documents that have been found, which were introduced in 1974 (*Instrukcja kwalifikowania pilotów i nawigatorów w lotnictwie wojskowym PRL*, catalogue number Lot. 1597/74), it is possible to surmise that such pilots must have had qualifications to perform flights in any atmospheric conditions in the daytime and at nighttime as well as having logged at least 700 flying hours.

*Inspection, and Test-Flights of Personal Aeroplanes issued on 27th December 1955.*<sup>27</sup> Moreover, individual members of the inspection committee were no longer entitled to notify the Commander or the Chief of Staff of the Air Forces and the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces of their reservations about complete readiness of an aeroplane and its crew to perform a special task asserted by the committee.

It was *Order of the Commander of the Air Forces and the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces no. 024/DWL issued on 10th March 1960* concerning test-flights of personal aeroplanes that introduced considerable changes related to the rules of ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft and persons responsible for it.<sup>28</sup> In accordance with this normative document, the personal aeroplanes specified in it (in total 7 Il-14 aeroplanes carrying the numbers: 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006 and 010), as well as an Li-2 aeroplane (tail number 010), used in the case of flights to small airfields, were assigned to transport members of the government.<sup>29</sup> As for the inspection committee, established to check the technical condition and level of readiness of personal aeroplanes to perform special tasks, it was obligated to carry out inspections and test-flights of the aircraft specified in the above order before each flight. It was probably due to the fact that an increase in the number of inspections and test-flights of personal aeroplanes was anticipated that the composition of the inspection committee was extended. A number of additional persons were assigned to it, who could replace the other members if such a need arose. What is more, the commander of the crew who was to transport state VIPs was no longer a member of the committee. However, the order did not specify any tasks for the commander of the 36th Independent Special Air Regiment. Moreover, the responsibilities that he or she had had so far, such as provision of parachutes for the passengers and crews of personal aeroplanes or ensuring supply of a complete set of spare parts as well as fresh bedding and covers for armchairs inside the personal aeroplanes, were transferred to the Chief of the Transport and Liaison Aviation Department of the Air Forces Command and the Command of the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces.<sup>30</sup> Also, a designated officer was to be responsible for organising the security of a personal aeroplane (making use of the crew, an air forces unit or an Internal Security Corps unit)

**27** The document was created on the basis of an instruction for the Air Forces Chief Engineer included in Order of the Air Forces Commander no. 00511 issued on 18th November 1955, although the deadline for its execution (30th November 1955) specified in the order was not met. It was impossible to find this document in the archives.

**28** Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/707.

**29** From 27th February 1957 to 18th May 1961, the government of the Polish People's Republic, headed by Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz, consisted of 30 members. T. Mołdawa, *Ludzie władzy 1944–1991*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1991, p. 229. When compared to the previous regulations, this meant that the number of the state VIPs entitled to transport by military aircraft was increased almost twofold.

**30** However, instead of the above, the distribution list of the order features the Transport and Special Aviation Department of the Air Forces Command and the Command of the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces.

in the case of being based at a foreign airfield. The order did not specify the person responsible for the condition of personal planes and the preparation of their crews to transport state VIPs while ensuring “complete safety” of flights. Furthermore, it also did not specify who was to be obligated to take the register of the persons taking part in flights. Last but not least, no minimal time limits for accepting requests for transport of state VIPs were imposed and no procedures for the processing of such requests were formulated. Also, the responsibility of assigning a permanent crew to each personal aeroplane was abandoned, although it was specified that both pilots and a navigator performing such a flight should hold the first-class military pilot or navigator title respectively. There was also an annex to order no. 024/DWL issued on 10th March 1960, i.e. *Instruction Concerning the Preparation, Inspection, and Test-Flights of Personal Aeroplanes*. It specified detailed procedures for notifying the chairperson of the committee of an aeroplane’s readiness to perform a special task. It also contained lists of support and maintenance tasks, documents, aircraft elements, and maintenance materials that were to be checked. Finally, there was a list of aircraft systems<sup>31</sup> whose work was to be checked by the committee during a test-flight with explanations of how to perform such checks.

It has not been possible to find in the archives any other orders of the Command of Branches of Armed Forces that regulated transport of state VIPs by military aircraft up to 1973. It is likely that due to changes regarding the subordination of the 36th Independent Special Air Regiment<sup>32</sup> or perhaps as a result of substantive changes to the content of the orders, further changes to the discussed issues could have been included for example in the guidelines of the Air Forces Chief Engineer, which have not been found in the archives. With regard to the substantive changes to the content of the orders mentioned above, it should be noted that the orders gradually changed from being regulations that were to ensure that aeroplanes and their crews would be able to conduct transport of state VIPs by military aircraft in a “completely safe” manner to regulations that concerned only and exclusively the inspection of the technical condition of aircraft before such transport.

To summarise, it should be stated that the main reason for the issuing of the orders of the Command of Branches of Armed Forces that were legally binding between 1947 and 1973 and that regulated transport of state VIPs by military aircraft was irregularities and procedural errors that resulted in air incidents during such transport. The purpose of these orders was to ensure “completely safe” execution of

**31** For example, engine running controls, autopilot, ventilation and heating system controls, electrical generators, radio station, radio compass, radio altimeter, oxygen system, pilot and navigational controls.

**32** At the end of 1962, the unit became subordinated to the Operational Air Forces Command. T. Kmiecik, *Polskie lotnictwo wojskowe 1945–1962*, Agencja Wydawnicza Ulmak, Pruszków 2001, p. 307. Then, in 1968, it became subordinated to the Air Forces Command, established by combining the Air Forces Inspectorate and the Operational Air Forces Command. C. Krzemiński, *Polskie lotnictwo wojskowe 1945–1980*, Wydawnictwo Komunikacji i Łączności, Warszawa 1989, p. 205.

such flights. The orders regulated in detail the procedures for requesting transport, minimal time limits for submitting requests for transport, requirements concerning the crews who executed such flights and procedures for inspecting the condition and readiness of aircraft to fly. It should be observed that the lists (included in the normative documents discussed in this paper) of the persons who were entitled to be transported by military aircraft with the application of the procedures to ensure safe transport changed considerably over time. This was probably due to decisions taken outside the Command of Branches of Armed Forces. It is also worth noting that the lists featured persons who held posts that were not specified in any of the basic laws that were legally binding at that time (e.g. Members of the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party or the Air Forces Commander), yet they omitted representatives of the highest constitutional state bodies.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, changes that increased the number of persons entitled to such flights were not often accompanied by an increase in the number of aircraft or crews who were to execute such flights. This could have placed excessive psychophysical strain on pilots and technical personnel, which in turn might have affected the safety of transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. Specific regulations included in the normative documents were responses to safety threats identified during transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. However, it should be emphasised that with the passage of time, the requirements contained in the normative documents were relaxed, e.g. the time limit connected with submitting requests for transport was reduced from 3 to 2 days. Moreover, sometimes even the previous version of a regulation was restored, e.g. a return to a regulation according to which transport requests could be submitted directly to the commander of the unit executing such flights. This might mean that as a result of changes to the staffing of the posts, the officers who prepared successive orders containing rules of transport of state VIPs by military aircraft were not familiar with the reasons determining the formulation of the previous orders. Thus, they would try to simplify the new orders, without considering how these changes affected transport safety.

### ***Directives of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces***

In the period of time discussed in this paper, the Directives of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces whose aim was to ensure safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft were connected with implementation, in the entire Armed Forces, of instructions whose scope regulated issues related to safeguarding such flights by air traffic services and commanding organs.

<sup>33</sup> For example, the Speaker of the Sejm. Art. 15 and 18 of *Konstytucja Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej z dnia 22.07.1952 roku* (Dziennik Ustaw (Journal of Laws) 1952 no. 33, item 232 as amended).

The first normative document regulating the above issues about which it was possible to find information<sup>34</sup> in the archives was *Instruction Concerning the Organisation of Flights for Execution of Special Tasks in Military Aviation*. However, since the very document was not found in the archives, apart from some information about its existence, it is difficult to determine the scope of regulations it contained. Nevertheless, considering the content of the following normative documents<sup>35</sup> that replaced the above instruction, one can suppose that it regulated the issues of assigning special designations to flights performed by military aircraft that transported state VIPs, which resulted in implementing additional security measures by air traffic services.

Another normative document introduced in the entire Armed Forces, regulating the issues related to ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft was *Instruction Concerning the Safeguarding of Flights with Official Persons*.<sup>36</sup> This document specified that there would be extra procedures that should be implemented in order to ensure safety. They were to be used during transport of official persons, i.e. “the leadership of the Polish United Workers’ Party, the leadership of the state, the armed forces, and representatives of foreign countries who are guests of the above leadership.” Moreover, it was also specified that flights during which transport of the official persons listed above was executed, would be designated as “important” and “particularly important” for air traffic services. The instruction also normalised the issues related to submitting transport requests and notifying air traffic services of flights performed by military aircraft transporting state VIPs. Also, it contained procedures that allowed implementing additional safety measures for such flights within their air corridors and in the vicinity of civilian airports. It was specified that submitting transport requests and notifying of flights performed by military aircraft transporting state VIPs should be conducted in accordance with the regulations contained in legally binding *Instruction for Air Traffic Services*.<sup>37</sup> It should be emphasised that this document did not have any regulations concerning time limits or persons responsible for notification of flights performed by military aircraft transporting state VIPs. Nonetheless, it regulated in detail issues connected with, for example, urgent flights with military leadership personnel, for which requests could be submitted by the crew’s captain at least an hour before a scheduled flight.

**34** However, the instruction approved on 26th June 1959 by the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces could not be found in the archives of the Military Historical Bureau, the Central Military Library, or the Military Archives in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki.

**35** In *Directive of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces no. pf-77/Sztab issued on 30th September 1962*, it was specified that regulations concerning the transport of state VIPs by military aircraft were only included in item 6, letters b and c on pages 13-14 of the instruction, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 1482/70/876.

**36** Approved and introduced on 30th September 1962 with *Directive of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces no. pf-77/Sztab*.

**37** *Instrukcja służby ruchu lotniczego Wojsk Lotniczych i Obrony Przeciwlotniczej Obszaru Kraju*, Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number Lot. 430/61.

The instruction also did not specify detailed requirements concerning the above-mentioned “important” and “particularly important” designations, leaving the person submitting a flight request a lot of freedom to choose a designation depending on the rank and post of the personnel who were to be transported. As part of additional safety measures applied during transport of state VIPs by military aircraft designated as “particularly important,” dedicated areas of airspace were selected in which there could be no other aeroplanes (except for passenger<sup>38</sup> and transport aeroplanes flying within air corridors and in the vicinity of civilian airports). These dedicated areas of airspace had the following measurements: horizontally they amounted to the distance covered by aircraft executing a “particularly important” flight within 20 minutes (forwards and backwards from the current location); 25 km perpendicularly to the flight path; 900 or 2000 m in the vertical plane (depending on the flight altitude). When air conditions were favourable, the dedicated area of airspace could include the whole flight path within the territory of Poland. While transporting state VIPs by military aircraft within air corridors, the area of air space that was needed was agreed with civil air traffic services; however, in the vertical plane, it could not be smaller than from 600 m to 1000 m (depending on the flight altitude). Execution of other flights on military airfields (take-off, landing) as well as on emergency airfields was to be suspended (if an airfield turned out to be within the dedicated area of airspace selected for transport of state VIPs). Moreover, all levels of air traffic control were obliged to perform radio watch duty on the communication channel with the aircraft, and to be ready to provide the aircraft commander with information, guidelines and assistance. Additional safety measures within air corridors and in the vicinity of civilian airports regarded granting military aircraft transporting state VIPs priority concerning taxiing, take-off, and landing. It was specified that each flight designated as “particularly important” was to be executed in accordance with “rules and regulations concerning instrument flying.”<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the assignment by civil air traffic services of flight level (altitude) within air corridors would be agreed on with the high command of military air traffic services. The document’s final provisions included a list of personnel obliged to be familiar with the document’s content, including civilian air traffic controllers.

Although the *Instruction Concerning the Safeguarding of Flights with Official Persons* was not withdrawn until 1st January 1973, as early as 1969 another normative document was introduced with a directive of the Chief of the General Staff of the

<sup>38</sup> The *Rules and Regulations Regarding the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation* (RWL–59), which was legally binding at the time when the *Instruction Concerning the Safeguarding of the Flights with Official Persons* was implemented, does not mention passenger aircraft. It is possible to surmise that this concept was understood by the authors of the *Instruction Concerning the Safeguarding of the Flights with Official Persons* as civil aircraft. According to *Act of 31st May 1962 on Aviation Law* (Dziennik Ustaw (Journal of Laws) 1962 no. 32, item 153), civil aircraft flights were supervised by the Minister of Transport.

<sup>39</sup> This meant, for instance, that it was air traffic services, not aircraft crews, who were responsible for maintaining safe distance from other aircraft.

Polish Armed Forces<sup>40</sup> which was to be binding in the entire armed forces. It also regulated procedures related to ensuring safe transport, by air traffic services and flight commanding bodies, of state VIPs by military aircraft, although it did it in a different manner. This document was called *Instruction for Military Air Traffic Services*,<sup>41</sup> and it stated that “in order to distinguish the flights with official persons<sup>42</sup> and so as to take additional steps, when submitting requests for such flights, the “important” signal is to be used,” also excluding the possibility of revealing (unless consent was granted by superiors) what function was carried out by the passenger on board the aeroplane.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the document regulated the rules of conveying information on such flights (including flights conducted by foreign aircraft). The above normative document necessitated ensuring increased separation of other aircraft from military aircraft transporting state VIPs. The new measurements were as follows: vertically at least two flight altitude levels in accordance with the semi-circular cruising levels (which amounted to approximately 600 m); horizontally 25 km (to the left and to the right of the flight path, and 20 minutes’ flight (forwards and backwards from the location of the aeroplane transporting state VIPs). The document also necessitated suspending other flights in the vicinity of take-off, landing and emergency airfields for flights with state VIPs (for the duration of 20 minutes’ flight calculated for the aeroplane transporting state VIPs; however, it was not specified how this regulation was to be used, i.e. when the above-mentioned suspension would start and end).

The command posts of the Territorial Air Defence Forces (of all levels) were obligated to perform radio watch duty on the communication channel with the aircraft transporting state VIPs and on the so-called radio direction finding channel in order to convey information to the aircraft commander, if requested. Military aircraft transporting state VIPs would also have anti-radiolocation cover within the distance of 50 km to the left and to the right of the flight path. The person responsible for the entire operation of ensuring safety of aircraft that transported state VIPs was the Duty Officer of the Central Command Post of the Commander of the Territorial Air Defence Forces. Additionally, it was specified that if take-off, landing or flight of military aircraft transporting state VIPs took place in the vicinity of or at a civilian airport, no restrictions for civilian air traffic were to be imposed.

To conclude, it should be stated that the directives of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces that were legally binding between 1947 and 1973 regarded additional procedures, which were stricter than those used in the case of

<sup>40</sup> No. 39/oper., 29th July 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number OPK 336/69.

<sup>42</sup> It was not specified which persons, from among the VIPs, were treated as official persons. Moreover, no procedures were introduced that would specify post holders or institutions responsible for granting the status of “official person.”

<sup>43</sup> In the document, the two following names were used interchangeably: aircraft and aeroplane, despite the fact that from 1967 onwards, the air forces were equipped with Mi-8 and Mi-2 helicopters, which could easily be used to transport state VIPs.



other types of air transport. Also, the procedures were to ensure safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft only with regard to selected issues connected with ensuring safety for such flights by military and civilian air traffic services. It should be observed that the list of persons, included in the normative documents, entitled to be transported by military aircraft with the use of the procedures discussed above was drawn up in a very general manner. There were no procedures or persons selected that would be responsible for giving flights designations that necessitated using safety procedures. This could have created peculiar freedom in this regard and could have led to exploitation of existing regulations contained in the normative documents in order to circumvent air traffic restrictions.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the regulations contained in the directives of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces were ambiguous because formally there were two separate normative documents that were in effect. They contained regulations that were different even in reference to such basic issues as designations of military aircraft flights with state VIPs (“important” and “particularly important”, or only “important”). This situation must have been caused by the publication of the *Instruction for the Military Air Traffic Services*, which was in the form of a book and was easily available to persons involved in organizing and executing flights with state VIPs. In contrast, the *Instruction Concerning the Safeguarding of Flights with Official Persons* was only an annex to the directive of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, and it was probably reproduced only in few copies. The very fact of allowing the implementation of another normative document that regulated in a different manner safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft without official withdrawal of the previous document can be regarded as a premise allowing one to state that no proper attention was paid to the issues related to military aircraft flights with state VIPs. The causes of this problem can also be sought in that the drawing up of another normative document was conducted by persons who might not have had adequate factual and practical knowledge of the factors and conditions related to transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. This meant that while drawing up a new normative document, the persons responsible for it failed to withdraw the previous one that regulated the same issues.

<sup>44</sup> For instance, in 1973, there were from 8 to 14 flights performed every day that were designated as “important.” This made it difficult to apply to them the procedures described in the normative documents. Furthermore, it also created a situation in which air traffic services did not pay adequate attention to their planning and execution. *Protokół Głównej Komisji Badania Wypadków Lotniczych pod przewodnictwem gen. bryg. pil. Tadeusza Krepskiego z dnia 30.04.1973 roku z badania katastrofy samolotu Antonow An-24W numer burtowy 012 należącego do 36. samodzielnego specjalnego pułku lotniczego*, Archiwum Wojskowe w Nowym Dworze Mazowieckim (Military Archives in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki), catalogue number 8/1973.

### *Orders of the Minister of National Defence*

In the discussed period of time, the normative documents of the Minister of National Defence that were in effect were as follows (in chronological order): *General Rules and Regulations Concerning the Execution of Flights*,<sup>45</sup> *Rules and Regulations Concerning the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation (RWL-53)*,<sup>46</sup> *Rules and Regulations Concerning the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation (RWL-59)*,<sup>47</sup> and *Rules and Regulations Concerning the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation (RWL-66)*.<sup>48</sup> The above documents did not directly regulate the issues related to safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. According to the RWL-53 and RWL-59 documents, “flights of military aircraft are divided into [...] special,” with no explanation, however, whether or not transport of VIPs by military aircraft belonged to this category.<sup>49</sup> The RWL-66 document stated that special flights were regulated with a separate instruction, adding, however, that unless stated otherwise in other regulations, special flights should be executed in accordance with the regulations contained in the RWL-66. Also, as far as types of flights were concerned, the RWL-66 listed “[...] service flights concerning transport of passengers.” Furthermore, the regulations contained in the RWL-59 document also specified that civilians could only be present on board military aircraft if consent had been granted by the Commander of the Air Forces and the Territorial Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces. In addition, in accordance with the RWL-66, such consent could also be granted by the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, Chief Training Inspector of the Ministry of National Defence, Chief Inspector of Aviation, Chief Inspector of State Territorial Defence, Commander of the Territorial Air Defence Forces, Commander of the Operational Air Forces or Commander of the Polish Navy (only with reference to subordinated transport, liaison, and air ambulance aeroplanes, as well as helicopters).

<sup>45</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number Lot. 65/51, introduced with *Order no. 41 of the Minister of National Defence issued on 28th July 1951*.

<sup>46</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number Lot. 78/53, introduced with *Order no. 18 of the Minister of National Defence issued on 14th November 1953*.

<sup>47</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number Lot. 312/59, introduced with *Order no. PF 48/MON of the Minister of National Defence issued on 11th August 1959*.

<sup>48</sup> Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (Military Historical Bureau), catalogue number 855/65, introduced with *Order no. PF 11/MON of the Minister of National Defence issued on 10th March 1966*. The changes to the document were introduced on 1st April 1970 with Supplement no. 1 to the *Rules and Regulations Regarding the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation (RWL-66)* Lot. 855/65, approved with *Order of the Minister of National Defence no. 9/MON issued on 27th February 1970*.

<sup>49</sup> It should be pointed out that orders of the commander of a Branch of Armed Forces normalising flights with state VIPs made at the time when specific *Rules and Regulations Regarding the Execution of Flights in Military Aviation* were legally binding contained the wording “special task,” and not “special flight.”

On the whole, it should be stated that the orders of the Minister of National Defence that were in effect between 1947 and 1973 concerned the implementation of normative documents which regulated the entire activity of military aviation and regarded provision of safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft. It should be emphasised that ensuring safety of flights with state VIPs was not directly regulated in the normative documents regarding the entire activity of military aviation (in rules and regulations concerning the execution of flights), which can be regarded as confirmation of the fact that no special attention was paid to such flights in the Ministry of National Defence.

In conclusion, it should be stated that procedures for ensuring safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft between 1947 and 1973 were introduced in normative documents that were drawn up on different command levels. Moreover, the changes these documents introduced resulted from identification, in the content of previous documents, of inaccuracies and errors which had caused air incidents. Considering the provision of safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft, what seems especially dangerous is that the requirements contained in the normative documents discussed above were often relaxed or even previous solutions from older documents were restored over time (solutions that had been included in normative documents as a result of identification of threats to safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft). As a consequence of the conducted analysis, the authors have also proved that the topic of ensuring, by air traffic services, safe transport of state VIPs by military aircraft was regulated differently, during the period studied in this paper, in two different but simultaneously legally binding normative documents, which posed a considerable threat to safety of such flights.

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