

Original article

Contemporary conditions of organization and functioning of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces

Marek Strzoda* , Dariusz Szkoluda 

Faculty of Military Studies, War Studies University, Warsaw, Poland,
e-mail: m.strzoda@akademia.mil.pl; d.szkoluda@akademia.mil.pl

INFORMATIONS

Article history:

Submitted: 21 November 2018

Accepted: 02 January 2019

Published: 16 December 2019

ABSTRACT

The Command and Control System of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland constitutes an essential element of the State Defense System. Its primary function is to enable decision-makers and commanders at all levels to make decisions and to create systems of actions that, in the course of the operation, achieve strategic, operational and tactical goals. Various external factors and internal conditions influence the structure and then the functioning of this system. This system is subject to continuous evaluation and, consequently, changes that are to lead to its improvement, so that the assumed goals are achieved efficiently and effectively.

The article discusses three groups of conditions directly, and with certain factors indirectly, affecting the organization of the command and control system as well as its functioning. The first one concerns the change in the nature of modern security threats. With regard to the short characterization of hybrid activities, subliminal actions, and asymmetric threats, it was indicated how they determine the requirements regarding the organization and functioning of the Armed Forces Command and Control System adequate to such situations. The findings of the 2016 Strategic Defense Review and its result document – the Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland constitute the second group of factors. In the consequence of strategic analysis, the conclusions and recommendations included in the Concept should be taken into account when introducing changes to the command and control system. In the last part, it was pointed out how the decision to establish the Territorial Defense Forces (WOT) and the organizational assumptions resulting from it concerning their structure, tasks, and rules of operation influenced the changes in the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces.

The conditions presented in particular parts of the study should be considered during the forecasted and partially implemented organizational and functional improvements to the Polish Armed Forces Command and Control System.

KEYWORDS

Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces,
Territorial Defense Forces, Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland

* Corresponding author



© 2019 by Author(s). This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY). <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Introduction

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland constitute an essential element of society. Over the centuries, the Polish Army has played a significant role in shaping and developing Polish statehood. Along with social, cultural, technological or political changes, the role of the armed forces and tasks that they were supposed to implement for the state also changed accordingly. However, the armed forces have always been an integral part of society and have enjoyed the trust of citizens.

The pursuit of continuous development and improvement of the functioning of the armed forces determines the necessity of adaptations made in them adequately to the needs of the future battlefield, contemporary conditions, their potential, and the needs of the state. Building the operational capabilities of the Polish Armed Forces is carried out within the defense system of the state. They are inseparably connected with the elements of the command and control subsystem as well as the non-military subsystem. An important element determining the development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland is their operation within the North Atlantic Alliance as well as bilateral and multinational cooperation.

In the context mentioned above, the conceptual and organizational activities that refer to the future of the Polish Armed Forces take on a special dimension. In this aspect, an important, if not the most important, element of development is the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces. It is a system that, on the one hand, provides civilian control over the Armed Forces and, on the other hand, makes it possible to translate political goals into military ones and to plan and launch the operation of the entire Armed Forces' executive apparatus. The command and control system has been subjected to extensive systemic organizational changes for several years. The concept of organization and functioning of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland prepared and implemented in 2014 has been analyzed and evaluated as part of the Strategic Defense Review conducted at the turn of the last two years. The conducted strategic analysis process was to demonstrate the advantages and shortcomings of the existing solutions and to present a vision of the future together with implementation recommendations.

1. A new dimension of security threats

The beginning of the 21st century is the further evolution of threats and new challenges in the field of international security. In the last two decades, there has been a growth in the number of intra-state conflicts, and the place of public institutions is increasingly occupied by different types of entities with a non-state status. At the same time, the line between soldiers and civilians as well as the state of war and the state of peace is more and more often blurred in the conflicts that have occurred. The conflict in Ukraine, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and the war against the so-called Islamic State has initiated a new wave of research and discussion on the phenomena of the changing world, as well as the causes and nature of the current armed conflicts and their evolution [1].

In respect of contemporary conditions of the security environment, cognitive processes mainly concern phenomena taking place during hybrid conflicts (activities), subliminal

actions, and asymmetric activities. The results obtained during the research serves, on the one hand, to identify, classify and describe the essential features of these activities (phenomena) and, on the other hand, they are a starting point in determining ways to counteract the adverse effects of these activities, enable the development of appropriate response methods and preparation of adequate counteracting system.

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia has caused a particular impetus in the field of security research. The operational method of the so-called “green men” gave rise to the widespread use of the term “hybrid warfare”. This term has gained great popularity, but contrary to popular belief, it is not the Russians but American military analysts that are the creators of the concept of “hybrid warfare”. This concept was supposed to be an answer to the experience gained by the United States Army in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the so-called war on terror. It has also become an attempt at a new theoretical approach to various aspects of security, which is to be a useful tool for explaining the surrounding reality [1].

The etymology of the term “hybridity” derives from the Latin word “hybrida” meaning in a biology a plant or animal formed from the cross of individuals belonging to two different varieties, breeds or species. In other terms, “hybridity” can be defined as “...a quality created as a result of crossing or mixing features, elements belonging to various, often structurally different and genetically distant, opposing objects, organisms or states” [2].

The review of the security literature indicates that precise definitions of the terms “hybrid war” and “hybrid conflict” do not exist. Experts are discussing their designations and denotations. The meaning and scope of the terms “hybrid war” and “hybrid threats” were clearly shaped – over the last one and a half decade – under the influence of ongoing or just finished armed conflicts – from Chechnya, through Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Israeli war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, civil wars after the so-called Arab Spring up to Ukraine [3]. However, it can be considered that the main characteristic of a hybrid war is the pursuit of maximum convergence and synchronization of methods, means, and measures of conducting military and non-military operations to increase the synergy effect [4]. It is worth noting that this concept does not only apply to military activities. It is pointed out that the “Russian hybrid war” consists in the use of a whole range of political, diplomatic, military, information, economic and cultural means, which are appropriately selected and combined in such a way that their synchronized use brings the intended results. In the so-called “new Russian model” war has no beginning or end, and the division into soldiers and civilians is blurred. A political declaration of war does not precede military actions, they are carried out by surprise, and they are initiated already in peacetime by small subunits of regular armies and irregular armed units (partisan groups, special forces, “green men”, etc.). Many specialists indicate that the main battlefield of this modern war conducted by Russia in Ukraine is no longer the physical space, but above all the unlimited sphere of psychological influence. These actions do not aim at the physical annihilation of the enemy and occupation of its territory, but their purpose is to break the will of the opponent and reduce its ability to resist [4].

When analyzing the conflict in Ukraine and the approach mentioned above to hybrid conflict, it is also worth pointing out that a “subliminal state may characterize modern

conflicts". Such a conflict is also defined as "subliminal aggression" and understood as military operations whose momentum and scale are deliberately limited and maintained by the aggressor at a level below the unambiguously identifiable threshold of conventional, open war. The purpose of subliminal aggression is to achieve the adopted goals while at the same time causing difficulties in obtaining a consensus decision in international security organizations [5].

The analyzed Russia's hostile actions against various countries, including Ukraine, the Baltic States, or Poland, which are defined as hybrid or subliminal activities, are frequently combined in one multidimensional threat of a wide range of instruments of Russia's external influence. Thereby significant boundaries between various means of influence, from undesirable but completely legal actions (e.g. traditional media and social media) to those completely illegal under international law (the use of armed force), are becoming blurred. It should be pointed out that the use of individual measures or actions corresponds to various political goals set by their Russian authorizing officers [3].

When referring to contemporary hybrid activities, it is also indicated that they may have the character of "asymmetrical operations". In an asymmetric conflict, the relatively weaker, unable to obtain a military victory opponent will try to fight the advantage at non-military levels. It results in the use of strategies, methods and combat techniques aimed at the highest possible psychological impact to intimidate and consequently discourage the opponent's society to conduct conflict [6]. These involve terrorist activities, actions of specialized units, internal political opposition, hired out non-state actors or the use of various means of struggle – such as weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, and submarines. The aim of such actions may be to strive to encompass the whole hostile area [1].

The contemporary analysis of international security, identifying individual threats and referring them to the strategic, regional and local dimensions is of great practical importance. As a matter of necessity, states must prioritize threats, develop concepts of counteraction and reaction to their occurrence, as well as incur expenditure related to the preparation of appropriate military and non-military means. Conducting security analyzes is also of great importance since today the differences between the strategic, operational and tactical level of operation, as well as between offensive and defensive operations are obliterated. The changing nature of security threats sets new requirements for the organization and then the functioning of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces. The basic conditions of hybrid, subliminal and asymmetric actions described above indicate that the boundaries between strictly military and non-military threats are getting blurred. Under such conditions, it is substantial to define the organization and operation of the command and control system to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. That applies to all levels of this system. While conducting conceptual work on future actions, it is necessary to determine to what extent and how to activate the elements of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces to maintain continuity of command, mask the arrangement of individual elements of the system and ensure freedom of operation in the situation of hybrid or subliminal activities. The above requires the use of organizational and procedural solutions that will be adequate

to the nature of threats and activities. Therefore, they may be actions other than the standard, currently accepted procedures of command organization in the “classic” approach to defense and attack. Being aware of the changes in the nature of threats, it is necessary to develop solutions that can be currently considered unconventional, however they may prove inevitable to ensure uninterrupted relations between commanders and subordinates

2. A new defense concept of the Republic of Poland

The changes taking place in the European and global security environment were one of the premises to identify the need for a comprehensive look at the Polish defense. In Poland the attention is increasingly paid to the conscious shaping of the environment in which we live, the use of development opportunities, and the prevention of threats. Therefore, on July 14, 2016, the Ministry of National Defense initiated the Strategic Defense Review (SPO 2016), the work on which ended with the report drawn up in 2017.

The Strategic Defense Review is a strategic management tool that responds to the need to anticipate changes. Its primary goal is to identify the factors that will affect the Armed Forces (broadly the State Defense System) in the future and formulate the strategy. That is another attempt at a comprehensive approach to defense issues and defining the future shape of the defense system of the state. Thus, the received conclusions and presented recommendations will have an impact on the decisions made about the structure and principles of the operation of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces.

The main objectives of the SPO 2016 include proposing a vision of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland adequate to current and future threats as well as owned resources and defining the directions of defense system development in the perspective of the coming 15 years. Secondly, identifying specific methods for implementing this vision in practice. Thirdly, creating a permanent basis for pursuing a defense policy based on data analysis and rational decision-making. The SPO 2016 conclusions and recommendations should allow the definition of a new strategy for the development of the state defense system and constitute the basis for modifying the development framework and functioning of the Polish Armed Forces.

Due to confidentiality reasons, the detailed results of the SPO 2016 cannot be disclosed. However, on May 23, 2017, at the War Studies University in Warsaw, the Minister of National Defense demonstrated explicit assumptions of the Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland [7] (Defense Concept), which presents general conclusions from the conducted analyzes and based on them sets out a vision of Polish defense in the future.

The Defense Concept is a document prepared for public use; it sums up the SPO 2016 and consists of four parts. The first one contains the foreword of the Minister of National Defense and the introduction of the representative of Minister for the Strategic Defense Review, who presents the methodical and organizational conditions of this process.

In the introduction, the Minister of National Defense emphasizes that the events of recent years, such as the aggression of the Russian Federation to Ukraine, the destabilization of the Middle East and North Africa or subsequent terrorist attacks, show growing

threats to Poland [7]. He also points out that the Polish Armed Forces are the basic tool to ensure state security, which, however, has been developing in recent years on the ground of erroneous assumptions. According to the Minister, there was no reliable assessment of the geopolitical situation of our country, and the scale of threats resulting from Russia's aggressive policy has not been properly estimated. The result was a mistaken belief that the risk of armed conflict in our part of Europe is minimal, and threats should be seen mainly among non-state actors. There are listed the main goals of the conducted analytical and conceptual works: the necessity of preparing the state to defend its own territory, increasing the capacity to deter based on its own defense potential, strengthening allied ties and the role of Poland in these relations, participation in crisis management and foreign operations, as well as identification of the desired model of the Polish Armed Forces. The Minister of National Defense also highlights the need to build the defense potential of the state in the broader context of Poland's development, which was outlined in *the Strategy for Responsible Development* [8]. It is also underlined that operational forces supported by the Territorial Defense Forces will remain the basis for the modern Polish Armed Forces. The modern army must have operational capabilities enabling an elastic response to increasingly diversified threats, including neutralizing hostile activities below the threshold of war. As regards changes in the security environment, it is also pointed out that future defense tasks will be fulfilled not only on the battlefield, but also in cyberspace. As one of the subsequent, long-term goals, the Minister mentions the need to build critical thinking in the department of culture and to conduct systematic analyzes of the needs so that the continuous and stable development of the Polish Armed Forces is ensured. One of the conclusions of Minister of National Defense was the statement that the findings presented in the classified report summarizing the SPO are already becoming the basis for making real changes in the functioning of the Polish Armed Forces in many areas: from defense planning, through the command and control system, to increasing operational capabilities and the available arsenal [7, p. 7].

The next part of the document presents the conditions of the security environment, the global context of individual phenomena as well as the threats and challenges that Poland will face in the next 15 years. It also describes the basic assumptions that were adopted after analyzing the strategic position of Poland.

The third part describes the directions of changes that must be adopted to meet the above-mentioned challenges. They mainly concern the catalog of future tasks of the Armed Forces, their model, desirable operational abilities, and especially changes in the command and control system.

At the end of the document it was emphasized that today, there is no possibility for the military forces to achieve their goals without the support of other sectors of the state and a modern approach to development management.

When analyzing the content of the Defense Concept, direct or indirect references to conditions affecting the future shape of the command and control system as well as the requirements for its functioning can be found.

With reference to the assessment of the security environment of our country, the authors of the Defense Concept suggest that nowadays security should be viewed in relation to several factors. Not only the aspects of state defense but also other factors, e.g., energy security, economic security, and social security ought to be considered. Nonetheless, the 2016 SPO consciously focused on the most important threats and challenges for the interest of the state. They are connected above all with potential aggression aimed at Poland or the allied state, as well as against irregular actions, below the threshold of war [9]. It was assumed that the Armed Forces must also be ready to participate in responding to non-military crisis situations or constructive participation in overseas operations.

The authors of the 2016 SPO indicate that the global trends listed in the Defense Concept have a bearing on the situation in our region, and thus co-shape local threats and challenges. Russia's superpower policy was recognized as the greatest danger, followed by the unstable neighborhood of NATO's eastern and southern flanks, terrorism, the economic and social environment, and new dimensions of the fighting space.

While pointing to the conditions of the future battlefield, the authors of the Defense Concept maintain that it will be much more chaotic than today [7, p. 33]. As a justification for this claim, they refer to an increase in the intensity of fire exchange, the use of numerous platforms, which are human-controlled, operated remotely, or even perform tasks autonomously, in the combat space. At the same time, the increasing efficiency of systems integrating sensors and fighting assets will balance new disruptive measures. It is predicted, however, that despite these changes, "conventional" military equipment such as tanks, armored personnel carriers or multi-tasked manned aircraft will continue to play the main role over the coming 15 years. New means of reconnaissance (including satellites), masking and destruction will be developed simultaneously, which together with the increase in their number will be cheaper and easier to employ. When it comes to the conditionality of command, the role of automated command and control systems will also continue to grow, and the high development rate of ICT tools will be maintained. The importance of technologies that make up the *anti-access complexes*¹ will also rise. In the assessment of the 2016 SPO, their implementation and the resulting change in the approach to defense operations will provide security more effectively than costly investments in systems primarily serving the power projection. It is also pointed out that technologies, which are at an early stage of development, are expected to bring significant savings in terms of costs in the future. Nevertheless, they will require high expenditure on research and long implementation time [7, p. 34].

Actions of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in building anti-access capabilities and assumption that the main task of the Armed Forces will be to stop the aggressor at the border of the state and inflict as much losses as possible on them, require the adaptation of the command and control system to new conditions and preparation for continuous and flexible respond to changes in the situation. The next dimension, namely

¹ Integration of air measures, missile systems, sensors, unmanned systems, land platforms and other elements effectively blocking the opponent's entry into the territory of our country and preventing freedom of maneuver in this area.

the cyberspace and the information battlefield, will have a great significance for the command and control system. Despite the prevailing conventional nature of the battlefield, new technologies will play an increasingly important role. Especially since they have already become the field of clash of institutional and non-institutional actors. This is the dimension of the fighting space, which allows for competing with entities with diverse, often asymmetrical, potential. It is difficult to distinguish the boundaries between states of peace, crises or open conflict. The findings of the 2016 SPO indicate that technological progress will have a huge impact on the economic and social environment of the Armed Forces, but simultaneously it will also generate a number of threats, including the possibility of uncontrolled use of various types of technology by non-state actors [7, p. 35].

When pointing to the directions of the state defense policy in the Defense Concept, the defense of Poland and the assistance to the allies if necessary were taken as a priority. Therefore, in the perspective of 2032, the Polish Armed Forces and thus the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces are to be ready to carry out those tasks in every aspect. They should have modern equipment with high potential, trained soldiers and rehearsed operating procedures. At the same time, some of the old equipment should be properly modernized and kept in reserve. Thus, Poland will maintain a growing contribution to NATO's activities and will strengthen allied cooperation and work to build closer ties. To meet these challenges, the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces should be clear and ready for quick response during the crisis and war, so that the leaders of the state defense have a precise picture and support to help them make decisions [7, p. 39].

The Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces must be ready to cooperate with other services during crisis management operations both on the territory of Poland and allied countries. That task becomes especially crucial in the context of the growing use of irregular activities in our neighborhood. It is indicated that there may be situations in the future that require coordinated operation by the Armed Forces and non-military institutions. Despite focusing on the essential defense task, Poland will be ready to participate in foreign operations, however with minimal depletion of the defense potential of the state. For this purpose, appropriate operational capabilities and units prepared to perform tasks measurably during missions beyond the state's borders will be indicated in the Polish Armed Forces [7, p. 39].

In the Defense Concept it is indicated that the model of the future Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, of which one of the elements is the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces, is the most important outcome of the 2016 SPO. The model specifies the general directions of amendments that should be introduced in the next fifteen years. Moreover, the model will be a reference point for conducting further analyzes of the security environment of the state. It should also enable quick and effective response to identified changes.

According to the adopted model, it was determined that in the 2032 perspective, the Polish Armed Forces would be one of the most modern and most numerous armies in Europe. It will consist of five types of military branches: Navy, Air Force, Land Forces,

Territorial Defense Forces and Special Forces [7, p. 43]. In the light of the findings of the 2016 SPO, the units of the Land Forces and Air Force will remain pivotal for Polish defense. The analyzes carried out show that there is a need to create the fourth division of operational forces. It was also pointed out that further efforts should be made to ensure that the divisions fulfill the role of combat tactical formations rather than administrative entities. A new, effective logistic system based on providing support for each division so that they can operate autonomously will be built for the Armed Forces. In the future, the emphasis is to be put on multiplying the possibility of destruction, and thus creating the potential for deterrence. The means to achieve this goal will be fire assets allowing for the reduction of enemy combat potential, but without destabilizing effects for the international situation, e.g., as a result of high civilian losses. The development of long-range barrel and rocket artillery will be intensified, which when combined with new attack helicopters is supposed to enable an effective fire maneuver. The introduction of new, more resistant to the enemy's weapons, armored vehicles will also be continued. When it comes to the armored weapons, the particular focus will be on the development of a new generation tank, whose project can be implemented in an international formula. Increased funds are to be allocated to the development of radio-electronic warfare technology. An important element of the future destruction potential will be radio-electronic means with a scale adapted to the defense operation.

It is also assumed that in the years to come the Special Forces will strengthen their potential, both in the context of high intensity operations and participation in foreign operations of lower intensity.

In the presented model, the Territorial Defense Forces will play a major role, which according to the adopted schedule, will achieve full combat readiness and have an increased fire potential in order to fulfill various tasks. However, their main mission will be cooperation with operational forces, mainly as light infantry. They will also be prepared to repel irregular activities and provide support for crisis management.

The Navy will fulfill an important function, since its main task will be to protect the Polish coast and prevent the enemy from seizing the southern Baltic. It is planned to strengthen the coastal missile units, which together with manned and unmanned reconnaissance platforms, modern mine fighting techniques, as well as new submarines, should create an operating system to significantly increase defense capabilities. Simultaneously, these activities will contribute to the construction of the Polish anti-access complex.

In the 2016 SPO it was stressed that the Air Force with long-range precision weapons as well as the fifth-generation combat aircraft would play a key deterrent role. Their quantitative potential will increase.

Due to the dynamically developing information space, the Armed Forces will be prepared for active impact as well as defense against foreign operations in the information environment. Actions will also be taken to fully integrate the activities of the military services and institutions responsible for obtaining information. At the same time, cybernetic forces will provide constant cover, coordination of security, and fight in cyber-space.

The 2016 SPO results indicate that with reference to the above-described assumptions regarding the development of the Armed Forces, the ability to command the Polish Armed Forces will be improved by reforming the current command and control system [7, p. 45]. In the perspective of the year 2032 actions will also be taken to introduce automated systems, enabling the commanders to have a full view of the situation, and thus faster decision-making process. The flow of data between all levels of command will be improved. The data exchange system will be adapted to operate in the combat environment of high level of interference. One of the priorities is to acquire and implement new sensors in the future, which will lead to the development of reconnaissance capabilities starting from the lowest organizational level. At the same time, it will seek to acquire own satellite capabilities and the possession of reconnaissance instruments at the strategic level.

Ensuring state security through the effective use of the military subsystem and the potential of the non-military part of the state defense system requires an efficient command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces. As regards the current solutions, it was pointed out after the 2016 SPO that the priority in this matter is to simplify the whole system, to precisely separate responsibilities within its scope, as well as increase hierarchy and unambiguous indication of the highest-rank commander [7, p. 52]. At the same time, due to the existing legal order, or rather the functioning of several legal acts defining the issues of state defense management, one of the most important issues is to order these issues in one comprehensive act. The basic assumption for the new solutions is to focus responsibility so that the persons (bodies) liable for commanding the Polish Armed Forces during the war has an impact on their development in peacetime. The new command and control system should allow for easy transformation from peace “P” to war “W” time. Training programs (improvement, exercises) are to be also developed and implemented for persons holding managerial and command posts to provide them with possibility of regular participation in war games. The conclusions from such projects will translate into operational plans and plans concerning the development of the Polish Armed Forces [7, p. 52]. In the reformed system, the General Command of Branches of Armed Forces and the Operational Command of Branches of Armed Forces will be disbanded, and the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces will play the role of the “first soldier”. New commands of branches of Armed Forces: Navy, Air Force, Land Forces, Territorial Defense Forces and Special Forces will be subordinated to him/her. The competences of the Chief of the Polish Armed Forces will include commanding the Armed Forces in the country and abroad, as well as planning their strategic use.

The authors of the 2016 SPO indicate that the reform of the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces will be designed in such a way to form a coherent whole with the proposed model of the 2032 Armed Forces. The tasks of the General Command of Branches of Armed Forces will be taken over by the afore-mentioned commands of branches of Armed Forces, while the tasks of the Operational Command of Branches of Armed Forces will fall to the newly created Inspectorate of Training and Command. The Inspectorate will also coordinate training issues. The latter and the Inspectorate for Armed Forces Support will report to the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed

Forces, who will be assisted by two deputies in charge of defense operations planning and support of the Armed Forces.

In the proposed solution, the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces will still be a part of the office of the Minister of National Defense, it will follow the guidelines of the Ministry of National Defense to ensure civilian control over the Polish Armed Forces [7, p. 53].

Defining the Defense Concept of our state creates new conditions and requirements in relation to the organization and functioning of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces. This applies to all levels of command. Therefore, the existing organizational, functional and procedural solutions require verification. It is also important to assume that there will not be too many differences between the future, peacetime and war Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces.

3. Establishment of Territorial Defense Forces

The decision on the establishment of Territorial Defense Forces is of great importance for the future shape of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces and its current functioning. It was taken in response to the emerging threats and in confrontation with the need for strengthening the potential of the Polish Armed Forces. Activities in this area were initiated on December 16, 2015. The Minister of National Defense decided to appoint the Plenipotentiary of the Minister of National Defense for the Establishment of Territorial Defense [10] and to organize the Office for the Establishment of Territorial Defense [9].

The Office for the Establishment of Territorial Defense is directly subordinated to the Minister of National Defense, and its main purpose was to prepare the formal and legal basis for the creation of territorial defense and to develop organizational, logistic and training assumptions regarding the functioning of organizational units of territorial defense. At the same time, while cooperating with the organizational units and departments of the Ministry of National Defense, scientific and research institutions, pro-defense organizations and state and local administration authorities, the Bureau worked out a proposal for the fundamental directions of territorial defense development in Poland and the principles of territorial defense in time of peace, crisis and war.

On April 25, 2016, the Minister of National Defense approved the Concept of Establishment of the Territorial Defense Forces, which provides for the formation of seventeen Territorial Defense Brigades (BOT) in Poland – one in each voivodship, and two in the Mazowieckie voivodship.

The Territorial Defense Forces commenced to operate under the Act adopted on November 16, 2016 [11], in which they were defined as another branch of Armed Forces (Article 3 (3)). The commander of the Territorial Defense Forces has been designated in the Act as competent for commanding military units and organizational formations of the Territorial Defense Forces (Article 11c paragraph 1) and defines its scope of activity, which in particular applies to (Article 11c paragraph 2):

- 1) implementation of the Armed Forces development programs,
- 2) planning, organizing and conducting training of subordinate military units and organizational formations,
- 3) planning and organizing the mobilization and operational development and use of the Territorial Defense Forces,
- 4) preparing means and resources of the Territorial Defense Forces for combat operations,
- 5) performing tasks related to the participation of units and subunits of the Territorial Defense Forces in combating natural disasters and elimination of their consequences, property protection, search and rescue operations or protection of human health and life, as well as participation in the implementation of crisis management tasks,
- 6) cooperation with other authorities and entities in matters related to the state defense,
- 7) ordering and conducting control of subordinate military units and organizational formations on principles and in the manner specified in the Act of July 15, 2011, on control in government administration (Journal of Laws, item 1092).

Inclusion of the Commander of Territorial Defense in the Command and Control System of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland increased the number of commanders of branches of Armed Forces subordinated to the Minister of National Defense. This situation creates new relations, both with the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces and other commands of the same level. The inclusion of the Territorial Defense Forces in the development program of the Polish Armed Forces is of particular importance for the planning and programming of their development. This document contains, inter alia, the objectives and methods for their achievement by individual branches of Armed Forces, the model of Armed Forces, development plans for individual operational capabilities, and, above all, defines the financing framework. For this reason, the decision to establish the Territorial Defense Forces “launches” a series of activities of particular elements of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces, so as to enable the process of their formation, achievement of operational capabilities and involvement in tasks in accordance with their purpose.

According to the Concept of the Establishment of the Territorial Defense Forces (WOT), the formation process of WOT units and subunits was spread over the years 2016-2021 and divided into four stages. Therefore, in the coming years the individual elements of the WOT command system will be included in the Command and Control System of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.

As part of the first stage covering the years 2016-2018, the Command of the Territorial Defense Forces (DWOT) was established in Warsaw and the process of forming three BOTs in the following voivodships: Podlaskie, Lubelskie and Podkarpackie commenced.

As part of the second stage covering projects planned for the years 2017-2019, the formation of three more BOTs dislocated in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Mazowieckie

voivodships was initiated and a Mobile Training Team (MZSz) was created in the composition of three Training Teams (ZSz).

The third stage covers the years 2018-2020. As part of the activities undertaken from the beginning of 2018, the formation of seven more BOTs dislocated in the Pomorskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lodzkie, Swietokrzyskie, Malopolskie, Wielkopolske, and Slaskie voivodships was initiated. At the same time, as the priority for 2018, the WOT Commander defined the formation of the WOT Training Center in Siedlce.

The fourth stage is to be implemented in the years 2019-2021; it is planned then to form another four territorial defense brigades in the following voivodships: Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie, Dolnoslaskie and Opolskie.

The WOT brigades will be deployed in the capitals of individual voivodships, with the exception of the Mazowieckie voivodship, in which two WOT brigades will be dislocated in Ciechanow and Radom respectively.

The WOT formation process assumes that by the end of 2018 these troops will count approximately 21,000 positions (including around 3,000 positions for professional soldiers and 18,000 positions for TSW (Territorial Military Service) soldiers). Ultimately, the WOT will have approximately 53,000 soldiers. They will be professional soldiers and soldiers performing the Territorial Military Service (TSW). In connection with this, a personal challenge for the commands of operational units is the separation of personnel to the WOT. In this situation, it appears necessary to define the scope of supplementing the personnel of both the commands of operational units and the WOT in the years to come, so that the realization of tasks by them is effective and efficient. It is estimated that the entire WOT system will have been completed by 2021.

When proceeding to the creation of Territorial Defense Forces, the assumption was made that they would carry out their tasks in accordance with their territorial arrangement. That is why their regional and local character should be emphasized. The implementation of this concept is reflected, among others, in the distribution of individual units in different localities and the territorial recruitment of soldiers serving in them.

During peacetime, the WOT's main tasks will include training, implementation of reconnaissance activities, participation in anti-terrorist activities, conducting anti-disinformation activities (including conducting activities in cyber-space), participation in patriotic education, as well as cultivating local social and civic ties.

The WOT also plays an important role in preventing and responding to various types of crisis situations, including those resulting from natural hazards and being a consequence of human activity. The analyzes carried out and the practical action showed that the currently existing crisis management and civil defense systems need support from the Armed Forces, since they are unable to mobilize adequate human resources for this purpose. In this situation, the WOT can fill this gap by preparing several hundred adequately equipped and trained volunteer soldiers in each poviast. It is estimated that several tens of thousands of trained soldiers exhibiting local patriotism and devotion can bring considerable potential and significantly strengthen the functioning of the entire state defense system [12, p. 1]. During the crisis, the WOT can perform tasks related to:

- 1) preparation of protection and defense of the area/facility, road junctions, etc. in the area (direction) of the threat,
- 2) responding in the area/direction of threat,
- 3) support for local state and local government administration bodies and the society in the prevention and counteracting of threats, and then removing the effects of the crisis,
- 4) conducting anti-disinformation activities,
- 5) developing a territorial reconnaissance system,
- 6) strengthening the protection and defense of the state border,
- 7) participation in counteracting hybrid threats,
- 8) participation in securing the mobilization and operational development of operational and support forces,
- 9) participation in securing the acceptance and development of allied and coalition augmentation forces.

The presented scope of WOT tasks during the crisis and the assumption that the subunits will primarily implement tasks in the field of prevention and counteracting threats, and then remove the effects of the crisis, means that further crisis management plans must change. They should be updated in line with the WOT development schedule, means and resources held by these subunits, and their territorial deployment. There may also be situations in which the operational troops and WOT subunits will be included in the crisis management system. These activities may require close cooperation with the regional military administration bodies – Voivodship Military Staffs, which are responsible for, among others, planning and organizing the use of allocated military forces in crisis situations, for example in rescue operations, in the liquidation of the consequences of accidents, disasters and natural disasters, and combating terror.

The next group of tasks of the WOT troops are activities during the war, where the main ones are as follows:

- 1) conducting military operations in cooperation with operational forces aimed at destroying or halting the forces of a potential enemy,
- 2) conducting independent unconventional, anti-subversion and anti-airborne, as well as anti-terrorist activities,
- 3) participation in the protection and defense of borders, localities and other important infrastructure in the permanent area of responsibility (SRO),
- 4) participation in supporting the acceptance and development of allied and coalition strengthening forces in the SRO,
- 5) participation in the protection of state property and cultural property against plundering and destruction,
- 6) protection and defense of state and local government administration bodies, as well as social organizations in areas temporarily occupied by the enemy,
- 7) participation in securing the restoration and functioning of state and local government structures in liberated territories.

The WOT tasks presented above point to a wide range of possibilities of using subunits for both strictly military and non-military tasks. According to the adopted concept, the WOT tasks are to be implemented in areas related to the family place of origin and residence of soldiers. This factor definitely increases the combat value of this type of subunits. The combat assets of territorial defense units resulting from light equipment and knowledge of the area should be stressed. In military activities, they ensure the possibility of conducting effective irregular activities in the areas occupied by the enemy. They can also carry out independent actions, especially in the rear area, including preparation for the defense of sensitive areas or protection of important strategic infrastructure facilities such as airports, ports, naval bases, refineries, chemical industry plants, state administration offices, military facilities, energy or hydro-technical facilities, etc. This will significantly relieve the operational forces. Other tasks include fighting a foe located deep in our territory (landings, subversive groups, groups of the armed underground), elimination of the effects of enemy strikes, and traffic control [13].

The inclusion of the WOT in the state defense system causes numerous implications for the various levels of the Command and Control System of the Armed Forces. These conditions must be considered from the point of view of its organization and then its functioning. The adopted concept assumes the national subordination of the WOT units. However, in the situation of conducting an allied defense operation in the territory of our state, it should be specified what the command relations between the WOT Command and the commanding bodies performing such an action will be. Also, at the tactical level, cooperation procedures for WOT brigades with units of operational troops and units of other states should be defined. Especially that the experience of the previous exercises indicates that the areas of the WOT's responsibility will not coincide with the operational troops' area of operations. Thus, there may be a situation in which several military units, including especially armored and mechanized brigades, will perform combat tasks in the WOT brigade's area of responsibility. On the other hand, the commanders of operational forces carrying out tasks in several voivodships must be aware of the need to organize cooperation with many "additional" commanding bodies of WOT units. This necessitates the precise definition of the chain of command, the relations between individual command bodies, and the authority to command. Therefore, the command organization will be a big challenge for both WOT commanders and operational troop commanders.

The conditions and assumptions of use presented above make the commands of WOT units carry out their tasks in cooperation with operational units and elements of the non-military system at individual levels of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces. In the situation of the creation of new WOT units, their training and the achievement of operational capabilities, the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces will in the next years be enriched with new elements – especially at the tactical level. This makes it necessary to prepare commanders of operational troops to operate in new conditions.

Conclusions

Pursuing objectives by the Polish Armed Forces requires a command and control system that will enable the command (control) function at all levels – strategic, operational and tactical. The efficiency and effectiveness of the command and control system results from the fulfillment of various requirements, in particular in terms of organizational, functional, procedural and technical conditions. At the same time, while designing the command and control system, its interoperability understood as the ability to implement tasks in an allied or international system, both in relation to the whole system and its individual elements, should be taken into account.

When organizing the current command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces, a number of factors should be taken into account. They stem from the changing conditions of the state defense system, from the internal conditions of the defense system of the state and conditions resulting from long-term strategies and development programming.

The command and control system ought to have the ability to respond to various types of threats. It should create the conditions for the commander to make decisions, and at the same time adapt to new, often unconventional, ways of operation. Regardless of the context, however, it is expected to ensure continuity and concealment of command.

The challenges presented in the Defense Concept, conclusions regarding potential threats and conceptual assumptions of the organization and rules of the Polish Armed Forces' operation in the future constitute a reference point for the adoption of the structure of the command and control system. All new organizational elements, in particular the Territorial Defense Forces and relations with the essential elements of the non-military system with which the armed forces cooperate, should be taken into account in the future shape of the command system. As far as the Territorial Defense Forces are concerned, first of all their relations with operational forces that are preparing for conducting operations in the international system due to the presence of Allied troops in the territory of our country should be considered. Thus, basic doctrinal documents regulating the organization and functioning of the command system, both in the organizational (structure) and procedural (command process) aspects, need to be verified. The solutions prepared in this respect should be checked, e.g., during exercises, and only then implemented. Such a course of action will allow for the development of presented proposals and avoidance of possible inefficiency. Representatives of various institutions should be involved in these activities, so that the designed solutions can be analyzed from a different angle. In the future, it is also necessary to ensure that any changes in the command and control system result from the process of planning and programming the development of the state defense system.

Acknowledgement

No acknowledgement and potential founding was reported by the authors.

Conflict of interests

All 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.

ORCID

Marek Strzoda  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7590-1012>

Dariusz Szkoluda  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4304-2641>

References

1. Skoneczny L. *Wojna hybrydowa – wyzwanie przyszłości? Wybrane zagadnienia*. Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego. Wydanie Specjalne Wojna Hybrydowa. 2015.
2. Parafianowicz R, Banasik M. *Teoria i praktyka działań hybrydowych*. Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Obrony Narodowej. 2015;2(99).
3. Paszewski T. *Wojna hybrydowa, atak zaskoczenia i wojna ograniczona a zagrożenia militarne ze strony Rosji*. Mysl Ekonomiczna i Polityczna. 2016;4(55).
4. Wojnowski M. *Mit “wojny hybrydowej”. Konflikt na terenie państwa ukraińskiego w świetle rosyjskiej myśli wojskowej XIX–XXI wieku*. Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego – Wydanie Specjalne Wojna Hybrydowa. 2015.
5. *(Mini)słownik BBN: Propozycje nowych terminów z dziedziny bezpieczeństwa*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/pl/bezpieczenstwo-narodowe/minislownik-bbn-propozy/6035,MINISLOWNIK-BBN-Propozycje-nowych-terminow-z-dziedziny-bezpieczenstwa.html> [Accessed: 1 March 2018].
6. Pajak K. *Mozliwosci uzycia okretow podwodnych w konfliktach hybrydowych i asymetrycznych*. In: Sokala W, Zapala B (eds.). *Asymetria i hybrydowosc – stare armie wobec nowych konfliktow*. Warszawa: Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego; 2011.
7. *Koncepcja Obronna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej; 2017.
8. *Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju do roku 2020 (z perspektywa do 2030 r.)*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Rozwoju; 2017.
9. Decyzja Nr 503/MON Ministra Obrony Narodowej z dnia 30 grudnia 2015 r. w sprawie utworzenia Biura do Spraw Utworzenia Obrony Terytorialnej (Dz. Urz. MON z 2016 r., poz. 1).
10. Decyzja Nr 504/MON Ministra Obrony Narodowej z dnia 30 grudnia 2015 r. w sprawie powołania Pełnomocnika Ministra Obrony Narodowej do Spraw Utworzenia Obrony Terytorialnej (Dz. Urz. MON z 2016 r., poz. 2).
11. Ustawa z dnia 16 listopada 2016 r. o zmianie ustawy o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz niektórych innych ustaw (Dz. U. z 2016 r., poz. 2138).
12. *Ocena skutkow regulacji do projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o zmianie niektórych innych ustaw*, [online]. Available at: <https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/docs//2/12290461/12382036/12382037/document247632.pdf> [Accessed: 1 March 2018].

13. Polcikiewicz Z. *Wojska obrony terytorialnej w systemie bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski*. Acta Scientifica Academiae Ostroviensis. 2016;7(1).

Biographical note

Marek Strzoda – Col., Dr. Eng., currently he is the main specialist at the Headquarters of the War Studies University. The area of his scientific and practical activity includes management control, improvement of public organizations' functioning, business planning, as well as the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces. Member of the Praxeology Science Society and the "Powermetric Research Network" Association.

Dariusz Szkoluda – Lt. Col., Dr. Eng., employee of the War Studies University. Currently he occupies the post of assistant professor – Head of the Department of Command. Author of publications in the field of command and tactics. Co-organizer of the conference Theory and practice of irregular activities in the struggle for independence of the Republic of Poland. Member of the Scientific Committee of Cooperation of Land Forces and Territorial Defense Forces of the Polish Armed Forces with military forces in the support of civil authorities during the crisis and war in the aspect of hybrid threats. In addition, the main author of study exercises organized for the students at the War Studies University.

Współczesne uwarunkowania organizacji i funkcjonowania Systemu Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP

STRESZCZENIE

System Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP stanowi ważny element Systemu Obronnego Państwa. Zasadniczą jego funkcją jest umożliwienie decydom oraz dowódcom na wszystkich poziomach podejmowanie decyzji oraz tworzenie systemów działania, które w toku działania osiągają odpowiednio cele strategiczne, operacyjne i taktyczne. Na architekturę, a następnie funkcjonowanie tego systemu ma wpływ wiele czynników zewnętrznych oraz uwarunkowania wewnętrzne. System ten podlega ciągłej ocenie, a w konsekwencji zmianom, które mają powodować jego doskonalenie, tak aby zakładane cele były osiągnięte skutecznie i efektywnie.

W artykule omówiono trzy grupy uwarunkowań wpływających bezpośrednio, a w odniesieniu do pewnych czynników pośrednio na zorganizowanie systemu kierowania i dowodzenia oraz jego funkcjonowanie. Pierwsze z nich dotyczą zmiany charakteru współczesnych zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa. W odniesieniu do krótkiej charakterystyki działań hybrydowych, działań podprogowych oraz zagrożeń asymetrycznych wskazano, jak determinują one wymagania w zakresie adekwatnej do takich sytuacji organizacji i funkcjonowania Systemu Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP. Jako drugą grupę czynników przedstawiono wyniki Strategicznego Przeglądu Obronnego 2016 oraz jego dokumentu wynikowego – Koncepcji Obronnej RP. Jako efekt analizy strategicznej, wnioski i rekomendacje ujęte w Koncepcji powinny być uwzględnione podczas wprowadzania zmian do systemu kierowania i dowodzenia. W ostatniej części wskazano, jak na zmiany w Systemie Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP wpłynęła decyzja o utworzeniu Wojsk Obrony Terytorialnej (WOT) oraz wynikające z niej założenia organizacyjne dotyczące ich struktury, realizowanych zadań oraz zasad funkcjonowania.

Przedstawione w poszczególnych częściach opracowania uwarunkowania powinny być brane pod uwagę podczas prognozowanych i po części wdrażanych zmian organizacyjnych i funkcjonalnych Systemu Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE System Kierowania i Dowodzenia Siłami Zbrojnymi RP,
Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej, Koncepcja Obronna RP

How to cite this paper

Strzoda M, Szkoluda D. *Contemporary conditions of organization and functioning of the Command and Control System of the Polish Armed Forces*. Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces. 2019;51;4(194):791-809.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.6473>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>