Political cooperation between Poland and Germany has not been running smoothly lately. It has been a long time since those relations had such bad press. The idea of the Center Against Expulsions, the matter of war reparations or discussions concerning the shape of the European Constitution are the issues which have made our relations colder. However, there is an area of co-operation, the military sphere¹, where co-operation runs exemplary. In this article I would like to draw attention to a few issues connected with this matter.

When the two hostile blocks collapsed, both countries were their members (Poland – the Warsaw Pact, Germany – NATO), there came a time for reevaluations which resulted in Poland’s decision to start negotiations to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and also in support for that decision given by Germany². Joining the programme “Partnership for Peace” in 1994 became a period of “trial”. At that time, an institutional military co-operation with the western neighbour was started. In 1993 an Agreement on military co-operation was signed. Two years later an Agreement on trilateral, German-Polish-Danish military co-operation was signed. The next agreements concerned: (24.02.1997) creating identification zone and securing information exchange on military aircraft flights in border area, (18.11.1997) military training. On March 12, 1999 Poland

² B. Koszel, Francja i Niemcy w procesie integracji Polski ze Wspólnotami Europejskimi/Unią Europejską, Poznań 2003, p. 147.
joined NATO³. The ratification documents, that were delivered in Washington, certified the acceptance of the 1949 Washington Treaty and subsequent protocols and resolutions by Polish authorities.

The fact that we have become members of the same defence organisation caused the intensification of co-operation in bilateral relations. Several documents were signed: on April 30, 1999 an Agreement on protection of the exchange of the military secret information; May 27, 1999 an Agreement on partnership co-operation of the airforces; February 18, 2000 an Agreement on co-operation of the 7th Armoured Division (Germany) and 10th Brigade of Armoured Cavalry (Poland) in ARRC (Allied Rapid Reaction Corps); on August 23, 2000 an Agreement on temporary accommodation of soldiers on a territory of another country; and on June 18, 2001 Guidelines on military and military-political co-operation. Bilateral co-operation was started concerning training, and also partnerships on various kinds of weapons were established⁴.

³ Also Hungary and the Chech Republic joined NATO.
⁴ 1. Bilateral co-operation:
   - Trainings:
     • Since 1991 training support for Poland (350 officers) in a form of language courses, NATO specificity courses, grants at Bundeswehr academies and universities in Germany
     • Since 1994 common exercises in spirit „Partnership for Peace” – also under the framework of NATO
     • Since 1995 eight German student officers at the Academy of National Defence and the Navy Academy
     • Since 1995 annual plan of bilateral co-operation comprising approximately 150 activities in Poland and in Germany
     • Since 1997 border contacts (approximately 180 – all sorts of Armed Forces) and Polish-German partnership reaching the level of training centres
     • Since 1998 German liaison officer resides in the Academy of National Defence
   - Partnerships:
     • 14th Armoured Grenadier Division with 6th Armoured Cavalry Brigade
     • Sapper Battalion 801 (engineering) with 17th Engineer Brigade
     • The Land Forces Non-commissioned Officers College IV with 9th Centre of Armoured Forces Training
     • Luftwaffe Command with Polish Air Force Command and 14 more at lower level, e.g.:
       • 3rd Luftwaffe Division with 2nd Air Defence Corps
     • 16th Radar Guidance Unit with 28th Radiotechnical Battalion CRC
     • The Naval Forces:
       • Minesweepers Flotilla with 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla
       • Chasers Flotilla with 3rd Ships Flotilla
       • the Area Command of Navy East with 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla

All data from: www.wp.mil.pl
The most spectacular example of military co-operation became the Multinational Corps North-East (MNC NE), which was created as a result of Polish-German-Danish cooperation. It consisted of three divisions: the Danish Jutland Mechanised Division from Fredericia (18 thousand soldiers), German 14th Armoured Grenadiers Division from Neubrandenburg (19 thousand soldiers) and Polish 12th Bolesław Krzywousty Mechanised Division from Szczecin (12 thousand soldiers). Its operation was commenced on September 18, 1999 and achieved full operational readiness by the end of 2000. Positions of the Corps commander, deputy commander and chief of staff will be taken up by individual countries on the rotation basis. During peacetime only the staff of the Multinational Corps North-East stays in operation. Its divisions remain in their present quarters and report to the national commands. However, during wartime the corps command assumes control over them. Among our allies only the command and signal platoon soldiers are stationed in Szczecin. The 12th Szczecin Mechanised Division Command is located in Szczecin. The 12th Mechanised Brigade, 2nd Diverse Artillery Regiment, 3rd Anti-aircraft Regiment, 12th Reconnaissance Battalion, 12th Command Battalion and 12th Munitions Battalion are also stationed here. In Stargard Szczeciński – 6th Armoured Cavalry Brigade, 2nd Sapper Battalion and 12th Medical Battalion. In Kolobrzeg – 8th Repair Battalion. In Trzebiatów – 36th Mechanised Brigade. Headquarters of German 14th Armoured Grenadier Division is located in Neubrandenburg. In Schwerin, 40th Armoured Grenadier Division is stationed, in Eggesin – 41st Armoured Grenadier Division “Vorpommern”, while 18th Armoured Brigade “Holstein” in Neumünster.

The Multinational North-East Corps is assigned to fulfil tasks arising from Article 5 of the Washington Treaty concerning collective defence in the event of aggression. The Corps Staff is prepared to participate in crisis reaction or peacekeeping operations (such as in Bosnia or Kosovo) as the command of the entire mission or land component together with subordinate corps units or units assigned for a given mission by other countries. Moreover, the Corps are prepared to support humanitarian missions or natural catastrophe recovery operations that may occur in various parts of our region by means of its command infrastructure. Every instance of usage of the corps units will be decided by the Corps Committee, which is composed of representatives of defence ministers and land force commands from

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5 Term of office at individual positions lasts three years. General Henrik Ekmann, until recently in charge of German-Danish corps (LANDJUT), was appointed first commander of the Corps, Polish Major Edward Pietrzyk was appointed deputy commander and later Polish Brigadier General Zdzisław Goral, German General Hans Joachim Sachau was appointed chief of staff. Every three years there is a rotation at command posts. Presently German Major General Egon Ramms holds the position of the commander, Danish Brigadier General Jan Brun Andersen is the deputy commander, and Polish Brigadier General Henryk Skarżyński is the chief of staff.
Poland, Denmark and Germany. The Corps soldiers undergo regular training⁶. To sum up it has to be said that co-operation within the Corps has a great meaning to the Polish Army as it widely protrudes beyond cases connected with training or logistics. The most important is that it has lasting character and has been done on a wide scale untill now. The other forms of co-operation (courses, training) with our alliances were limited in terms of time and quantity - only small groups of soldiers or small units could participate. In case of Szczecin, we have a chance to train whole tactical alliances, integrating them with NATO forces⁷. Examining Polish-German co-operation in multifarious sphere, apart from co-operation in the Triangle of Poland-Denmark-Germany, military issues are being discussed during the Weimar Triangle summit meetings, especially when Defence Ministers participate in it⁸.

As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation we were obliged to modernise our army, as far as organisation and equipment matters are concerned. Speedy modernisation of the army was hindered by scarce public finances. One of the first decisions aiming at adaptation of the army to the new criteria was to open a tender for the supply of multi-role fighter aircraft. After many perturbations three manufacturers were left: Dassault Aviation with Mirage 2000 (France), SAAB Avionics/BAE Systems with JAS-39 Gripen (Sweden) and Lockheed Martin with F-16 (USA). Finally, American F-16 Block 50/52 was chosen. Polish Army will buy 48 such aircraft, and first deliveries will take place in 2006. At present, Polish Air Force have Russian MiG-29 combat airplanes (22 machines) and Su-22 (98 machines)⁹, since out of date MiG-21¹⁰ fighters were no longer in use – 23 MiG-29 fighters seem to be a precious gift – bought from the German Air Force for one symbolic Euro. They were transfered to the Polish side successively, the first part of delivery arrived on September 30, 2003 in Bydgoszcz, where they are being

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⁶ The first major test of operation of the Multinational NorthEast Corps was the „Crystal Eagle” training, which took place in November 2000 at the Drawsko Pomorskie training field. The training was aimed at checking how staff handles units in combat situation, as well as hosting units of other member-states on its own territory.


⁹ Basic armament (1.01.2003): at: www.wp.mil.pl

¹⁰ By the order of the Commander of Air and Air Defence Forces, No. 150 from December 8, 2003, training and flying all types of MiG-21 fighters, and also their modernisation was finished, and thus the history of this plane in the Polish Army finally ended. See also: H. Mordawski, Ostatni lot, „Wiraże” No. 1 from 2004.
Polish-German military cooperation after joining NATO

It is also worth mentioning that Federal German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) presented Poland with 128 used Leopard 2A4 tanks. Deliveries started in 2002. An agreement on this subject was signed on 27–28 April 2002 by Defence Ministers: Jerzy Szmajdziński and Rudolf Scharping. The tanks were received by 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade in Świętoszowo, which belongs to the rapid reaction forces of NATO and is operationally subordinated to 7th German Armoured Division.

German military equipment (MiG-29 fighter jets and Leopard 2A4 tanks) was handed over to Poland thanks to an agreement on Polish-Federal German Republic military co-operation signed on January 29, 2002 by Polish and German Defence Ministers.

Its transfer contributed to intensification of bilateral co-operation on armament and armament industry. Poland also receives equipment which secures the activities of Leopard tanks (means of transport, accompanying bridges, repair units, means of communication); shipyard industries co-operate, and both countries participate in TACOMS-POST 2000 programme.

Training cadre is a very important aspect of military co-operation. The Academy of National Defence with the Command Academy of Bundeswehr (Führungssakademie der Bundeswehr) in Hamburg keep in close contacts, and also Polish Military Navy Academy with German Naval Officers’ School in Flensburg (Marschale Schule Murwik). Military training co-operation is developing, and Poland, in the framework of German training help, has a high priority – it can use over 20 training posts a year. More than 340 representatives of Polish Armed Forces have undergone training and practice in Germany. Also German officers finished training conducted in institutions of the Polish Armed Forces. Since the year 2004 the process of planning and realisation of contacts with the Germans is done according to rules accepted in the North Atlantic Treaty. Thus, central planning is abandoned, and freedom in planning and realisation of co-operation is given to particular kinds of armed forces and co-operating institutions. Polish Ministry

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11 Mig-29 fighters are former East Germany aircraft. More on this in: Z. Wydra, **Cenne Migi**, „Wiraże” No. 20 from 2003, and also: Deutschland überlässt Polen alle MIG-29 Bundeswehr, „Die Welt” 25.06.2003.
12 Polen übernimmt Leopard-Panzer, „Franfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, 2.05.2002.
13 More on this in: Notatka nt. współpracy resortów obrony Polski i Niemiec, Departament Współpracy Międzynarodowej MON, www.wp.mil.pl
16 More on this in: Notatka nt. współpracy resortów obrony Polski i Niemiec, Departament Współpracy Międzynarodowej MON, www.wp.mil.pl
of National Defence claims that Polish-German military co-operation comprises 400 joint events a year.

An example of concerted Polish-German initiative, concerning training the personnel, was a Polish-German-English dictionary written by officers of Bundeswehr Command Academy in Hamburg (lieutenant colonel Rainer Oestmann) and National Defence Academy in Warsaw (lieutenant colonel Roman Kwećka and lieutenant colonel Mariusz Wiatr). This dictionary comprises names and abbreviations of NATO terms, and it made co-operation easier from the very moment of Poland’s membership in this organization¹⁷.

The importance of Polish-German military contacts can be observed in events like participation of high rank politicians in military celebrations of neighbouring country. Such importance was attached to participation of Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski and representatives of the Polish Army when Bundeswehr recruits were taking solemn oath on July 20, 2002 (an anniversary of Stauffenberg’s attempted assassination of Hitler celebrated each year in Germany) in Berlin.

President Kwaśniewski stated that his presence testified that both nations came to the right conclusions examining the history. Democracy, human dignity and respect for the state ruled by the law are now common values of both nations. “This moment is the victory of values, for which Stauffenberg and his companions gave their lives”, the President said and he also assured that Poland and Germany stand shoulder to shoulder to serve peace. This visit was an occasion to express gratitude to German generals for their support for Poland’s activities to gain NATO membership¹⁸.

In bilateral military relations working contacts occur frequently, for example on June 24, 2003 Polish Minister of National Defence Jerzy Szmajdziński visited Berlin, where he spoke with Peter Struck, Federal Minister of Defence. During this visit two Polish-German agreements were signed on military co-operation: “Agreement on bilateral technical co-operation of land forces and air forces” and “Agreement on servicing the equipment” (from the Polish side Secretary of State in MOD Janusz Zemke and the commander of the Land Forces General Edward Pietrzyk signed the agreements). Concluding the meeting, Polish politician stressed, inter alia, excellent co-operation of Polish and German Ministry of Defence, and on behalf of the Polish Government he thanked German partner for help and involvement in the process of realisation of projects.

The presented above military co-operation with our western neighbour is running unexpectedly smoothly. Poland’s membership in NATO enabled its further development and harmoniously became a part of solutions used in the Alliance. Its biggest threat were growing discrepancies concerning political decisions directly influencing military issues. The “Letter of the eight” signed on January 30, 2003 and its consequence – the participation of Polish Armed Forces in the American military intervention in Iraq, with German standpoint strongly opposing any military intervention in this country, have considerably slowed down the pace of military co-operation. As B. Koszel claims *Polish attempt to moderate conflict with Berlin by inviting multinational Polish-German-Danish corps stationing in Szczecin to take part in Iraqi mission, have additionally poisoned the atmosphere. German Ministry of Defence has labeled it as not serious, because in its opinion the corps were not suitable for such an operation*¹⁹. Taking into consideration the fact that Polish Armed Forces would soon retreat from Iraq²⁰, and also the gradual process of soothing conflicts concerning, i.a. the issue of war damages or the future of the European Union, it seems that an example of successful military co-operation would become an inspiration for better Polish-German relations. Political powers of both countries also agree that bilateral relations should improve, thus influencing the future of Poland and Germany – members of NATO, as well as the European Union.


²⁰ Jerzy Szmajdziński, Minister of National Defence, in one of his interviews has given the date – the end of 2005. After this statement, this standpoint was strongly criticized by Prime Minister Marek Belka, as well as President Aleksander Kwaśniewski.