MILITARY FORCE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL REALITY

Keywords: international security, modern warfare, national security, international relations

ABSTRACT: For the purposes of this article it has been assumed that the army should not become an autonomous constituent of the state’s structure, since this would pose a threat of taking over a dominant position by this specific formation. The aim of the article is to analyze the modification of the reasons for the outbreak of war, and the means of conducting it. The ongoing changes in the security environment, both in national and worldwide scale, as well as the proceeding national interests of our country imply increasingly advanced tasks for the army and considerably extend their range. The process of transformation in the Polish army is being continued. Further changes are targeted at increasing operational capability in order to enable efficient accomplishment of domestic tasks and performing missions outside its borders. In the contemporary international reality there is a prevailing conviction, that the threat of the outbreak of a global-scale war is rather unlikely. However, other jeopardies and risks have recently come to the fore.

Armed forces are an indispensable element of the state and a component of the society. Their task is to fulfil the principles and objectives formulated by the state authorities, which are usually a consequence of constitutional and legal regulations. However, one ought to bear in mind that the army should not become an autonomous constituent of the state’s structure, since this would pose a threat of taking over a dominant position by this specific formation. We are witnessing a modification of both the reasons for the outbreak of war, and the means of conducting it. We need to rede-
fine the field of action for the armed forces and all of those who will resort to using force. Whether we will know how to make use of them to our benefit depends only on the scope and thoroughness of comprehending the so much current processes. The ability to translate the experience and to build relations in the sphere of international connections both stimulate this process. Hence, being familiar with the rules of these activities seems to be unquestionable, which severely affects all those who have disregarded them. States, as the actual monopolists of war and using the armed forces, are losing their position. This process already fosters the gradual autonomisation of different forms of violence and other activities resulting from the military capabilities, and the tendency will certainly become stronger in the future (Balcerowicz, 2005, p. 470).

Following the discussion on the subject, one can pose a question about the issues that the condition and shape of the particular state’s military force are dependent on, or more precisely, what factors and tendencies bring about the changes in the structure and role of the contemporary military forces.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHANGES IN THE POLISH ARMY’S DEVELOPMENT TASKS**

In the source literature, the most frequently mentioned factors determining the condition of the state’s armed forces are:

- the manpower of the armed forces,
- the level of training,
- the degree of technological development (meant as the army’s level of equipment and its quality, the possession of nuclear weapon etc.),
- command structure,
- the potential of the military industry in the army’s own state,
- alliance commitments.

W. Polk named yet different factors shaping the role of the armed forces in international relations, such as the ideological aspects of wars and conflicts, the question of soldiers (volunteers, conscripts, guerrillas, mercenaries), munitions, mobilisation and financing (Polk, 2000, p. 230).
In the present-day security environment, two chief tendencies stimulating change in the sphere of military affairs can be pointed out, quoting B. Balcerowicz. The first group of such circumstances is related to information revolution as well as breakthroughs in technology and production process. The alterations in the field of military affairs are induced by the results of globalisation. The other set refers to the premises which determine the change of the international order, transformations in the geopolitics and strategy, as well as new challenges and jeopardies (Balcerowicz, 2006).

Taking into account all the above-mentioned circumstances of change for the armed forces, it is worth to focus on Polish grounds. The place of the army and its development in Polish defence system obliges the political authorities and the society to devote considerable interest to this issue. It is significant from the point of view of each and every citizen, since the course, form and character of the changes introduced in our armed forces will define the way our mother country will be characterised.

There are a number of conditionings that trigger change for the armed forces of the Republic of Poland. Their interrelation serves the task of wielding direct or indirect influence on the improved functioning and development of the army. Moreover, they ought to determine appropriate reactions to challenges and jeopardies, and form the character and the pace of the transformation process. Among these factors, we can list, among others, the changes in the security environment, Poland’s membership in NATO and the EU, participation in and experience from missions abroad, the necessity to modernise the army, professionalization of the personnel and, last but not least, planning based on operational capability.

The surrounding security environment is the basic determinant influencing the shape of assignments for military force. Contemporarily, the threat of a global military confrontation has been diminished. Little probability of an outbreak of a large-scale war results, to a considerable extent, from the existence of international agreements limiting and controlling the states’ weaponry, effective confidence-building measures and the development of increasingly modern and efficient warning and penetrating systems. Nevertheless, the probability of the occurrence of minor
hazards of military nature, which might convert into serious enduring crises and conflicts, has increased. Present-day wars are not guided by any principles. After losing the monopoly on conducting war, the state leaves the field clear for the “invisible hand of the market” and the creation of paramilitary and private units (Kaldor, 2000, p. 17). In contemporary wars, two basic tendencies are to be seen, both of which differentiate modern-day wars from the conflicts in foregone periods. The first of them is the commercialisation of war and the appearance of private subjects on the arena of military actions, driven by economic motives rather than political ones. The other tendency refers to the process of increasing asymmetrisation of military actions.

The growing number of non-military threats makes local-scale armed conflicts the most probable scheme. Globalisation, demographic and environmental processes increase the probability that crises will arise in the nearest future; they can have military character and may be induced by national organisations, supranational subjects as well as the so-called failed states. As M. Gocuł puts it, “(...) The political transformations of the past decade, and the resulting escalation of internal and international conflicts as well as the threats mentioned above caused that it has become necessary to redefine the conception of employing military force, including the process of strengthening the intervention system and peace-building activities.” (Gocuł, 2014, p. 13).

Poland’s membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and joining the European Union became the unquestionable vector of change for the Polish army (Piątek, 2008). Participation in these organisations provides confirmation of security and is a testimony of democratic character. The membership in these structures offers guarantees of territorial integrity, more comprehensive protection of internal security and it forms the basis of social and economic development. Owing to that, Poland’s position in international relations has been improved. At the same time, entering these structures provided the armed forces with new tasks, namely participation in missions abroad, multi-national military units, or active membership in their rapid response forces, reinforcing collective defence, but also improving and adapting the domestic army’s standards to alliance prerequisites.
The involvement of the armed forces in various missions abroad is a significant instrument of our state’s foreign policy and it determines the way our army functions and develops. Poland’s participation and commitment in foreign missions has positive influence on the state’s reputation on the international forum. So far, its military units took part in missions for NATO, the UN, and the EU as well as for coalitions created *ad hoc*. These activities influence our credibility and integration. Participation in operations instigates changes in doctrines and makes the modernisation process more dynamic, which involves “(…) increasing the mobility, acquisition of modern equipment for the soldiers’ needs, as well as creating military structures allowing more effective command and reinforcement of the actions” (Piątek, 2008, p. 18).

Another factor influencing the armed forces is their professionalization, resulting from the tendency for reducing the size of the army at peacetime and extending the range of competences and tasks they need to be prepared for in the new, changing international environment, as a member of NATO, the UN and the European Union. Professional army is characterised by larger efficiency and flexibility. The process of professionalization involves legal and organisational changes as well.

Modernisation is necessary for the armed forces so that they are prepared for accomplishing their tasks in new conditions and adjusted to the modern battlefield. The modernisation is aimed at providing the army and its different types with more modern, mobile and effective weaponry and equipment of larger firepower, as well as assisting the command. The issue of modernisation is closely related to involvement of the economic sectors associated with arms industry and greater intensity of works of scientists and providers of technological know-how. It would be the most beneficial to develop the state’s own potentials, which would bring about positive effects both to the economy and the armed forces.

The arguments in favour the modernisation are not only the changes in the security environment, but also the participation in alliance missions, the latter of which require adjusting interoperability and achieving greater extent of standardisation. The process also involves allocating appropriate financial resources, as well as improving the command and adapting the training system of contemporary soldiers to the increasing number of new
technological advancements. “(...) The success of the fighting troops in the future battlefield will depend on achieving supremacy within the scopes of knowledge (information), rapidity (manoeuvrability) and precision attacks” (Sobolewski, 2013, p. 221).

High degree of technicisation should also determine Polish armed forces as well, since the international commitments as well as the expectations of the society enforce the accomplishment of a metamorphosis oriented on the strategic and operational needs. The notion of operational capability is increasingly often used with reference to the development plans for the armed forces. This term denotes the potential ability of a military subject, arising as a result of its characteristics and attributes which authorise undertaking tasks enabling to achieve desired effects and results easily and rapidly. The functional elements of this capability are, among others, the doctrines, organisation, the instruction process, military equipment and accessories, chief command, personnel, infrastructure etc.

In order to arrange the directory of operational capabilities, the so-called functional systems have been created, encompassing e.g. the systems of command support, reconnaissance, weaponry, training etc. Hence, when designing the program of armed forces’ development, specified activities aimed at achieving particular abilities should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the documents created by the authorities and commanders-in-chief ought to be specified in such a manner they comprise these capabilities and associate them with definite functional systems. The document prepared this way is e.g. “Program of Development of Polish Armed Forces for years 2013–2022.” In the words of M. Gocuł, “(...) In the long-term perspective, Poland ought to have efficient, mobile and interoperational armed forces, which will systemically and proactively adapt their operational capability to the changes taking place in their environment, and thus maintain full readiness to fulfilling the tasks they are entrusted with” (Gocuł, 2014, p. 26).

The adopted directions of change are also influenced by other factors, just to mention increasingly frequent crisis situations. They can be of natural origin, e.g. caused by adverse weather conditions, but they can also occur as a result of terrorist activities, technical failures or public order disturbances. There are numerous sources of crises, and the resultant of it
is more and more frequent adjustment of the armed forces’ capabilities to reacting upon non-military threats. Social expectations about providing aid by the armed forces in mitigating the effects of these crises contribute to the necessity of appointing special formations and units, responsible for and prepared to respond upon this kind of threats and crisis situations, within the military structure. The examples of such task forces provided for and elaborated in the conceptions of development are e.g. Military Reconstruction Units (“Jest już 10 wojskowych…”).

The ongoing changes in the security environment, both in national and worldwide scale, as well as the proceeding national interests of our country imply increasingly advanced tasks for the army and considerably extend their range. This circumstance brings about the necessity of the armed forces’ constant adaptation to new conditions so that they can amply and without any complications fulfil the expectations of the state and society.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARMED FORCES – QUALITATIVE CHANGES

The term ‘transformation’ in reference to the military has recently become extremely popular. It can have broad and varied interpretations. The transformation refers both to the change, metamorphosis, and to the process of active pursuit for and initiating new solutions in particular direction.

The notion of transformation attributed to military organisation was consolidated in the United States, when the term was identified with Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). To a large extent, the latter was instigated by the impact of the advancing globalisation which penetrates most of the spheres of social life, including military affairs. The moment considered to be the symbolic starting point of this revolution is Operation Desert Storm, which was part of the First Gulf War conducted in Iraq in years 1990–1991. “(…) RMA is, above all, a technological revolution, an alteration of the manner of conducting war, caused by innovative implementation of new technology which, together with breakthrough
changes in military doctrine as well as tactical and organisational conceptions, all fundamentally transform the character and the course of military operations” (Piątek, 2011, p. 832). Another vector for even deeper transformation of American armed forces was the terrorist attack of 11th September 2001. The solutions introduced by the RMA trigger changes on the battlefield. Modern robotics, inventing smart (precision-guided) weaponry, satellite technology, or drones safeguard superiority and enable to substitute human soldiers in battle areas. As a result of the transformations, also the employed instruments of war have been changed to enable localising one’s position and remain in continuous contact with the commanders. The discussed revolution has also taken the form of the so-called cyber-warfare, consisting in paralysing the enemy with the use of attacks onto IT networks, electrical power networks, communication or financial systems. The actions of the armed forces are to be characterised by rapid reaction (using of modern equipment, tracking the enemy’s movements) in order to suppress the conflicts in their early phase. Due to modern weaponry and automatisation, the change in the structure of the troops has also been significant, since “(…) withdrawing the soldiers from the battlefield, leading on the operational level to diminishing the role of the human factor on physical level” (Lekowski, 2011, p. 274) implies a fundamental change as regards the number of the troops. In the view of the supporters of this idea, “(…) as a result of the transformation, the armed forces ought to become smaller, better trained, and networked to a large extent. They should have expeditious character and be capable of rapid operational development in adverse environment” (Ojrzanowski, p. 86). Modern equipment and technological systems on one hand reduce the soldiers’ risk of being wounded or killed, but on the other hand they require perfectly trained soldiers who know their trade really well.

One ought to remember that only some of the states can afford to implement such revolution. What can raise concern and has already been suggested by R. Kuźniar is that the states themselves will be eager to instigate wars if conducting them is so safe and painless for them (Kuźniar, 2005, p. 287). A minor group of sceptics believe that the genuine revolution has not been commenced yet, and the ongoing changes are just “(…)
an accelerated evolution in the equipment, organisation of the armed forces and tactics” (Balcerowicz, 2010, p. 239). Moreover, the term ‘revolution’ in military affairs ought to be substituted by ‘transformation’.

When discussing these issues, one cannot overlook Poland’s standpoint and this state’s attitude towards the transformation of the armed forces. Reform and modernisation of the military in Poland has been continuing for over two decades. The process was initiated at the moment the decision was taken of aspiring to join the NATO structures. It is worth emphasising that we had to adjust the armed forces to entirely different geopolitical conditions. Along with the objective of entering the alliance and the end of the Warsaw Pact we used to be members of, the armed forces of the time had to provide defence and undertake actions aiming at joining NATO, simultaneously and independently.

The fundamental and essential change was “(...) breaking with the hitherto dominant quantitative approach in favour of qualitative approach” (Koziej, 2008, p. 316). The quantitative attitude meant that the measure of the army’s strength was its size, and what mattered were manpower, equipment supplies or facilities, and exactly these were expected from us by the Warsaw Pact. The qualitative approach is just the reverse, as it promotes the quality of military power, and the issue of the number is of secondary importance and it was the attitude to the question of military forces that North Atlantic Alliance required from us to adopt.

The phase of the armed forces’ transformation related to receiving the membership in NATO brought about profound changes in all the domains of military activity. Among the most significant modifications listed by F. Gągor there are the changes in the personnel policy and organisational structures, as well as technological modernisation (Gągor, 2009, p. 9). The process of considerable reduction of manpower was initiated. The number of garrisons was being gradually reduced. Transition towards professional army was also extremely significant for the structure and led to major qualitative changes; the consequence was the adoption the law stating that career service recruits will be admitted to the army in place of conscripts. The result of recruiting professional soldiers was also the replacement of personnel (Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2013, p. 45).
Another significant element of the modernisation process was disposing of the outdated equipment and weaponry as well as reducing the distance of technological reorganisation in comparison to our allies. The turning point promoting modernisation was the Act on Reconstruction, Technical Modernisation and Financing of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, adopted in 2001 by the contemporary state authorities, which safeguarded the exact percentage of GDP per annum to be allocated from the budget for military expenditures. Enormous modernisation efforts were made for improving the military capability of various force types, e.g. by purchasing the Rosomak infantry fighting vehicles, introduction of CASA military transport aircraft and the F16 multirole fighters. IT and communication systems were also included in the modernisation process, and the army was equipped with Spike anti-tank guided missiles.

The adoption of the Program of Professionalisation of the Armed Forces in 2008–2010 became another milestone of the transformation, since professionalisation can be considered to be one of the most significant indicators of Polish army’s pursuit for modernisation finding its place in the existing international order. Implementing the reform of the command and control system (1st January 2014) was equally important and substantially contributed to the ongoing transformation of the armed forces. However, it should be admitted, using the words of M.K. Ojrzanowski, that “(…) making the transformational efforts would not be possible without the stimulating requirements of our membership in NATO” (Ojrzanowski, p. 88). The participation in this alliance has contributed to positive results of the changes in the military affairs. It must be remembered, though, that it will be impossible to accomplish the transformation without considerable expenditure. “(…) it necessitates investment in time and resources, but at the same time its result is sometimes difficult to measure and does not guarantee success” (Ojrzanowski, p. 83). At times it is even necessary to experiment in order to find new possibilities and abilities, being aware that they may be a failure.

In conclusion, the process of transformation in the Polish army is being continued. The armed forces’ military potential is systematically being improved. Further changes are targeted at increasing operational capability in order to enable efficient accomplishment of domestic tasks and
performing missions outside its borders. Another significant change consists in increasing the military capability by gradually supplying the army with increasingly modern equipment and weaponry. Obviously, shortcomings will still be present in different areas requiring further modernisation activities. However, it is related to constant changes in the military environment which the army must adapt to.

THE ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE, QUALITY AND CAPABILITIES OF THE ARMED FORCES IN SOLVING CONFLICTS IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD

In the contemporary international reality there is a prevailing conviction, that the threat of the outbreak of a global-scale war is rather unlikely. However, other jeopardies and risks have recently come to the fore. As Clausewitz stated a long time ago, “every age has its own kind of war.” One cannot but agree, since we are witnessing an increasing number of local crises which can escalate to large-scale conflict. The present armed conflicts and wars have undergone a qualitative change, featuring the domination of internal conflicts which may pose a threat for the neighbouring countries in the longer term. Above all, the characteristic feature of the present-day conflicts is their asymmetry. The distinction between the militants and non-militants, the number of subjects involved in the combat is increasing, and the frequent consequence of contemporary conflicts is their deinstitutionalisation.

All the changes, both in the character and the form of the contemporary conflicts, as well as the transformations of the globalising world result in a change of the role which the armed forces are to serve, that is to say “(…) presently, their traditional function, namely the defence against external aggression on the part of other states, has been losing importance” (Elak, 2012, p. 91). The range of tasks performed by this formation has been subject to considerable change. The reason for that were the commitments which have been gradually introduced by the subjects of international law, consisting in restricting the use of force and abandoning warfare. Contemporary regulations prohibit using force, classifying it as
the ultimate means of solving a conflict. Instead, diplomacy and peaceful means of settling the disputes are preferred. In the post-modern societies, the approval for war is accompanied by a radical change in the perception of involvement in war (Caney, 2009, p. 218–221). Hence such a strong pressure to seek for every possible method and means which would enable to avoid answering the questions about acting in the fog of war (Kuźniar, 2001, p. 287).

Nonetheless, reality shows that at times these methods fail and using force becomes necessary. Therefore, the thesis advanced by J. Gryz who stated that “(...) military force employed in international politics serves equivalent function in relation to economic, diplomatic or informational force” (Gryz, 2010, p. 23) would be quite adequate. For that reason, the states still need to maintain the armed forces, since the latter are an instrument of state policy, and in the extreme cases when all the other methods of resolving conflicts are unsuccessful, the authorities resort to using force.

In the case of reacting to different conflicts, the armed forces must be prepared to different actions, from conducting classical warfare to completing assignments in the form of missions, which are “(...) related to the necessity to intervene in internal conflicts (also the ones taking the shape of peace operations or humanitarian missions)” (Piątek, 2013a). The armed forces also need to be prepared to stabilising and reconstruction tasks after the conflict has been brought to an end. The shape of such activities yields significant influence on international military cooperation which can also adopt various forms (Szpyra, 2012, p. 165; Piątek, 2013b, p. 41–61).

As far as resolving conflicts is concerned, cooperation is definitely necessary. As historical events show, even world superpowers need help and appeal for international cooperation aiming at military security (Keegan, 1998, p. 156).

Also international organisations, e.g. the European Union, the UN or NATO, which become militarily involved in various disputes despite geographical distance, make invaluable contribution in this case. The experience of the armed forces appointed for accomplishing such operations by various states demonstrates that, to a considerable extent, they effectively and beneficially contribute to settling conflict situations. The
reason is that the armed forces, apart from the states of war and of peace, have started to distinguish another one, namely the state of conflict, which requires operations below the threshold of war, called peace operations or crisis management operations. International organisations do not refrain from acting and become actively involved in bringing crises under control or maintaining peace. Within the framework of these structures’ activities, “in 2013 there were 57 peace operations” (Lachowski, 2015, p. 131). This number demonstrates the scale of the threats, to the reduction of which the multinational task forces are appointed.

Each conflict has different background and therefore the armed forces employed to resolve it will perform different functions and assignments in each of them. Thus, they can serve the deterring function for the parties of the conflict, protect the civilians by monitoring the observance of human rights, supervise and control the reconstruction processes of the site and administration, and many others. Frequently, civil and police units or humanitarian organisations are appointed to provide assistance.

In the armed conflicts and wars typical of our age, it is not so much the force which is actually significant, but the moral legitimisation, since“(…external intervention must be morally justified in the eyes of democratic public opinion; this also facilitates accepting the expenses and losses incurred in its course” (Kuźniar, 2001, p. 309). Hence, in order to ensure the success of such missions, the best thing would be to define their mandate clearly, which combined with effective command, financial support, and especially with cooperation between the parties of the dispute, can result in an improvement of the international order and peace.

To a considerable extent, the success of the military force in resolving conflicts is affected by the quality of the units and troops sent there. The indicators of quality are the capabilities of the armed forces’ operational activity outside their own state. The army must be able to accomplish tasks in all the regions of the globe. E. Cohen’s opinion that“(…) the new era in conducting wars is defined by three chief characteristics: the rise in the importance of quality compared to quantity, diversification of weaponry and domination of technology in military affairs” (Cohen, 2009, p. 164) fits perfectly in the positive assessment of the armed forces’ quality. Thus, in reference to conflicts, the army’s constant pursuit for improved effec-
tiveness, strategic mobility, modernisation of equipment, and gradual increasing of operational capability will be a valuable asset.

In the source literature one can also find different views. In the opinion expressed by E. Olzacka, in the increasingly frequent asymmetric conflicts, “(...) the prism of the technological progress concerning the instruments of conducting war, as well as the popularity of the RMA category” (Olzacka, 2012, p. 305) has declined in importance. It results from the fact that present-day conflicts largely depend on other non-material factors such as knowledge, information, culture, along with concurrent reduction of combat force. Mission in Afghanistan is an example of a mission where the advantage of modern technology was considerably overestimated and it failed against the asymmetric opponent. Referring to future conflicts, significant negative trends are to be observed. At present, instead of the alleviation of conflicts, one can rather hear about their escalation or about the outbreak of other ones. Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 was simply inconceivable and aroused international criticism. The international order is also significantly affected by the crisis in Ukraine, (Popowski, 2014) as well as by the events in Syria and Iraq. As a result of the proceedings there, the public opinion realised that transatlantic structures guided by the ideas of democracy, respecting human rights, and forming a community of law, are seriously endangered. Recent events bring about further changes for the military force, in which not only terrorism and cyberspace actions are the new jeopardies, but requiring to focus on and prepare for the traditional sources of danger. At the same time, one can also observe that “(...) war in Syria and other conflicts signalise a visible tendency of the Western countries to refrain from military intervention as the basic reaction, and their search for the means to manage and settle conflicts outside the military sphere” (Lachowski, p. 130).

Armed forces are an indispensable element of the armed conflicts. They can be used in two ways, depending on the subject managing them. From the perspective of the aggressor who initiates the conflict, they will be employed in the classic understanding, as an instrument of war. However, from the perspective of subjects striving to maintain peace and stabilisation in the world, the assigned military forces will be used to solve the conflict, establish peace or even providing humanitarian aid.
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