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## **Polish Army Contribution to Operations in Afghanistan and the Security of the Republic of Poland**

### **Introduction**

The armed forces are widely recognized as a strength of statehood. Armed forces are not only an attribute of the state, but also its security. Undoubtedly, the importance of the armed forces has changed over time. National and international security is dynamic, so there is no doubt that the armed forces of each country must adapt to the changing reality of security. The state will be safe, but only if its armed forces are able to respond appropriately to any kind of threat. Armed forces are “armed soldiers organized in various units and sizes of troops, separated by the state to safeguard its interests and conduct armed struggle.”<sup>1</sup> The world knows the history of the conflict in Afghanistan, it is one of the most important wars of the 21st century. After the WTC attacks on 11th September 2001, the United States launched a global war on terrorism and, as part of its eradication, started Operation Enduring Freedom to punish those responsible for terrorist attacks who were hiding in Afghanistan. On 7th November 2001, the Americans set out to accomplish the goal of eliminating terrorist organizations and overthrowing the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Poland, at the request of the Americans, confirmed its commitment to the mission on 22nd November 2001. Then a three-month training of 300 soldiers began, and on 16th March 2002, approximately 100 logistics, sappers and commandos arrived in Afghanistan. Their tasks mainly consisted of:

- reconstruction of the base, city and airport infrastructure,
- terrain demining,
- logistic protection for Polish and international troops.

Then, three months later, the resolution established the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, which began operating in August 2003 under the aegis of NATO. Their priority was to help rebuild a stable and democratic Afghan state. According to the official data of the Ministry of National Defence, 869 soldiers and army employees were injured in the combat operations of the Polish Military Contingent in Afghanistan, of which 361 were wounded. The data shows that since 2002, over 28,000 Polish soldiers and army employees have participated in Enduring Freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Siły Zbrojne [Armed Forces], <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/sily-zbrojne>, access 03. 11. 2018.

and ISAF operations in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> In 2014, the Polish Armed Forces returned from the mission to the country.

## **Polish Armed Forces in foreign policy**

According to most Poles, our membership in NATO has a direct impact on improving the security of the country. The North Atlantic Alliance was established in 1949 and it was the idea of the United States, aiming by creating allied links with Canada and ten Western European countries to obtain a tool to stop the further expansion of the Soviet Union on the European continent. The basis for its creation is the North Atlantic Treaty, also referred to as the Washington Treaty, dated 4th April 1949. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Alliance gradually transformed from a typical military-political pact into a global security organization.<sup>3</sup> This alliance enables close cooperation among member states, based on approved procedures as well as command and control structure. Figure 1 shows NATO's organizational structure.

NATO's goal is to maintain peace and prevent armed conflict in the last few years. In pursuit of NATO membership, Poland was driven by a desire to change the geopolitical situation and to break free from the gray security zone. At that time, Poland's foreign security policy was based on three assumptions:

- subordinating it to security matters in an international system by engaging with such institutions or countries that will be able to reliably ensure security in Poland,
- the need to seek security in an international system by engaging with such institutions or states that will be able to reliably ensure security in Poland,
- applying the "nothing about us without us" principle developed on the basis of negative experiences related to betrayal of an ally.<sup>4</sup>

On July 5, 1994, Poland and NATO adopted the individual Partnership for Peace Program. Poland was the first of the countries that agreed this program with the Alliance.

The program, adopted for the first time in 1994, took three main forms of cooperation:

- consultation of expert groups and exchange of experience and information,
- joint training and exercise in peace, search and rescue and humanitarian operations,
- participation of Polish officers and civil specialists in NATO-organized courses, trainings, conferences and seminars.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/wracacie-z-tarcza-polska-konczy-bojowa-obecnosc-w-afganistanie,437361.html>, access 05.11.2018.

<sup>3</sup> MAJCHRZAK, D. *Bezpieczeństwo militarne Polski [Poland's military security]*. Warsaw: National Defence University, 2015, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> OSICA, O.; ZABOROWSKI, M. *Nowy członek Starego Sojuszu. Polska jako nowy aktor w euroatlantyckiej polityce bezpieczeństwa [A new member of the Old Alliance. Poland as a new actor in the Euro-Atlantic security policy]*. Warsaw: Fundacja Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych [Center for International Relations Foundation], 2002, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/1229557,Partnerstwo-dla-pokoju---poczatek-drogi-do-NATO>, access 15. 03. 2019.

In January 1999, NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana issued formal invitations to the governments of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to join the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>6</sup> Poland's membership in the strongest military Alliance in the world has given our country not only the guarantee of security provided for in art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, which specifies that it constitutes an armed assault on any of the parties to the treaty. It also obliges participants to help themselves. However, stating that each of the allies "immediately and in consultation with other parties undertakes such action as it deems necessary, including the armed forces," does not impose a requirement to support the attacked ally (allies) by military means.

The structure of NATO forces was divided into three categories:

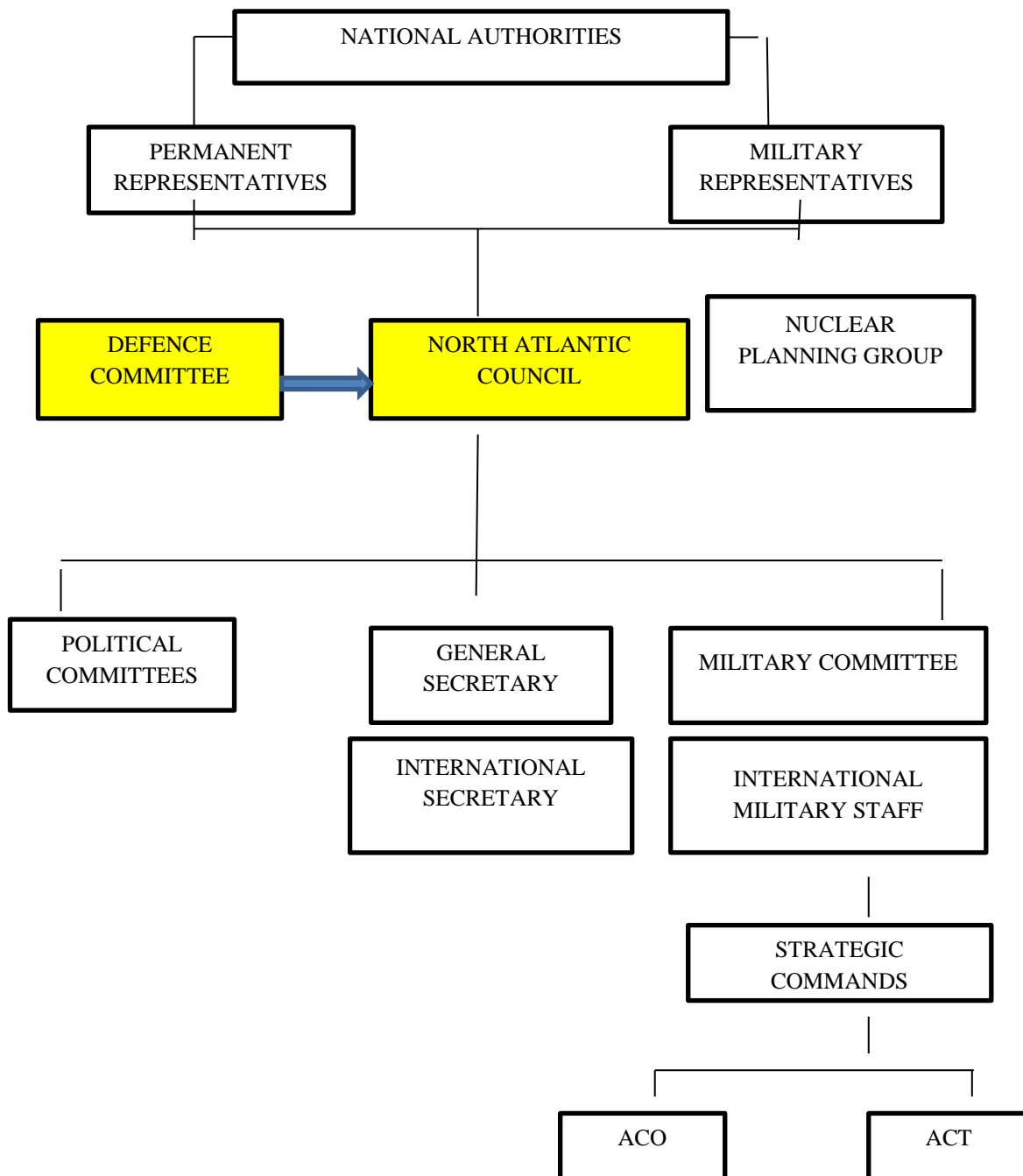
- forces with the highest level of readiness,
- efficient forces, but not prepared to take action,
- forces with the highest combat readiness.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> PIETRAŚ, M.; WOJTASZCZYK, K. A. *Polska w systemie bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego [Poland in the international security system]*. Warsaw: ASPRA, 2016, p. 307.

<sup>7</sup> PIETRASIĆ, M.; STELMACH, M.; ŻAKOWSKI, K. *Polityka zagraniczna Polski [Polish foreign policy]*. University of Lodz, 2016, p.247.

Figure 1. NATO organizational structure



Source: based on the materials of Krzysztof Paszkowski, Ph. D.

The North Atlantic Pact organization includes two divisions: political and military. The North Atlantic Council is the highest management body in political affairs, operating at ministerial level, these deliberations are commonly called NATO summits. The Defence Planning Committee is the highest management body dealing with military matters. The Nuclear Planning Group meets twice a year at defence ministerial level and more often at ambassador level.

The Permanent Representatives Council is a solid body that gathers at least once weekly to consult the evaluation and guidelines of other bodies. The Military Committee is organized in two divisions: operational and transformation. The military supreme body is the Military Committee, composed of the chiefs of general staff of the member states.<sup>8</sup>

In the transformation division, the largest body is the Transformation Command, which was established to carry out tasks related to the transformation of the Alliance, military forces and operational capabilities. Currently, NATO's integrated command structure consists of eleven commands. Among them, two are of strategic importance - Allied Command for Operation (ACO) and Allied Command for Transformation (ACT). The first (along with subordinate lower-level commands) is responsible for the current functioning of forces at NATO's disposal and for directing military operations of the Alliance, regardless of their location. The second deals with the organization of the Alliance's transformation process, which includes its adaptation to the changing security environment, including the improvement of its functioning principles, the organization of training programs and exercises, and designing directions for the future evolution of allied forces.<sup>9</sup>

The next article defines the scope of allied obligations to help, according to which help should be given when an act of aggression on one of the allies occurs: on the territory of any of the parties in Europe, North America, Turkey (also in the Asian part) or on any island under the jurisdiction of the parties in the Atlantic Ocean north of the Tropic of Cancer, this act takes the form of an attack on the armed forces, aircraft or a ship of either party in waters or in the airspace as indicated in point first territorial borders.

Membership in the most powerful military alliance in the world has given Poland not only security guarantees in the form of art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, but also led to an increase in the position and prestige of our country in the international arena. The need to adapt to NATO standards, the participation of Polish soldiers in missions and exercises and training with soldiers from other NATO countries, led our Armed Forces to achieve a high level of interoperability (ability to interact) with other members of the Alliance. Our contribution and commitment in NATO operations have made Poland a reliable partner for both our allies and third countries. The war in Kosovo has shown that Poland is one of the most solidary allies of the USA. Poland, becoming a NATO member, certainly obtained much more military and political security than if it were to ensure it for itself.

Poland's involvement in the Alliance includes the organization of the NATO Battle Group, the management of the Baltic Air Policing mission in Lithuania and participation in training missions in NATO in Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, Poland spends 2 % of its GDP on defence and makes significant investments. After 20 years, Poland is a full member of the alliance and plays an important role in the structures of the North Atlantic Pact. Allied army exercises are being carried out continuingly and in addition, the command of rapid reaction forces is being formed in Szczecin. Polish soldiers

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<sup>8</sup> MAJCHRZAK, D. *op. cyt.*, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> KUŹNIAR, R.; BALCEROWICZ, B.; BIEŃCZYK-MISSALA, A.; GRZEBYK, P.; MADEJ, M.; PRONIŃSKA, K.; SUŁEK, M.; TABOR, M.; WOJCIUK, A. *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe [International Security]*. Warsaw: SCHOLAR, 2012, pp. 177-178.

carried out an important role in Afghanistan. For the first time ever, NATO has applied the key Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which specifies that an attack on one of the alliance's states is an attack on all others.

## **Armed forces - functions, roles, tasks**

According to the National Security Dictionary, "Armed Forces are the army, forces and resources allocated by the state to safeguard its interests and conduct armed struggle, included in an organizational whole consisting of various units and unions in terms of type and size. Armed forces are usually divided into individual types of armed forces, which include types of troops and types of services."<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland<sup>11</sup>, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland serve to protect the independence of the state and the integrity of its territory and to ensure the security of the inviolability of its borders.

The main directions of the Polish Armed Forces are:

- ensuring the state's ability to defend and protect Polish borders;
- maintaining readiness to resist aggression as part of allied commitments;
- participation in asymmetrical activities, including multinational, combined counter-terrorism operations conducted in accordance with international law, organized by NATO, the EU or an ad hoc coalition of states;
- participation in stabilising the international situation as part of multinational stabilisation, peace and humanitarian operations outside the country.<sup>12</sup>

The most important tasks of the Polish Armed Forces, giving direction to planning and training activities in peacetime, concern the ability of the state to: defend and oppose aggression; maintaining readiness to carry out tasks related to defence and protection of the inviolability of borders; conducting a strategic defence operation on the territory of the Republic of Poland; participation in anti-terrorist activities in the country and abroad; participation in defence operations outside the territory of the country in accordance with allied obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; conducting reconnaissance and investigation activities. In the defence operation on the territory of the country, special tasks should be provided for units and subunits of Special Forces and the formation of the National Reserve Forces.<sup>13</sup>

An important task of the Polish Armed Forces is to simultaneously support other state organs in ensuring Poland's internal security and provide necessary military

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<sup>10</sup> *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego* [Dictionary of national security terms]. Warsaw: AON, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> *The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April, 1997* (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 1997 No 78, item 483 with amendments).

<sup>12</sup> SULKOWSKI, S.; BRZEZIŃSKI, M. *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państwa. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Internal security of the state. Selected Issues]. Warsaw: ELIPSA, 2009, p. 249.

<sup>13</sup> *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland], 2014.

assistance to relevant government and self-government institutions and services, civil organizations and the public in responding to threats.<sup>14</sup>

According to the directive of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland from 2014, these activities include: monitoring and protection of airspace and support, conducting reconnaissance and investigation activities, monitoring radioactive, chemical and biological contamination on the territory of the country, conducting search and rescue operations, cleaning the area of explosives and dangerous items of military origin.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the Armed Forces maintain readiness to conduct (independently or in cooperation with other state authorities and services) search and rescue operations and participate in the national crisis management system, retain the ability to help relevant public administrations and the public in the event of natural disasters, catastrophes and terrorist threats. Subsequently, units and subunits of the Polish Armed Forces may be used to assist the Police, but this requires a decision of the President of the Republic of Poland issued on the basis of a request by the Prime Minister. Detailed conditions and the manner of using the units and subunits of the Armed Forces in situations of threat to public security and order are set out in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers, which also regulates the method of logistic support for units and subunits of the Polish Armed Forces.<sup>16</sup> This regulation indicates, among others, that units of the Armed Forces can be used in particular to:

- protection of facilities important for the security or defence of the state, head offices of supreme authorities, supreme and central organs of state administration or the judiciary,
- objects of the economy or national culture as well as diplomatic missions and consular offices of foreign countries or international organizations,
- facilities supervised by an armed protective formation: preservation or isolation of specific objects, roads, separated streets or parts of cities;
- supporting the activities of police departments restoring security and public order, including anti-terrorist activities.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Act of 21 November 1967 on universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland, the Armed Forces may participate in the fight against natural disasters and the elimination of their effects, anti-terrorist activities and search-and-rescue operations, as well as in the cleaning of areas from explosives and dangerous military origin and their disposal.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> KITLER, W.; GAŚIOREK, K.; JANOWSKI, J.; MARCZAK, J.; SKRABACZ, A.; SZAFRAN, H. *Wojskowe wsparcie władz cywilnych i społeczeństwa* [Military support of civil authorities and society], Warsaw 2005, p. 78.

<sup>15</sup> Point 97 of the Strategy.

<sup>16</sup> *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 19 July 2005 on the detailed conditions and manner of using units and subunits of the Police and Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in the event of a threat to public security or disturbance of public order.* (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] 2005, No 135, item 1134).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Act of 21 November 1967 on universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland* (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] 2018.0. 1459).

If in a crisis situation the use of other capabilities and resources is impossible or may prove to be insufficient, the Minister of Defence, at the request of the voivode may provide him with subunits or units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, and assign them to carry out crisis management tasks. The Armed Forces units may participate in the performance of crisis management tasks:

- participation in the monitoring of threats;
- performance of tasks related to the evaluation of the effects of events that occurred in the area where the threats exist;
- performance of search and rescue tasks;
- evacuation of affected people and property;
- performance of tasks aimed at preparing the conditions for temporary stay of evacuated people in the designated places;
- participation in the protection of property left on the area where the threats exist;
- isolation of the area where the threats exists or the place where the rescue operation is carried out;
- performance of protective, rescue and evacuation activities on threatened buildings and historical buildings and monuments;
- performance of activities requiring the use of specialist technical equipment or explosive from the resources of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland;
- removal of dangerous materials and their neutralization using capabilities and resources at the disposal of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland;
- elimination of chemical contamination as well as biological contamination and infections;
- removal of radioactive contamination;
- performance of tasks related to repair and reconstruction of technical infrastructure;
- participation in ensuring the suitability of transport routes for driving;
- provision of medical aid and performance of sanitary and hygiene tasks as well as of antiepidemic measures.<sup>19</sup>

In a state of natural disaster, if the use of other forces and means is impossible or insufficient, the Minister of National Defence may place at the disposal of the voivode in whose area the natural disaster occurs, subunits or units of the Polish Armed Forces along with directing them to perform tasks related to preventing effects natural disasters or their removal. The rules for the participation of the Polish Armed Forces in the performance of tasks designated by a voivode are determined by the Council of Ministers, by means of a regulation, determining the types of rescue or preventive tasks, methods of coordination and command, and how to provide them with logistical protection.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Act of 26 April 2007 on Crisis Management* (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws], 2007, No 89, item 590 amended).

<sup>20</sup> *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 February 2003 on detailed rules for the participation of subunits and units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in the prevention or removal of the effects of a natural disaster* (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws], 2003, No 41, item 347).



Special Forces are best prepared to act against asymmetrical threats and to cooperate with other specialized institutions and bodies operating in the state security system. The Special Troops Command is prepared for planning, preparation and conducting special operations in peacetime, in crisis situations and in emergency states.<sup>21</sup>

## Armed forces in the international environment

Political changes and Poland's accession to NATO, participation of the Polish Army in crisis response operations under the North Atlantic Alliance, as well as the occurrence of new threats influenced the development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland. In recent years, transformations in international politics have affected many dimensions of the army's operation, as well as the modification of its military structures. The reason for the ongoing transformations is the progressive stabilisation created after the end of the Cold War. This conduces to a gradual reduction in the peaceful numbers of the armed forces of individual countries and regional military alliances.

After joining NATO, the development phase of our defence policy began. Its main content is on the one hand - the transformation of its own security system in line with the constantly changing conditions of NATO and EU membership, and on the other - gaining experience in allied structures, including actively forming them according to their own national interests. The transformation consists mainly in adapting the armed forces to NATO standards and joining the strategic and operational practice of NATO and the EU.

The basic assumptions of the national and international security policy impose on our armed forces an obligation to participate in various types of military operations (war and below the war threshold), mainly under the aegis of organizations guarding international security, such as: UN, OSCE, NATO, EU.

The participation of the Polish Army in operations conducted abroad began in the 1950s under the UN shield. For the first time in history, the Polish Armed Forces separated military units, even before our country joined the Alliance, to participate in a NATO operation of peace enforcement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996. In Sarajevo, the Polish battalion in the area of responsibility performed the following tasks:

- controlled traffic through points on the separation line of the armed parties;
- patrolled military separation zones;
- collected information about minefields;
- controlled the withdrawal of troops and armaments of the conflict parties outside the agreed lines;
- provide support, if necessary, to other brigade battalions in their areas of responsibility;
- assisted in the exchange of prisoners of war between parties to the conflict;

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<sup>21</sup> JAŁOSZYŃSKI, J. *Współczesny wymiar antyterroryzmu [The contemporary dimension of anti-terrorism]*. Warsaw, 2008, p. 106.

- controlled the security and free movement of civilians (refugees and displaced persons);
- support humanitarian activities.<sup>22</sup>

## **Contribution of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in missions to build a stable security environment**

Since 1953, the Polish Armed Forces have been constantly involved in international operations. Polish soldiers completed tasks in about 70 international missions. Almost 100,000 soldiers served for over 69 years. It has evolved significantly throughout the Polish engagement. The missions discussed below illustrate the evolution of the Polish approach to involvement in international operations.

- (1953-1975) - officers of the Polish Army participated in the International Control Commissions (Indochina region);
- (1975-1990) - the first compact units of the Polish Army, individual logistics units were involved in peacekeeping missions (operations) in the Middle East;
- (1991-1992) - for the first time, units of the Polish Army constituted part of the peace operations contingent established under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter
- (from 1992) - the participation of Polish representatives (including the police) in OSCE and EU peace missions (operations);
- (1995-1999) - participation of operational units of Poland Military contingents and police supporting peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (FIFG and SFOR);
- (since 2000) - broad participation of the Polish army in various peace missions (operations), including in the fight against terrorism.<sup>23</sup>

Polish Armed Forces were involved in the missions:

- observations;
- logistics;
- operations.<sup>24</sup>

The involvement of Polish military contingents in international missions is an expression of Poland's responsibility in the international arena. Poland has become a security giver. This commitment brings special benefits in the military sphere. It allows to gain experience in the conduct of Polish Armed Forces in international operations. It creates the process of technical modernization of armaments and military equipment, and processes are improved based on experience and training programs.

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<sup>22</sup> GAĞOR, F.; PASZKOWSKI, K. *Międzynarodowe operacje pokojowe w doktrynie RP [International peacekeeping operations in the doctrine of the Republic of Poland]*. Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 1999, p.164.

<sup>23</sup> KOZERAWSKI, D. S. *Udział jednostek Wojska Polskiego w międzynarodowych operacjach pokojowych w latach 1973-2003. Wybrane problemy [Participation of units of the Polish Army in international peacekeeping operations in 1973-2003. Selected problems]*. Warsaw: AON, 2004, pp. 65-67.

<sup>24</sup> WRZOSEK, M. *Polska, Unia Europejska, NATO wobec wyzwań i zagrożeń [Poland, the European Union, NATO of the challenges and threats]*. Warsaw: AON, 2012, pp. 20-25.

This caused, in particular, a change in the mentality of Polish soldiers and officers. The Polish Armed Forces paid for their deployment in missions abroad with the blood of their soldiers.

## Origin and objectives of the military operation in Afghanistan

In 2001, Al-Qaeda representatives took possession of four commercial aircraft, crashing them at the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania. Nearly three thousand people were killed in the attacks. The then president W. Bush vowed to “win the war on terror”. The terrorist attack on the United States was undoubtedly one of the leading events of the 21st century and established the beginning of the global fight against terrorism.

The military operation in Afghanistan, initiated in 2001, turned out to be the most difficult armed conflict of the 21st century and a book example of the asymmetrical war. Thanks to the enormous technological advantage of the West, within a dozen days the forces of the Northern Alliance, supported by NATO troops, occupied the major cities of Afghanistan and forced the Taliban to hide in the mountains. Following the rapid military break-up of the Taliban, NATO operations were directed towards stabilising the political and social situation and the long battle for security in Afghanistan.

US President George W. Bush addressed a request to the Taliban for the unconditional surrender of Osama bin Laden and his closest associates, the immediate closing of terrorist training camps and capitulation of all terrorists. The President also noted that the expressed conditions and demands are not negotiable. Nevertheless, the Taliban disregarded the American postulate, which was a trigger to decide on a forced resolution of the problem. Preparation for the war took two stages. The main and first of the areas was gaining the greatest diplomatic support, and the second military preparation.

The United States referred to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and asked for joint operation of all NATO members. However, the most important issue was to receive support from Muslim countries, which were given by i.a. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Iran and Pakistan. The Northern Alliance has also been involved.

In the international intervention in Afghanistan, codenamed Enduring Freedom under US leadership, the legal basis was Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which grants states the right to individual or collective defence. The next legal regulation that validated the intervention was UN Security Council Resolution, number 1368 of September 12, 2001, which included the main objective of the action as combating terrorism and the destruction of its bases in Afghanistan.

War operations began on 7th October 2001 with an air operation codenamed Crescent Wind, which was divided into three stages: the destruction of Taliban air defence systems, raids on command and control centers, airports and attacks on Taliban forces fighting the Northern Alliance.<sup>25</sup>

During the first week of US and British air force operations, the structure of anti-aircraft warfare was destroyed. However, air operations were carried out until the

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<sup>25</sup> ROCHNOWSKA, M. *Polscy żołnierze w Afganistanie [Polish soldiers in Afghanistan]*. Warsaw: Bellona, 2014, p. 82.

beginning of November 2001, as a result of which the Taliban lost all ability to react. On 22nd October, the Northern Alliance, supported by the United States, launched a land offensive. Despite short-term setbacks, on November 9, the anti-Taliban coalition conquered the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, and two days later Kabul. In contrast, Taliban forces gave up and strengthened in the city of Kunduz in northeastern Afghanistan.

After taking control of the north of the country by the coalition troops, the remaining Taliban troops withdrew south to the area of Kandahar. The city served as the capital of the Taliban, but additionally constituted the last resistance fortification. Taliban units constituted approx. 40-50 thousand people and owned nearly 500 tanks and armored fighting vehicles. The city of Kandahar collapsed on 6th December 2001, and most of the Taliban had been defeated.

The fall of Kandahar signaled the end of regular military operations in Afghanistan. During the war, the Taliban moved to the side of the Northern Alliance or died in battle or were taken prisoner. Despite this, a large number of them hid in the high mountains, where they began partisan activities. To be able to eliminate the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces, the Americans together with the allies began another Enduring Freedom operations. They were one-off and large military operations that lasted for several days or months. The most important known are Operation Anaconda, which lasted from 1st March to 17th March 2002. The purpose of this operation was to help rebuild the Taliban forces in the Shah-e Kot valley to the south of Kabul. Simultaneously with the military actions, it was decided to take steps to standardize the internal situation in Afghanistan. Based on the conference in Bonn, The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established, which fulfills the mandate of the United Nations on the pillar of UN Security Council Resolution number 1386 of 20th December 2001.<sup>26</sup>

The main purpose of the operation was to help the Afghan authorities rebuild the country and create democratic state structures. As a consequence, ISAF was primarily to be a stabilisation mission, aimed at ensuring security by combating terrorism, reduction local conflicts, conducting drug campaigns, but also training the National Forces of Afghanistan and supporting various international missions, such as UNAMA or EUPOL Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup> The main tasks entrusted to the International Security Assistance Force were stated in fifteen UN Security Council resolutions.

After obtaining the control over the state, ISAF took up a stabilisation phase in Afghanistan. It aims to help rebuild damaged infrastructure, mainly roads and bridges, but also schools, hospitals, power stations and other public buildings, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) have been established. These are small components made up of military workers and civilian. Their tasks include assistance in the implementation of tasks related to humanitarian aid and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure. Twenty five such teams work in Afghanistan, which are led by several

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<sup>26</sup> Draft report on stabilization  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/pr/706/706037/706037pl.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/pr/706/706037/706037pl.pdf), access 20.03.2018.

<sup>27</sup> BANASIK, M. *Uwarunkowania misji w Afganistanie [Conditions of the mission in Afghanistan]*. Warsaw: Bellona, 2008, no 1, p.119.

NATO member states (including the USA, Italy, Germany, Turkey), as well as New Zealand.

The penultimate round of ISAF operations has now ended, because a larger area of Afghanistan has already been transferred to the Afghan Security Forces and administration. Nevertheless, the coalition forces have entered the phase of withdrawing their forces. It is still dangerous in Afghanistan despite the upcoming end of the ISAF mission. There are still groups that are fighting with NATO forces. In Lisbon on 19-20 November 2010, a NATO summit was held, at which a new 10-year strategic concept was adopted. The concept is called "Active involvement, modern defence". Countries that maintain military contingents in the International Security Assistance Force have confirmed that the stabilisation mission allows the process initiation of transferring responsibility for security to the hands of Afghans. It was agreed that the Afghan National Security Forces could take responsibility over all of Afghanistan.

A NATO summit was held in Warsaw on 8-9 July at which the extension of the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan after 2016 was adopted, and the allocation of \$ 5 million to support Kabul authorities.

To sum up, the main goal of the 2001 war was fulfilled because the Al-Qaeda network was destroyed and will not return to Afghanistan. The partisans know that they made a mistake when they hosted bin Laden and his terrorists.

## **Polish Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom**

The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon carried out on 11th September 2001 by al Qaeda terrorists initiated a new phase in the war on international terrorism. The Taliban refused to surrender bin Laden at the request of the United States, so on October 7, 2001, a military operation against terrorists in Afghanistan began. It was called Enduring Freedom.

It is worth mentioning that Poland in 2001 faced efforts to provide assistance to the USA. On 22nd November 2001, the President of the Republic of Poland prepared a decision to use the Polish Military Contingent as part of the Allied Forces in the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.<sup>28</sup> This constituted the legal basis for determining and changing the Polish Military Contingent under Operation Enduring Freedom. It included soldiers from the following units:

- GROM Group,
- 1 Sapper Brigade,
- 10 Logistics Brigade.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, in the summer of 2002, the crew of the ORP logistics security ship was included in the scope of operations.

In the next rotations of the Polish Military Contingent (PKW) , an average of about 100 soldiers participated, among whom were representatives i.a. 2nd Mazovian

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<sup>28</sup> [https://zbrojni.blob.core.windows.net/pzdata/TinyMceFiles/pz12\\_2014.pdf](https://zbrojni.blob.core.windows.net/pzdata/TinyMceFiles/pz12_2014.pdf), access 20. 03. 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Sapper Brigade, 5th Engineer Regiment, 2nd Reconnaissance Regiment. The tasks of the PKW stationed in Bagram were mainly:

- rebuilding the base and airport infrastructure,
- demining the area around the base,
- logistic protection of Polish and international troops. GROM Group was supposed to protect the Polish base as well as the headquarters of US troops and diplomats in Afghanistan.

Polish soldiers, apart from performing these tasks, often provided humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan by giving food, clothes and medicines to the most needy. Poles received good opinions from both the local population and allied forces. The most important were contacts with the troops of other countries that were stationed in Afghanistan. Polish soldiers had the opportunity to learn new equipment as well as to work out and practice various forms of cooperation, which in the future can be used during next rotations or foreign operations.

The Polish Armed Forces completed their work in Operation Enduring Freedom in 2007. In total during all ten PKW rotations in Enduring Freedom Operation, from March 2002 to April 2007, approximately 1,300 soldiers and army employees participated. During the war no Polish soldier was killed.<sup>30</sup>

## **ISAF Operation**

As mentioned in the chapter above, the end of Polish participation in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan took place on April 25, 2007, but this did not mean the end of Poles' presence. The continuing situation in Afghanistan required the constant presence of international troops, this time as part of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), in which Polish soldiers participated in fifteen rotations in 2007-2014.

The most important goal of stationing international forces coalition in Afghanistan was to normalize internal relations, improve security conditions and help local authorities, which was to simplify the standardization of life in this country. After many wars, internal conflicts and fears, the people of Afghanistan needed peace. Therefore, Afghan police and military forces could not completely ensure a high level of security for inhabitants.

“The purpose of the ISAF operation was to support the Afghan government and help NATO in ensuring security in Kabul and its surroundings, also participating in creation and training of Afghan government structures, security forces and assistance in the reconstruction of civil infrastructure.”<sup>31</sup>

This support was conducted on the basis of 5 phases:

- Phase one concerned the evaluation and preparation for the deployment of forces,

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<sup>30</sup> POLAK, A.; WIĘCEK, W. *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w Afganistanie, Wnioski i doświadczenia [Polish Armed Forces in Afghanistan, Conclusions and experiences]*. Warsaw: AON, 2015, pp.127-128.

<sup>31</sup> BANASIK, M. *Uwarunkowania misji w Afganistanie [Conditions of the mission in Afghanistan]*. op. cyt., p. 120.

- The second phase was aimed at expanding the region of operations geographically,
- The third phase stabilised the situation
- Phase four delegated tasks for the responsibility of state security to government institutions,
- The fifth phase was the withdrawal of the Forces from Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup>

While the mission of the International Security Support Forces (ISAF) ended in late 2014, NATO training, consultancy and assistance to Afghan security forces and institutions will be continued through a NATO-led mission called Resolute Support. This non-combat mission is mainly aimed at supporting Afghan ministries and institutions, and also aims to bring Afghan security forces to a higher level of command.

The detailed Resolute Support operational plan was approved by NATO Foreign Ministers at the end of June 2014. The invitation and legal framework of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) are included in the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and bilateral security agreement, the Brigade Support Area (BSA), which were signed in Kabul on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and ratified by the Afghan parliament on November 27, 2014. It defines the conditions under which NATO forces will be deployed in Afghanistan under Resolute Support, as well as activities to be performed under this contract. BSA presents two critical missions to the United States after 2014, training, consulting and assistance to ANSF as part of the NATO Resolute Support mission and targeting remnants of Al-Qaeda.

Almost 17,000 soldiers from 39 countries participate in the NATO Resolute Support mission, helping to train Afghan security forces, often in a dangerous combat environment. About half of these soldiers are Americans. The United States is by far the largest and most influential member of NATO.

About 12,000 personnel from NATO and partner countries will be deployed to support the mission. The RSM mission plan requires operations with one central node in Kabul / Bagram and four in Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, Kandahar and Jalalabad. In addition to ensuring accountability and supervision, key functions will support:

- Afghan security planning, programming and budgeting;
- Compliance with the rule of law and good governance;
- Establish and maintain processes such as power generation, recruitment, training, management and staff development.

In addition to training, consultancy and assistance missions, the allied and partner countries are involved in wider support of the international community for long-term financial support for the Afghan security forces, including the commitments made at the NATO Chicago Summit.

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<sup>32</sup> CZUPRYŃSKA, A.; TREMBECKI, J. *Uwarunkowania współpracy cywilno- wojskowej w rejonie działania [Conditions of civil-military cooperation in the area of operation]*. Warsaw: AON, 2008, p. 44.

## Involvement of the Polish Military Contingent in activities for Afghanistan

The mission of the Polish Military Contingent in Afghanistan began in April and ended in October 2007. It constituted 1,200 soldiers who were stationed at three bases: Sharan, Waza Khawa and Ghazni. The contingent was commanded by Brigadier General Marek Tomaszycski. Afterwards, it was decided to increase the number of the Polish Army to 2,600 soldiers. In addition, Polish Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters were sent to Afghanistan. In those field conditions, having a helicopter became necessary.

The Polish Military Contingent was responsible for training the Afghan police and army. The Afghan army and police learned to shoot, logistics and plan operations. Afghan forces and soldiers performed joint operations, e.g. anti-rebel operations. Polish soldiers assisted Afghan soldiers during patrols, checkpoint observation trips, and observation of nearby roads.<sup>33</sup>

“In total there were about 300 soldiers from the following units:

- Sapper Brigade (Brzeg)
- 10. Logistics Brigade (Opole)
- 4th Chemical Defence Regiment (Brodnica)
- Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (Puławy)
- GROM Group special unit
- The ship "Rear Admiral Xawery Czernicki.”<sup>34</sup>

The Polish Military Contingent Afghanistan was soon modified and from mid-2002 it numbered 120 soldiers. The tasks carried out by the contingent until mid-2007 were basically engineering activities.

The operation in Afghanistan is one of the greatest challenges facing the Polish Armed Forces over the years. Cultural, civilization and climate conditions in the mission area are completely different from European realities. In addition, Polish soldiers were involved in securing the presidential election in 2009 and the parliamentary election in 2010. The Polish Military Contingent also joined in their organization, supporting local forces in building the organizational structures of Afghanistan. For example, air transport of electoral documentation and equipment of individual polling stations to remote villages and settlements were provided.

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<sup>33</sup> MATUSZAK, J. Z. *Wojsko Polskie w Afganistanie 2002-2014 [Polish Army in Afghanistan 2002-2014]*. Warsaw: Military Center for Citizenship Education, 2015, p. 52.

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*National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2014.*

## RESUMÉ

JAKUBIAK, Ewa: *PŘÍSPĚVEK POLSKÉ ARMÁDY K OPERACÍM V AFGHÁNISTÁNU A BEZPEČNOST POLSKÉ REPUBLIKY*

Ozbrojené síly provádějí své úkoly také ve vnější dimenzi. Týkají se jak období míru, tak i války. Některé z těchto funkcí se podobají ve své podstatě funkcím realizovaným ozbrojenými silami na území státu, avšak rozsah jejich realizace byl rozšířen na mezinárodní úroveň. Klíčový význam mají především: účast na školeních, které posilují bojové schopnosti organizovaných v rámci spojeneckých povinností, pomoc společnostem postiženým přírodními katastrofami, plnění spojeneckých povinností státu. V práci se autorka zabývá účastí Ozbrojených sil Polské republiky (na příkladě mise v Afghánistánu), která podle jejího názoru má významný vliv na bezpečnost Polska.

**Klíčová slova:** Polsko, mise, armáda, Afghánistán.

## SUMMARY

Armed forces also have their tasks in the external aspect. They concern both time of peace and war. Some of these functions are similar in essence to those performed by the armed forces within the state, however, the scope of their implementation has been extended to an international level. The most important are: participation in training to improve combat skills organized as part of allied commitments, assistance to societies affected by natural disasters, implementation of allied commitments undertaken by the state. In her work, the author will deal with the contribution of the Polish Armed Forces (on the example of the mission in Afghanistan), which she believes has a significant impact on Poland's security.

**Keywords:** Poland, army, missions, Afghanistan.