



Maintaining **Alliances** and Homeland Defense

Poland's security strategy includes a solid commitment to NATO and the EU and improves defense capabilities



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oland wants to be an important and active regional player. Articulated security goals and plans for a substantial increase of defense capabilities show that Warsaw has the ambition, the strategy

and the potential to shape the security environment in the region. Poland's standing as a major contributor to the NATO security network seems secure. With the perceived decline of military threats, including a reduction of likely large-scale external threats against Poland, the country has concluded its first National Security Strategic Review (NSSR) to prepare for possible security situations. However small the likelihood, Poland can't exclude the possibility of a violation of its sovereignty, an attempt at political-military blackmail or a crisis resulting in uncontrolled migration onto Polish territory. To mitigate those risks Warsaw has put a defense emphasis on development of preemptive threat capabilities.

Systemic Approach to Security

In September 2012, after almost two years of intensive work, the National Security Bureau finished the NSSR to create a comprehensive, integrated and systemic approach to evaluating the future national and international security environment. Poland's National Security Council welcomed the results of the NSSR and unanimously accepted its general conclusions and recommendations for addressing the security challenges of the next decade.¹

The main reason for this review were weaknesses in the Polish national security system, described as a lack of coherent thinking and the existence of a nonintegrated, "ministerial" attitude in the area of national and international security. The review outlined a strategic imperative for the next 20 years that combines sustainable security internationalization and gradual defense autonomization. The philosophy of this approach is essentially focused on preventive and integrative thinking as well as gradual and more independent initiative in national defense and security.²

Externally, the NSSR assumes proper exploitation of emerging opportunities and successful prevention of looming security threats through multilateral cooperation, but internally it recommends strengthening national security potential by gradually consolidating capacities. With this approach, Poland wants to build the credibility of external security pillars through multilateral and bilateral relations with key partners (NATO, EU, U.S.), but also reinforce internal pillars of defense and security by maintaining a state of readiness to act independently in situations when a full credible allied response cannot be guaranteed.³

Poland would raise its internal capacity by integrating the national security management subsystem, professionalizing operational services (military, diplomacy, law enforcement and other security agencies), providing social and economic security (developing security plans, programs, trainings, etc.) and enhancing security education to citizens.⁴

Maintaining Alliances

In the external security dimension, Poland would maintain its willingness and ability to contribute to international security, while working to consolidate NATO defense functions, improve the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union and develop a strategic partnership with the United States. In the context of Polish security interests in Europe, the North Atlantic Alliance remains a prime, multilateral and external security guarantor. Therefore, it is especially important for Poland to foster the Alliance by equal security sharing among all its members, empowering NATO's multinational operational command and improving its threat responsiveness, readying air defenses, developing continental missile defense and strengthening rapid reaction forces.⁵

Poland's foreign policy will work for permanent confirmation of NATO's credibility and the Alliance's main mission of collective defense by participating in NATO military operations. Poland will also seek cyclical updates of contingency plans, conduct exercises with troop deployments based on Washington Treaty Article 5 scenarios, and push for equal distribution of the Alliance's military infrastructure among its members.⁶

After NATO, the EU's CSDP is the main external guarantor of security. From the Polish point of view, it is essential to achieve CSDP growth in harmony with NATO without challenging NATO's role in the European security system or the U.S. military's position in Europe. Enabling the U.S. to maintain a significant presence in Europe and play an active and leading role in NATO is of particular importance to Poles. The U.S. is committed to maintaining the balance of power in the European theater and participates through NATO in safeguarding Polish security.

Therefore, Polish diplomacy actively acts in various forums (the Visegrad Group or V4, the Weimar Triangle) to bolster the CSDP. Through the Weimar Triangle, Poland is trying to enhance key EU defense capabilities, such as improving EU-NATO relations, establishing permanent civilian-military planning and command structures, and developing EU Battle Groups and their defense capabilities.⁷ Polish diplomacy seeks — at the European Council meeting on ESDP scheduled for December 2013 — a strategic debate that would lead to the identification of specific common strategic interests of EU member states and, in due course, to amendments to the EU Security Strategy (2003). Additionally, the V4 Battle Group will begin operations in 2016 and remains the most important common project in the field of defense.

Maintaining Homeland Defence

Despite the perceived decline of direct external danger of using military force on a large scale against Poland, the NSSR does not exclude the possibilities of blackmail or threats of using armed violence, including use of non-conventional weapons (nuclear). Threats to Poland's security could specifically take the form of: military blackmail or a direct threat of use of nuclear weapons deployed in the vicinity of Poland's territory with the intention of undermining Polish status in NATO and creating a low security zone; demonstration of power in the form of military exercises, as well as temporary or permanent deployment of military units near the Polish border, including the violation of territorial waters and air space; rapid expansion of the offensive capability near the Polish border, forcing the Polish side to react militarily, or military provocations and cross border incidents.⁸

But one of the most likely challenges associated with the need to use military force seems is a humanitarian catastrophe caused by an escalating socio-economic, political or natural disaster at the eastern border resulting in uncontrolled mass migration onto the Polish territory.⁹

In worst-case scenarios involving a large-scale conflict in which state sovereignty is threatened, the Polish strategic concept assumes the country will face that threat by conducting allied defense operations. In such a situation, the armed forces will enlist strategic forces, maintain key terrain positions and then, reinforced by NATO allied forces, begin to conduct a combined, joint operation aimed at creating resolution in accordance with Polish national interests. The Polish defense concept also takes into account strategic loneliness, meaning that despite having appropriate security consultation mechanisms, Poland could act alone in the first phase of a conflict until NATO support arrives.¹⁰





REUTERS

Soldiers march in November 2012 during the opening ceremony for a U.S. Air Force aviation detachment at the Polish air base in Lask, Poland.

In the case of a conflict on a small local scale, the strategic concept assumes that the armed forces could employ its arsenal to protect people, territory and sovereignty.¹¹ That arsenal includes modern reconnaissance, command and control systems that meet the requirements of a network-centric battlefield characterized by high mobility and fire power and strengthened by extensive ballistic missile defense capacities. In addition, Poland's military should be prepared to take active part in Alliance defense operations in the event of an attack on another member in accordance with the principles of collective defense.¹²

Developing Anticipatory Potential

In the context of developing military defense capabilities, Poland clearly desires to provide its forces with the potential to pre-empt threats. This means the ability to defend and protect people and critical infrastructure against military threats in politically ambiguous situations that are caused by unclear or hidden political motives. The sudden emergence of an unexpected, limited military threat inspired by unknown political motives could inhibit the Alliance, whether NATO or the EU, from responding immediately with adequate military force and from forming a common political and military understanding beneficial to Poland.¹³ Therefore, the NSSR recommends the country acquire tools and capabilities that would anticipate this type of situation and allow the country to respond immediately and adequately. To meet these objectives, the armed forces have been given three clearly defined strategic development priorities. The first is to implement a modern Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) system; the second to strengthen air defense capabilities, especially through the development of ballistic missile systems; and the third to increase the mobility of land forces through improved helicopter mobility.

This NSSR vision adheres to a plan of technical modernization of the Polish Armed Forces for 2013-2022. Poland's air defense plans include the purchase of six medium-range missile batteries (range up to 100 kilometers) capable of targeting cruise missiles under the Wisła operational program, and 11 short-range missile batteries (range up to 25 kilometers) under the Narew operational program. Developing improved air defense capacity is supported by the Polish president, who asked Parliament to initiate legislation to finance these

projects in 2014-2023.¹⁴

To address force agility and helicopter mobility, the Polish Ministry of Defense intends to buy 70 combat support helicopters in four versions, along with a package of specialized logistics and training, and subsequently equip the Army with additional combat helicopters. The Army will also be equipped with 300 wheeled and armored personnel carriers.¹⁵

To integrate intelligence, communication, command and control, providing actionable information to commanders, the Polish Armed Forces plan to equip themselves with a new C4ISR system, including unmanned aerial vehicles of different classes. The upcoming reform of armed forces command and control encompasses a formation of two commands: a general command responsible for armed forces management in time of peace and an operational command to operate in times of crisis, war and expeditionary missions. The reform aims to trim the military command structure at the central level while strengthening operational structures; create comprehensive, joint and combined command and training at the operational level; unify peace, crisis and war command structures; and deepen civilian control over the military.¹⁶

To accomplish a strategic military modernization, the Polish defense ministry plans to spend about 140 billion zlotys (about \$42 billion). Importantly, equipping the armed forces with new systems and weapons will also result in a significant transfer of new technology to the country, especially to the Polish defense industry.¹⁷

Conclusions

Poland's strategy shows that Warsaw intends to play a leading role in Europe and desires to shape the security and defense environment in the region. However, it may be difficult for Poland to achieve one of its external objectives: maintaining a significant U.S. presence in Europe and retaining U.S. participation, along with NATO, in safeguarding Polish security.

Last year the U.S. activated the first permanent air element (Aviation Detachment) on Polish soil at Łask and still declares that Poland is the intended site of medium-range ballistic missile interceptors (part of the U.S. missile defense system in Europe) to be deployed in 2018. But the financial crisis in the U.S. and significant cuts in the U.S. defense budget, as well as the U.S. willingness to reset relations with Russia and push for greater European participation in their own defense, might encourage the U.S. to



Polish soldiers on duty at Forward Operating Base Ghazni in May 2013. Poland has played a significant role in the coalition helping to stabilize Afghanistan.

abandon existing plans.¹⁸ Poles realize that U.S. interests are no longer concentrated in Europe; that America sees Europe as a stable continent, and Poland is not considered a strategic partner to U.S. global interests. President Barack Obama's administration supports a military presence in Europe but is particularly keen on maintaining its posture in the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East.¹⁹ These circumstances force the U.S. to undertake a strategic decision to reduce, or perhaps diversify, its military presence in Europe while maintaining the ability to project power in the event of threats to U.S. or Allied security and interests.²⁰ Therefore, Poland's long-term security policy must prepare for the possibility of revision or reversal of U.S. plans to deploy ballistic missile defense capabilities on Polish territory.

By implementing the new strategy and realizing planned activities, internally and externally, Poland can integrate national security management and control significantly improved defense capabilities, better suited to the demands of the future battlefield and with much greater operational value. With an emphasis on increased mobility, firepower, improved computerization and robotics on the battlefield, Poland wants to acquire tools and capabilities that will not only allow it to meet the state's constitutional defense functions but also to develop farsighted capabilities capable of meeting national security threats in politically unclear situations (situations similar to Turkish-Syrian border incidents).

Importantly, the Polish modernization process, as well as the country's planned defense spending, contrasts positively with current European military budget

curtailments caused by the European financial crisis and subsequent restrictions in defense spending planned by key European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Finally, modernization will help the Polish military, whose development was in some ways hampered by long and intense involvement in foreign missions, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. □

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