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POLISH TERRITORIAL DEFENSE FORCES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Territorial Defense Forces of Poland are being developed after some years of impasse in this field. At this particular stage of development of their structure it is crucial to make sure that they can be properly recognized as a warrant of security both in crisis management and in time of war. Territorial Defense Forces are the most cost effective tool to provide national security. The members of Territorial Defense Forces have deep understanding of the local needs and good orientation in the terrain. That combined with local patriotism can result in great synergies when the Forces perform their activities. Responsible planning and preparation of structure of the Forces plays a crucial role, especially connecting the Territorial Defense Command system with local authorities can bring good results in crisis management. Their representatives shall be part of Crisis Management Teams on respective levels. That would ensure a prompt response so much needed in crisis management.

Keywords: *territorial defense forces, security, defense, crisis management, national defense.*

Relevance of research topic.

Constantly changing global security situation has a great impact upon the approach that a modern country need to adapt in order to maintain its position among other actors on the international arena. One trend is to build up capabilities with the respect to limited financial resources that a country has – the territorial defense forces are a perfect solution. Increasing population or density of population in urban areas as well as introduction of technologies can result in greater dangers in case of natural or manmade disasters. That problems can also be addressed by proper use of Territorial Defense Forces.

Bearing in mind geo-strategic position of Poland and Russian way of conducting foreign policy it is crucial to establish strong Polish territorial defense forces. Especially, Russian military interventions in Ukraine and Georgia prove that modern conflicts not only are of military nature but also involve non-military threats, showing growing trend of hybrid activities use as an effective way to destabilize and take over control. The aforementioned changes in warfare are good reason to strengthen the Polish defense potential. At the same time territorial defense forces have so much more to offer especially during the time of crisis and therefore can be an useful component to conduct many activities essential for crisis management. Bearing that in mind, it appears necessary to consider and analyze the role, significance and tasks of National Defense Forces and its role in Crisis Management.

Formulation of the problem. Territorial Defense Forces – crucial element of state security. While defining Territorial Defense one shall take under consideration two meanings depending on the context, thus the term simultaneously serves to denote two closely related concepts. Respectively, in the organizational sense, as an implementation structure, Territorial Defense is – next to operational forces – one of the two basic components of the defense military system. The famous war theorist and general Carl von Clausewitz described it as «national defense». Important to highlight – both components of the military defense system (territorial forces and operational forces) should cooperate closely.

Analysis of recent researches and publications.

Secondly, in the functional sense, Territorial Defense is the implementation of national defense at the local and regional level – with the common involvement of the whole society. In particular, carrying out defense operations in one place without relocating territorial defense forces to other areas is Territorial Defense. For the aforementioned reason, territorial defense forces should be numerous and quickly replenished.

Modern Territorial Defense is a component of a modern military structure, whose connection with the non-military system, in a decisive way affects the effectiveness of national defense.

The goal, missions, functions, tasks and role as well as tasks of common Territorial Defense are the basis for determining its structure, where the main elements are: (1) territorial command bodies, (2) OT troops and (3) military elements of operational preparation of territory for defense, (4) non-military organizations and forces (military and militarized formations) working for national defense; subordinate to territorial command bodies.

Territorial defense is the basic organization of society to create the required level of national security with the use of local armed groups. Territorial Defense Forces are an unique structure within the country as it allows optimally use the advantages of defending country's own territory, such as terrain properties, fortifications or bravery of the nation – including its ability to conduct insurgent fights and build coalitions.

In case of Poland the Territorial Defense Forces (Pol. Obrona Terytorialna Kraju, OTK) system was established in 1959 and its expansion started in 1965 as a part of regular army. There were responsible for the task protection of the civilians during the war. The number of OTK troops after mobilization amounted to approx. 650,000 soldiers. Since the reductions in Polish army between 2008 and 2011 when the disbandment of the 1st Mechanized Division and the Territorial Defense Forces took place, general potential of the Polish Armed Forces has been significantly lowered. After the aforementioned Poland's Army reform the new concepts of the Territorial Defense Force (Pol. WOT, Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej) emerged. The concept was welcomed as a solution to efficiently develop less expensive, reliable capabilities for the time of war and crisis.

So far the Territorial Defense Force (Pol. WOT) is recognized as the fifth branch and the reserve component of the Polish Armed Forces. It is supposed to operate in order to protect the Polish territory in case of enemy aggression, especially in the regions in which the use of a regular army has no operational justification. WOT forces consist of professional soldiers and part-time soldiers – volunteers, who join military service in order to enhance national defense capabilities and protect their local communities. By creating Territorial Defense Forces Poland increased the national ability to defend the country from any attack by any potential aggressor which is in line with the NATO standards for building own defense capabilities of the Alliance member nations (NATO Treaty Art. 3). WOT complement national deterrence capabilities, not substituting any of the Polish Armed Forces capabilities.

Main tasks of the Territorial Defense Forces are in line with Polish Armed Forces missions described in the National Defense Strategy, and therefore include:

- presenting deterrence posture;
- conducting military operations within the Strategic Defense Operation, in order to repel enemy aggression;
- coordinating and executing crisis management activities with other parts of national security system i.e. Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) agencies, in order to protect and support local communities;
- providing and coordinating Host Nation Support (HNS), in order to enable efficient reception and staging of Alliance elements in Poland;
- conducting counter hybrid and asymmetric warfare;
- promoting among the Polish society patriotic values and education [6].

In order to understand how territorial defense forces can increase level of security during the crisis management it is essential to address most important information related to the crisis situations.

K. Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek states that crisis management is a specific type of management, the essence of which consists in preventing threats, preparing for their appearance, reacting, removing their effects and restoring the desired state of security [4]. To properly characterize crisis management it is important to highlight that the management process is carried out under conditions of stress and risk.

The crisis situations may resource from the destructive forces of nature and both unintentional and intentional activity of people (i.e. man caused disasters). In case of a crisis where routine activities of entities responsible for security (public administration, services, inspections and guards) are insufficient – troops and subdivisions of the army may be involved. Still even if it is allowed by law, Polish Army can be only used as the last instance. The cases of possible use of armed forces as well as limitations of their engagement in crisis management are listed in the texts of applicable legal acts that can be only applied in case of crisis situation.

The most important legal act that regulates the scope of tasks and competences of the use of branches and subunits of the Polish Army in crisis situations is the Act of 21 November 1967 on universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland. Its regulations state that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland can be used to combat natural disasters and their consequences, in anti-terrorist activities, property protection, search campaigns. In addition to saving or protecting health and human life, cleansing trains of explosive and dangerous materials of military origin and their disposal. (...) military forces may participate in the implementation of tasks in the field of crisis management [8].

The more specific legal regulations can be found in the Act on Crisis Management. It explains matters as the manner, conditions and procedure for use of the Polish Armed Forces in a crisis situation in case the use of other forces and resources is not possible or when they are not sufficient. According to the provisions of the Act, the Minister of National Defense, at the request of the voivode, may provide at his disposal the forces and resources at the disposal of the ministry, along with directing them to perform specific tasks in the field of crisis management [11].

Polish Constitution also tackles use of armed forces if one of the extraordinary states is introduced:

- 1) Martial law (Article 229);
- 2) state of emergency (Article 230);
- 3) the state of a natural disaster (Article 232) [3].

The aforementioned states are introduced by the President of the Republic of Poland, at the request of the President of the Council of Ministers. The decision to use military forces shall result in restoration of the normal functioning of the state in the event of a breach of constitutional and public security or order.

The Act explicitly emphasizes that the use of armed forces for the purpose of a state of emergency should not jeopardize the ability to carry out their essential function, which is associated with a readiness to defend the territory of Poland or an ally in the case of armed aggression [10].

In case of occurrence of a natural disaster understood as a natural disaster or technical failure with effects threaten the life or health of a large number of people, large-sized property or the environment in large areas and when the help and protection can be effectively taken only by extraordinary means, in cooperation of

various bodies and institutions as well as specialized services and formations operating under uniform management also military forces can be used [9]. Occurrence of such a case of «extraordinary measures» may state an excuse to turn for the help to the army. With accordance to procedure the territorially competent voivode can request it from the Minister of National Defense, who may delegate sub-units or units of the army directing them to perform tasks related to the prevention of the effects of a disaster or to removing its effects [9].

Army shall also play a role of support forces other institutions of the crisis management system in situations where the lead entity is not able to counteract the threat on its own. Police Act consist an example of aforementioned solution and in that case there are provisions for simplification of the rules for the use of the Polish Armed Forces. The decision-making level required to make a decision on granting support for police is lowered. However the military forces can only assist in this case in the event of a serious threat to public safety and order or to a terrorist offense [7].

Factual use of military forces is based with the respect to hierarchical character of the military organization. Respectively, the command of divisions and sub-units assigned to act in crisis situations follow the rules of military regulations and procedures of the Polish Armed Forces. The strategic level document regulating the use of Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland units in crisis situations is the Crisis Management Plan of the Ministry of National Defense, introduced under the order of the Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army. The document specifies the readiness of forces and means, activation procedures, organization of the command and communication system, principles of coordination and organization of logistic and medical security. It also refers to resources that can be used for crisis management purposes. To provide more specific instructions there are compact annexes attached.

They constitute separate plans of support for civil authorities and society in particular cases i.e. in case of actions counter-terrorist and oriented on maintaining public order.

With the respect to aforementioned information, the general rule is to rely upon the decision of Minister of National Defense when it comes to deploy military units needed in crisis management. That solution is not efficient when it comes to facing a crisis situation. Therefore the Territorial Defense Forces in order to increase national security shall not be used as Operational Forces – where it must be launched from the level of the Minister of National Defense at the request of the Governor. It causes the prolonging of the decision-making process about the use of troops to a specific crisis situation and the Ministry of National Defense has to deal with problems at the level the poviats. Therefore it is necessary to make changes in the regulations that would distinguish in a decisively manner components of the armed forces between operational forces and territorial defense forces. It is necessary to assign actions of territorial defense troops to the actions of the state administration for their use during a crisis situation.

According to Professor Jerzy Wolanin's theses, security in terms of effectiveness and satisfaction of the needs of the population during peace, crisis situation or war should be built and managed territorially – regardless of the scale of the threat, there are always local needs. Local residents know best how to take care of their own, their families, their friends, neighbors security and know their area best. Therefore local community members well-trained within the territorial defense forces will be able to meet local needs in crisis situation and during the war. Security exists at local level. If it is not provided at the local level, there is no way it exists at higher levels. Even if a war or cataclysm has a national, regional or global dimension, from the point of view of a citizen – local security is the most important, because it practically provides security at higher levels.

Presenting main material.

Nowadays, due to military modernization, Poland is neither capable to achieve defensive operations strategic goals nor to effectively defend its territory. The main reason behind it is the low number of the Polish regular troops. In particular, three divisions of the Polish Land Forces (one armored division included) can defend the area of 40,000 km². That explains why article 5 of Washington Treaty is repeated so often - Poland counts on receiving military support from its NATO allies with at least two armored divisions and other combat support and logistics units. Still even if the help would be secured the crucial aspect is the ability to defense the territory till the deployment of these forces to Poland takes place. In that important period the Territorial Defense Force shall play a key role as an actor responsible for defense.

In order to be ready and conduct their operations there is a division of the Territorial Defense troops to battalions, independent battalions and brigades. Their aim is to conduct locally defensive and delaying operations on the local level (including cities) as well as directions where employment of mobile light infantry units is possible. Local nature of WOT will provide a quick response to the threat. Members of WOT will take advantage of their good knowledge of the territory – generally Polish geographical diversity offers many opportunities to organize defensive lines or delay enemy operations through conducting irregular activities by WOT. The development of WOT as planned is taking place between 2016 and 2022 – the goal is to have one brigade in each Polish voivodship (province), however it is decided to form two brigades in Masovia. The aforementioned units are govern by local military administration. Initially, this solution was aimed at providing optimal use of human resources and supplies during a crisis or war. In order to secure efficient employment of WOT units combat operation plans shall be prepared. It is important to mention that both during war and crisis it might not be necessary to deploy the entire brigades in each province, therefore the reaction system of WOT shall be focused on providing fast local reactions including life-saving interventions, combat of natural disasters or their effects, counter-terrorist activities and other crisis management activities held alone or in cooperation with third parties, support of operational troops.

As opposed to regular army troops, units and sub-units of the WOT are expected to conduct operations in their local area. Well trained WOT troops being familiar with the local terrain take advantage of its properties and can perform reconnaissance and that grants them dominance in case of enemy attack or control while facing the crisis situation. Therefore WOT while carrying out operations utilize terrain properties in their favor and as a tool to weaken the enemy. The organizational structure of the Territorial Defense Force should be based upon the properties of territory that influence tasks and goals of a specific WOT unit. Therefore brigades' structure shall be diversified. This will also be very helpful while performing crisis management activities. WOT Units equipment shall reflect their tasks, missions and the operational area. It is crucial to enable them to perform their duties as activities including search and rescue (including CBRN contaminated areas) or destroying and building barriers, maintaining and repairing roads, rebuilding infrastructure alone or with cooperation with non-military services.

As far as the strategic defensive operation is concerned, the Territorial Defense Force ought to consider the following regions:

- A coastline with harbors, naval bases and energy infrastructure;
- Masurian Lake lands and other lakes located between the Bug and Vistula rivers;
- Mountain ranges in the southeast of Poland;
- The areas around convenient crossings of the Vistula and Oder (Odra) rivers; particularly bridges which allow NATO forces to cross Poland's longest rivers;
- Key industrial centers, factories and facilities including the defense sector;
- Regions crucial for the functioning of the state, including the capital of Poland;
- Regions in which the strategic materiel of the Polish Armed Forces is located;
- Part of critical national infrastructure which is crucial for the functioning of the state [5].

It is planned to permanently deploy five or six WOT operational brigades between the Bug and Vistula rivers, accordingly to their initial disposition. Bearing in mind scientific research results and Polish geopolitical location this will be not enough to conduct efficient defense activities [1].

According to Gen. Skrzypczak is of opinion that 17 WOT Brigades are not enough to significantly improve Polish security. He claims that it seems absolutely clear that the Armed Forces need to deploy approximately 30 brigades of the Territorial Defense Force, it is questionable, however, whether this goal can be achieved. It is also worth considering the organizational structure of the Territorial Defense Force. The structure of each brigade ought to reflect its combat capabilities as well as diverse conditions and environment, in which a brigade is supposed to operate, e.g. forests and lake lands; urban areas; mountain warfare. Above all, units of the Territorial Defense Force should be capable to conduct defensive and delaying operations [5].

Therefore it would be the best to have a realistic approach and treat current plan as a transition phase between the factual void in field of territorial defense and eventual fully developed WOT structure capable of deterrence and defense of Polish national territory.

The territorial command system – an essential and indispensable element in the territorial defense – naturally connects civilians and the WOT troops. It has a very important component – the territorial reconnaissance system necessary for the effective operation of the WOT troops, and indirectly also operational troops, including allied forces undertaking armed operations on the territory of the Republic of Poland. It can be also used while fighting with a crisis situation i.e. natural or man-caused disaster. The aforementioned territorial recognition system enables particularly effective information control and undertaking of protective actions in the sphere of cyberspace at the local level. It is based mainly on obtaining information from many reliable sources, not only military ones. It can be organized on the basis of the reconnaissance system of the WOT troops, but mainly it will operate based on data having its source in non-military structures functioning at the poviast level. Sources of information include, among others, services and formations of local territorial structures of local government institutions and private entities operating in the poviast carrying out activities useful for defense and security in the event of crisis situations. Due to their functions, aforementioned entities have important data for organization of defense and protection of the population and infrastructure. It is necessary to highlight that in this case not only critical infrastructure is taken under consideration, but also general infrastructure crucial for the military and, above all, for local residents, which the Polish critical infrastructure definition does not cover. This system consists of:

- 1) a territorial reconnaissance system;
- 2) external (local, poviast) sources of information (interacting with the territorial reconnaissance system);
- 3) cells to defend (counteract) cyberspace at the poviast level operating under territorial command system of territorial defense.

WOT to achieve a high level of effectiveness in action, should be properly placed within the territorial defense system (as a component of the Polish Armed Forces) and at the same time must be closely connected in the field of administration with the state and local administration. In particular local and governmental administration, starting from the commune (gmina), through the poviast, the voivodship, to the ministry – thus the WOT should reflect the administrative structure on military level. At the same time, their part within the territorial command system should be a territorial reconnaissance system, which includes its competence among others cooperation in the field of territorial defense with: Police, State Fire Service (Pol. Państwowa Straż Pożarna, PSP), Border Guard, Forest and Water Guards, Communes, transport agencies and other entities dealing with security of enterprises and local and regional administration institutions, as well as territorial units of state authorities and pro-defense organizations, «uniformed» class schools of youth and academic associations, as well as critical infrastructure located in various counties.

In order to build and keep operational an effective Territorial Defense Forces component it is important to establish a territorial command system reflecting the administrative system of the state. The structural solutions used in the Polish Police or in the State Fire Service can be used as examples. Strategic element of WOT should be (1) the Headquarters of Territorial Defense – a body subordinated to the Minister of National Defense and supervising voivodship Headquarters. (2) Voivodship Headquarters for Territorial Defense (in turn should be supervising (3) Poviats Territorial Defense Commands and should act In case of the cities that are greater than poviats and are divided into communes (gminy) there shall be (4) Territorial Defense Commune Headquarters reporting to Territorial Defense Poviats Headquarters Commands. To the organized territorial command system should be assigned battle structures of the WOT troops, where the county level should be an essential element of the combat organization of these troops and have at least an WOT battalion, but not mapped on the structures of operational forces, and for this armed WOT formation for the defense of cities. It is important to organize the structure in such a manner it can be used quickly by voivodship, poviat and commune (gmina) authorities in case of crisis situation. The best would be to implement legal solutions similar to ones used for Police. According to article 3. of Police act, The voivode and the head of the gmina authority (town or city mayor) or the head of the poviat authority acting in their general administration capacity and the gmina, poviat and voivodship local government authorities shall perform the tasks within the scope of the protection of public safety or order as specified in the relevant acts. Basically these authorities are responsible to provide safety in their territory. In article 11. 1. it is stated: The head of the gmina authority (town or city mayor) or poviat authority may demand that the appropriate Police commander restored legal order or undertake actions to prevent the violation of law and intended to remove threat to public safety and order. That implies the fact that Police closely cooperates with respective administration levels and therefore it is possible to quickly undertake activities as needed at the appropriate level. In case of problems there is a solution involving other levels as described in article 11. 5. The competent Police commander shall promptly inform the Police Commander of a higher rank, when he is unable to comply with the demand referred to in Paragraph 1. If Poland want to have increased public safety and national security it is crucial to introduce similar legal solutions for Territorial Defense Forces securing their immediate involvement in case there is a crisis situation and their support is needed. In other words poviat or gmina authority shall have right to demand support directly from appropriate level of territorial defense forces in providing public order and safety in case of crisis situation.

Poviat Territorial Defense Command should control forces of dual character, capable to act in time of crisis and war. WOT shall neither imitate the tasks of operational forces, nor the structures of poviat state formations such as the Police or Firefighters. Territorial Defense Forces are unique for their transformation of the social potential, which is not used by the existing structure of operational forces (Land Forces, Special Forces, Air Forces and Navy) and state formations.

It is important for Poland to have a territorial defense system, where the preparation to defense will play an important role, since the inclusion of objects and projects covered by it arises from economic necessity (economical and purposeful – according to their characteristics) of operating troops, relieving them from secondary tasks and the absolute need to prepare in advance (during peace) and to maintain a constant readiness to quickly launch a system of dams and damages. These tasks should be performed by the engineering units of the WOT. The duty of territorial command bodies is to conduct operational studies, inventory defense infrastructure facilities, and coordinate cooperation in this area with non-military forces [2].

In order to secure the best use of resources and optimal performance Territorial Defense Forces shall be a non-operational component of military forces oriented upon executing their tasks on a local level.

Conclusion.

In times of war they shall be commanded within the military hierarchy. However in crisis management the same local structures of territorial defense shall very closely cooperate by the local government authorities. That would result in increased engagement of territorial defense in crisis management.

As mentioned before – regardless of the scale of the threat, there are always local needs. Local community members well-trained within the Territorial Defense Forces will be able to meet local needs in crisis situation and during the war. The key to security and safety is at local level, proper training will enable to grow it at higher levels as well. It is worth noting that the territorial defense forces, having appropriate training, knowledge of the area and the needs of residents in a fast and efficient manner can support appropriate services during the crisis and free. Proper management of Territorial Defense Forces will enable to increase not only security but also safety on all level at lower cost in comparison to investing in increase of operational forces. It is also worth mentioning that during the training of territorial defense forces, we strengthen and shape the civil society and the ideas of patriotism not only local.

Bearing aforementioned in mind, it is crucial to provide a proper position and way of operation to Territorial Defense Forces.

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