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## Fort Trump as a Chance for Security in Europe

**Summary:** The article assesses the intentions of building permanent American bases in Poland in terms of actions taken by the West for strategic deterrence and stabilization of the situation of international security. The analysis of actions taken by the United States after the annexation of the Crimea to maintain security on the territory of Europe. The NATO-Russia agreement of 1997 was evaluated in terms of the current conditions of the international security environment. The pros and cons of the location of American bases in the territory of Poland are presented.

**Keywords:** Strategic deterrence, American bases, threats of the Russian Federation, security guarantees, NATO-Russia agreement

## Fort Trump szansą dla bezpieczeństwa w Europie

**Streszczenie:** W artykule dokonano oceny zamiarów budowy stałych baz amerykańskich w Polsce w aspekcie działań podejmowanych przez Zachód na rzecz odstraszenia strategicznego i stabilizowania sytuacji bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego. Przeanalizowano działania podejmowane przez Stany Zjednoczone po aneksji Krymu na rzecz utrzymania bezpieczeństwa na terytorium Europy. Dokonano oceny porozumienie NATO-Rosja z 1997 roku w aspekcie obecnych uwarunkowań środowiska bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego. Przedstawiono plusy i minusy rozlokowania na terytorium Polski baz amerykańskich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Odstraszenie strategiczne, amerykańskie bazy, zagrożenia Federacji Rosyjskiej, gwarancje bezpieczeństwa, porozumienie NATO-Rosja

## Introduction

The Kremlin's aggressive policy towards the West since the annexation of the Crimea in 2014 has forced the Allies to change their attitude towards new political, economic, informational, and military threats. Due to its defence potential and geostrategic location, Poland is a key element of NATO's security architecture, especially in the eastern borders of its treaty responsibility stretching from the Arctic to the Black Sea. The evaluations of possible future offensive actions conducted by the Russian Federation (RF) against the West show that the northern strategic direction in which Norway is located is currently rather safe. The South, due to Turkey's rather unstable attitude, raises some strategic

questions for the Alliance. It seems that the most dangerous direction is the central direction encompassing the territory of Poland, where, as historical experience shows, the future conflict between NATO and Russia may be resolved.

During the Cold War, the wall of the Alliance was made up of Germans. Nowadays, due to the lowest defence spending, the disastrous condition of the armed forces' operational readiness and low public support for NATO missions led by the United States (U.S.), the U.S. is increasingly reluctant to send troops to Europe. The extreme opinions also point to a reluctance to support Allies in the event of a conflict, and even to the possibility of blocking U.S. troops from Germany. All this makes Germany less and less credible. Moreover, the construction of a pipeline from Russia near the Baltic Sea to Germany, without fear of political interference from transit countries such as Poland and Ukraine, leads to political and economic dependence on Russia and an inability to oppose it. The political tensions between Berlin and Washington make it increasingly clear that U.S. troops will leave Germany if they fail to pay the appropriate financial sums (PaNCZ, 2019). Experts also point to the argument that U.S. military bases and commanders are located too far away from the borders with Russia, which is currently more than 1000 km away. It is also estimated that the European transport infrastructure is not able to meet the challenges related to the rapid relocation of U.S. forces to the region of the future hypothetical conflict in the East of Europe. It can be concluded that the central strategic direction is weak in terms of its ability to resist Russian offensive activities.

It is estimated that the presence of NATO troops on the so-called eastern flank is symbolic. There are not enough capabilities to withstand the aggression of the Russian Federation. The decisions taken at the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016 to provide military support for Central Europe and the Baltic States respected the provisions of the 1997 Russia-NATO Act and allowed only small, rotating international forces to be deployed. Despite Russian intervention in Ukraine and obvious violation of international law, the Alliance did not decide to build permanent bases on its eastern flank. As a result, NATO's territory to the east of the Vistula can be considered to be poorly defended. The simulations carried out by the Rand Corporation in 2016 show that the Russian Federation may seize the Baltic States in 60 hours, and NATO would not be able to prevent the achievement of this goal, because the Alliance's core forces will not be able to join the fight in such a short time (Shlapak, 2016, p. 2). Other studies indicate that the 65km-long section of land between Belarus and Kaliningrad, the so-called Suwałki Corridor, can easily be blocked by the Russian Federation, preventing the free movement of NATO personnel and equipment in order to strengthen the Baltic States by land (Hodges, 2018). In such a situation, NATO's credibility as the guarantor of security could be seriously undermined. So far, there is also no answer to the question of how NATO could defend it.

Russia has the undeniable advantage of deploying its own troops close to NATO borders, which gives the possibility of a surprising attack on one or more Allied states at the same time. Based on the analyses carried out, it is difficult to conclude that aggression against the Alliance will certainly be expressed in the seizure of a specific territory, but it is nevertheless advisable to take steps to eliminate existing vulnerabilities and at the same time increase resistance to threats. It seems that in these conditions, it is necessary

to build and present a more decisive deterrent attitude. In this respect, the permanent presence of U.S. military forces on Polish territory should be considered legitimate, which would certainly improve stability and security in the region.

The problem situation identified in this way leads to the formulation of the leading research problem, which is as follows: *How can permanent American bases on Polish territory deter the Russian Federation and improve security in Europe?* In order to solve the main research problem, it was defragmented, resulting in the following specific problems: 1) What measures have the United States taken and are being taken to strengthen security on European territory? 2) What is the assessment of the 1997 NATO-Russia agreement in the current context of the international security situation? 3) What are the pros and cons of locating American bases on the territory of Poland?

The aim of the research, the results of which are presented in this article, was to evaluate the intentions to build permanent American bases in Poland in the aspect of measures taken by the West for strategic deterrence and stabilization of the situation of international security. The research process was carried out using methods of scientific cognition, which was based mainly on the analysis and criticism of literature and own assessment of facts.

### **Proposals Security Guarantees for Europe from the United States of America**

The illegal annexation of the Crimea, the permanent occupation of Georgian and Ukrainian territories by the Russian Federation, the militarisation of the Kaliningrad Oblast, and the hybrid warfare against the West are the reasons for the increasing instability in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. This situation makes some NATO states feel the real threats coming from the Russian Federation and strive to strengthen their security at all costs. One of the ideas is to build permanent American military bases. This is not a new idea. After President George W. Bush took office, Poland openly proposed a permanent presence of American troops on Polish soil (Kaminski, 2019, p. 2). Unfortunately, in September 2009, Barack Obama's administration revoked earlier arrangements concerning the construction of a missile defence shield in Poland (Doran, 2018, p. 9). Poles have repeatedly proven their loyalty and usefulness to Washington, even at the cost of deepening divisions within the European Union (EU). For example, they participated in NATO and U.S. missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Taylor, 2019, p. 15).

In 2014, the United States started to increase its military presence in Europe as part of the Atlantic Resolve, mainly on a rotating principle (Shevin-Coetzee, 2018). On this basis, at the beginning of 2017, the Brigade Armoured Battle Group was deployed in Poland. At the same time, high-ranking American commanders believed that in order to maintain a military advantage on the European continent and at the same time stop the Russian Federation from aggression, a greater presence of soldiers, equipment and armaments was necessary, and therefore their continued presence in the air, on land

and in European waters should be considered (*Statement...*, 2018, p. 1). However, not all Pentagon officials shared this view. Many generals believed that from the point of view of strategic interests, the U.S. it was China rather than the RF that was more important, which is why the permanent deployment of soldiers to Europe would limit the possibility of opposing the threats in the Far East (Kaminski, 2019, p. 23). This seems to be a mistaken assumption because, as studies have shown, in the event of armed conflict in Asia, it will be necessary to have a maritime and air component, whereas in Europe, it is mainly land forces that are needed. The very presence of American troops on Polish soil may stop the manifestations of Russian aggression. Based on this assumption, on 18 September 2018, during a meeting between President Duda and Donald Trump, Poland proposed to build a permanent U.S. base in Poland, justifying this with strategic conditions. The creation of such military bases would be of great geopolitical significance not only for Poland and its bilateral relations with the United States but would also have a positive impact on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. The idea of the permanent American military bases in Poland is also supported by Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania and Ukraine, i.e., countries that are most vulnerable to Russian military aggression (Rempfer, 2019). According to Jorge Benitez, the Polish offer would make sense as part of the multinational investment of NATO forces in Central Europe carried out within the framework of strengthening the eastern area of treaty responsibility. Acceptance of the Polish proposal without taking into account the Alliance's strategy would mean greater direct involvement of the U.S. in defence of Europe. That would be contrary to D. Trump's priority, which would be expressed in a decrease in the dependence of NATO member states on US military aid. The construction of the U.S. bases in Poland would be a step in the opposite direction. It would make the U.S. unilaterally more responsible for security in the vicinity of NATO's borders with Russia. On the contrary to Moscow's warnings, a permanent stay of the U.S. troops in Poland would not weaken European security; more U.S. troops in Central Europe would strengthen the deterrence and thus increase stability in the region (*Fort...*, 2018).

During a joint press conference of the Presidents of the United States and Poland, a proposal to increase the involvement of the U.S. Army in Central and Eastern Europe was announced. President Donald D. Trump stated that the U.S. was considering deploying more U.S. soldiers and military equipment in Poland (*Russia...*, 2018). As a consequence of this stance, the U.S. Congress obliged the Pentagon to present a report evaluating the feasibility of permanent stationing of U.S. military forces in Poland. In addition, the Atlantic Council's working group on the deployment of U.S. forces in North-Eastern Europe welcomed the idea of increasing the number of U.S. forces in Poland. It recommended, among other things, the installation of permanent training centres in Poland, which could be used by both American forces and other NATO member states. The existing extensive training ground would allow shooting with live ammunition, which is currently being carried out in Germany (*Permanent...*, 2018).

The report prepared by the analytical centre of the Atlantic Council states that Russia's behaviour forces NATO to increase its presence on the eastern flank constantly. A step in this direction would show that the Alliance is ready to defend the Baltic States in the event

of a real threat. At the same time, it is proposed that Poland, in the event of a military threat to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, should be the main point of deployment and command of NATO troops. Experts recommend that the Pentagon, in consultation with NATO, undertake the following actions (Breedlove, 2018, pp. 4–6): 1) Establish a divisional headquarters in Poznań, to which U.S. military forces stationed in Poland and the Baltic States would be subject, and coordinate joint actions with the international divisional headquarters in Elbląg and the international corps in Szczecin; 2) Permanently deploy a brigade combat group in Żagań and deploy its elements for the duration of exercises throughout Central Europe. It would be a continuous rotational presence based on a fixed base; 3) Accelerate the runway extension planned for 2023 at the Powidz airport. It is also proposed to extend the unloading and storage facilities for ammunition and equipment; 4) Take over for an indefinite period of time the command of the NATO Combat Group deployed in Orzysz, which includes subdivisions from Croatia, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom; 5) Move one mechanised brigade from the U.S. to Germany and deploy one battalion of the brigade in Poland and one in the Baltic republics; 6) Move part of the short-range anti-aircraft defence units planned to be deployed by 2020 on a rotating basis from Germany to Poland; 7) Relocate of medium-range air defence sub-units covering U.S. troops in Europe to joint training with Patriot batteries purchased by Poland, and in crises to strengthen the air defence of the Baltic States; 8) Increase U.S. intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities in Poland; 9) Create the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) from base 10. U.S. Special Forces Group, which is stationed near Krakow, a training site for NATO special forces; 10) Establish a permanent command of the U.S. Air Force Brigade in Poland; 11) Increase the permanent presence of U.S. subdivisions in the base in Grace to facilitate the rotation of combat aircraft and increase the capacity to receive transport aircraft; 12) Establish in Mirosławiec a permanent base of unmanned reconnaissance aircrafts MQ-9 Reaper (successor of Predator); 13) Increase of the momentum of exercises conducted in Central Europe with the participation of U.S. aviation; 14) Establish a small U.S. Navy base in Gdynia. Its task would be to support the stay of American ships in the Baltic Sea; 15) Permanently deploy American destroyers in ports in Denmark, from where they would conduct patrol missions in the Baltic Sea; 16) Use for the purposes of the NATO anti-missile system of the permanently deployed in Poland base of the anti-missile shield in Rędzikowo<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, outside the Embassy in Warsaw, American troops are stationed in 15 cities in Poland. 3.5 thousand soldiers from four land force battalions are stationed at 4-6 training sites in Bolesławiec, Skwierzyna and Swietoszów, and their command is located in Żagan; 550 soldiers from the NATO battle group are stationed in Orzysz, which was recently mentioned by the Russian media as a base for the American brigade in Poland; the aviation battalion is stationed in Powidz; US soldiers work in the NATO mission headquarters in Szczecin.

## NATO-Russian Act

A serious problem for Russia in its relations with NATO is the gradual territorial expansion of the Alliance to the east. The adoption and signing in 1997 of the founding act of NATO-Russia on mutual relations, cooperation and security between NATO and the Russian Federation was the result of a consensus on the future order of security in Europe. Western states assured Russia that NATO enlargement would not threaten its security. They argued that NATO had no intentions, plans, or reasons for deploying nuclear weapons in the new Member States. NATO's concessions on the renegotiation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe of 19 November 1990 were intended to show that NATO enlargement would not lead to an increase in the potential of its conventional forces in the vicinity of Russia (Asmus, 1983, p. 195). The aim was to build long-lasting peace, without rivalry between the major powers and without attempting to enlarge spheres of influence. Western countries committed themselves to build a system of collective security, of which Russia would be a part. In return, NATO was able to expand and integrate new members. At that time, due to problems related to Afghanistan and Iraq, the Alliance did not focus on deterring and conducting collective defence but on gaining the ability to act as an expeditionary force and prepare to react to threats outside its own territory (Dyner, 2018, p. 1).

The agreement between NATO and Russia not to deploy any permanent, significant forces on the territory of the Alliance (NATO, 1997, p. 4) was and is of a political nature. Since then, however, there has been no binding definition of such forces. Their size and the equipment at their disposal were not specified. For this reason, it is difficult to speak of a violation of this agreement by NATO (Henze, 2014). Despite Russia's aggressive behavior after 2014 and violation of international law, the Alliance has not given up on respecting the provisions of the agreement. At the same time, it considered that the additional deployment of troops up to the level of the brigade was a reasonable limit to the previously adopted limits. Moreover, NATO is of the opinion that in response to their exceeding, by permanently deploying larger forces in Poland, Russia may seek to build a similar base on the territory of Belarus. Currently, Russia is concentrating on this part of the document, accusing NATO of violating the agreement. This is also the main argument in the discussion against a decisive strengthening of the eastern flank, which consists of replacing the formula of the rotating presence agreed in Newport and Warsaw with the permanent stationing of NATO coalition forces (Dyner, 2018, p. 1).

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cin and Elbląg; 90 soldiers work in the US mission headquarters as part of the NATO mission in Poznań; 100 soldiers work on the construction of a missile defence base in Redzików; the aviation support unit is stationed at the Łask airport; the reconnaissance drone unit MG-9 in Mirosławiec; unit 10. Special Forces Group in Kraków; transport and logistics battalion in Powidz; soldiers serving in NATO training centre in Bydgoszcz. In total, approximately 4.4 thousand American soldiers are stationed in Poland permanently or as part of a rotation. In addition, in the countries of our region Americans rotate 300 soldiers in Bulgaria, 100 soldiers in Hungary, 675 soldiers in Kosovo, 1,000 soldiers in Romania and 300 soldiers in Ukraine. For comparison, there are 37.5 thousand American soldiers stationed in Germany (Breedlove 2018, pp. 7-8).

It should also be taken into account that if the Russian threat to the Baltic States and Poland increases, the United States and NATO should be prepared to act beyond the signed agreement. In addition, a sufficient argument for such moves is the change in the conditions of the international security environment, which are diametrically different from those of 1997 (Vershbow, 2018, p. 37).

It should be clearly emphasized that the plans to establish American military facilities on Polish territories, like the construction of the anti-missile shield, are purely defensive in nature and constitute a natural response to the aggressive measures taken by the Russian Federation against the West. The assessments carried out indicate that the permanent arrival of U.S. military units in Poland will not lead to any radical changes in the balance of power in the region and will definitely not affect the proportions between the number of armed forces stationed in Poland and those of the Russian Federation concentrated at the western borders of Russia (Kaminski, 2019, p. 19). However, this idea raises unjustified suspicions of Moscow and fears of losing territorial integrity. It seems that these are only elements of an information war that aim to present NATO's intentions in a bad light because the aim is to protect the treaty territory from Russian invasion, and not the other way round.

It seems, however, that no matter what defence measures NATO takes in the east of its territory, Russia will react in its own way by launching permanent disinformation campaigns in which NATO is accused of undermining Russia's security and conducting military exercises at the eastern flank's borders. Russian objections to NATO's military presence in the east are aimed at creating divisions within the Alliance, especially with Germany, which argues that a permanent military presence near the borders with the Russian Federation is provocative (Dempsey, 2017, p. 7). Independent analyses lead to the conclusion that NATO should remain in the east, regardless of whether the conflict in Ukraine is resolved or not, and what happens after Vladimir Putin loses power.

The studies carried out show that the provisions of the Agreement, which was based on the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states, inviolability of borders and the right of peoples to self-determination, have been unilaterally violated. Russia unilaterally failed to respect the provisions on refraining from threatening or using force against any State, its sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence, which would be in any way incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations (NATO, 1997, p. 6).

The experience of the last decade confirms that all the above-mentioned principles have been broken: the war with Georgia in 2008, the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimea, to name a few. Russia has repeatedly used open and hidden threats against NATO members. They were directed, among others, against Poland and Romania in order to discourage them from deploying elements of American and NATO missile defence systems on their territory as well as against Denmark and Norway, which contributed to these systems (Dyner, 2018, p. 2).

The Russian Federation has become an authoritarian state. Doctrinal regulations indicate that it treats the North Atlantic Alliance as a major threat. Vladimir Putin's rule

brought society to a state of permanent war with the West. Russia has militarized the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea and has probably deployed nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad and Crimea (Rybczyński, 2018). It withdrew from the treaty prohibiting the construction and deployment of medium-range INF rockets (Kokot, 2019). Russia also used chemical weapons on NATO territory for the murder of Russian intelligence agent Sergei Skripal (*Poisoning...*, 2018). Dutch investigators also found that a Malaysian MH-17 aircraft over Donbas was shot down by Russians (Dutch..., 2018). RF is continuously transforming its armed forces, especially its nuclear capabilities, and is deploying new military units with a high level of combat readiness and offensive capabilities near the borders with NATO. The newly acquired anti-access capabilities of the Russian Federation, whose aim is to prevent the arrival of essential forces strengthening the territory of the future hypothetical conflict, are particularly dangerous for NATO (Doran, 2018, p. 7). In conclusion, it can be said that Russia's breach of NATO agreements allows it to gain a strategic advantage, particularly in the Baltic Sea and Black Sea areas, from where it can unexpectedly conduct an offensive operation against the Alliance states.

### **Pros and Cons of Permanent American Bases in Poland**

It is believed that Poland should play a central role in NATO's deterrent strategy due to its geopolitical location and proximity to the borders with the Russian Federation. In addition, the expert assessment shows that the Baltic Sea region and Polish territory will be the theatre of future operational activities (Kaminski, 2019, p. 32). The assessments carried out indicate that Poland's ability to oppose the Russian Federation is insufficient and it is necessary to take into account the combat potential of the entire Alliance. It is considered those deterrent capabilities can complement permanently stationed U.S. troops in Poland, which will at the same time stabilise the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. It is estimated that such a decision will have a positive impact on the cohesion and security of the Alliance as a whole (Vershbow, 2019, p. 39). This is supported by both political and military arguments. Poland is a steadfast ally of the United States and is committed to developing common interests and values that are increasingly threatened by Russian interference. A permanent presence of American troops may shorten the significant time gap between the initial stage of the conflict and the arrival at the theatre of operational activities of NATO's main forces, especially in the event of a strike without the symptoms of such a strike (Vershbow, 2019, p. 39). Such a problem will occur even after the implementation of the idea of having a so-called Schengen military zone in Europe and the materialisation of concepts ready to be used within 30 days by 30 land battalions, 30 aircraft squadrons and 30 warships (Lesiecki, 2018). The deployment of American troops in Poland also has an important aspect of their strategic use. After all, the greatest challenges for NATO are related to the defence of the Baltic States and the defence of the so-called Suwałki Strip. The loss of the Isthmus will have strategic consequences and will force the Alliance to conduct military operations deep within its own territory (Hodges, 2018, p. 52). The strategy of such a defence must also assume

in advance the loss of the territory of the Baltic States, and perhaps even of Poland. Conducting an in-depth strategic defence does not give any guarantee of regaining the lost territory (Grygiel, 2014); therefore, the Polish territory should be crucial for the majority of efforts undertaken as part of collective defence (Vershbow, 2019, p. 39).

American bases in Poland provide extraordinary benefits for the strategic planners of the Pentagon in opposition to the Russian Federation. Moreover, American military investments in Poland will serve to increase security in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, which will have direct benefits for the entire Alliance. A sustainable infrastructure in Poland would bring enormous benefits to the United States and its Allies. The early deployment of weapons, equipment, equipment, and materials in the area of a future hypothetical conflict would avoid problems associated with the relocation of troops and the subsequent logistical securing of operations. The bases would significantly increase the mobility of troops, and the use of personnel and material resources would be made more efficient. This is not even about the U.S. bases alone, but about approaching more than 200,000 armies stationed in the Western Military District. This argument should determine that Fort Trump should be seen as a new strategic deterrent for the Russian Federation in the eastern NATO territory (Kaminski, 2019, p. 34 and 35). The measures taken by the U.S. would also give a clear signal to Russia that the Alliance takes Russian threats seriously and clearly communicate that any attempts to test and provoke may end up with a decisive response from the Alliance (Doran, 2018, p. 8).

It is very important that U.S. troops do not limit their presence to Polish territory, but also include the Baltic States. This would create a unique opportunity for joint training and exercises, and at the same time would increase the effectiveness of the operational integration of American troops with Polish, Lithuanian, German, and other NATO countries (Kaminski, 2019, p. 37). The United States should also consider the possibility of periodical divisional level exercises in various parts of the so-called eastern flank of NATO, in order to increase the readiness to assemble forces and operate in large formations, prepare to conduct combat operations independently in war conditions, which in essence would have a great deterrent potential, and on the other hand, would prepare NATO armed forces for a war waged on a large scale, just as the Russians do (Hodges, 2018, p. 53), during e.g. military exercises under the code name Wostok, conducted in 2018.

From NATO's point of view, Polish-American cooperation may bring serious benefits to the strengthening of the Alliance's defence in the east. U.S. troops will provide additional deterrent value in the region. Their freedom of movement within the Treaty territory will also have a positive impact on their ability to react in the required place and time, and their high mobility may have a positive impact on the guarantee of immediate activation and implementation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (Kaminski, 2019, p. 39).

The construction of American bases should also bring measurable benefits to Poland and other countries where investments will be made. It would be beneficial for both parties to help the host countries in planning and expanding their infrastructure in exchange for synchronizing the Pentagon's plans with local needs. All the investments made should have a dual-use, i.e., military and civilian. This includes infrastructure such

as U.S.-tailored railway stations, bridges and viaducts, airports and seaports, underground fibre-optic networks, fuel distribution networks and so on. It seems that now is a good time to coordinate the needs of the Pentagon with the planned investments within the framework of the so-called Triple Seas (Michalek, 2017) initiative being implemented.

Skeptics claim that the time for building bases in Poland is inappropriate and that political leaders who are in power in Warsaw should not be rewarded. This argument does not make sense, because, first of all, political considerations concerning Poland's internal affairs cannot take precedence over issues of Euro-Atlantic security, and secondly, all political parties support the idea of stationing American troops on Polish territory (Kofman, 2018).

Secondly, the relocation of the armed forces of other countries to Poland will require their permanent training, which will require the use of training ground facilities, shooting ranges, and numerous infrastructure, at least road infrastructure. Garrisons, after all, cannot be dormant and operational units remain passive. The point is that continuous training activities should have an impact on the high combat readiness of the armed forces and constitute a real combat potential against which the Russian Federation will feel respect, and this will require additional costs to be borne by Poland. The Polish government will have to express its readiness to meet further expectations of the U.S. side in order to achieve the intended strategic effects.

The permanent military presence is also opposed to those who claim that this will cause a spiral of tension in the East-West line. It cannot be ruled out that Russia will treat the actions of NATO or the U.S. side as a provocation and respond with an increased presence of assault measures close to the Alliance's borders and the targeting of more rockets, probably with nuclear warheads on Polish territory. However, in terms of the Russian Federation's violation of the security architecture based on democracy, the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the CFE Treaty and the Vienna documents, as well as the militarisation of the border with NATO and the threat of nuclear weapons, unilateral compliance by NATO with the agreements signed with Russia in 1997 are unfounded. All the more so as Russia is openly announcing an increased military presence in the Western Military District and announcing the construction of new military bases in the territory of Belarus (Doran, 2018, p. 11).

The argument of the loss of NATO's political cohesion in the event of undeniable defence benefits for the Alliance as a whole, which may be brought by U.S. troops based in Poland, is also not convincing. After all, the loss of cohesion has been discussed for a long time, which was particularly evident during the U.S. intervention in Iraq, as well as during the actions of the B. Obama administration, who gave the Allies the impression that Washington, without consultation, offers Russia only good deals for the U.S. (*An Open...*, 2009). At present, it is the Russian Federation that depends on disinformation and is seeking at all costs to divide the Allies and weaken NATO.

## Conclusions

Poland is a steadfast ally of the United States and is committed to developing common interests and values that are increasingly threatened by Russian interference. A permanent presence of the U.S. in Poland will certainly contribute to strengthening mutual cooperation in the political, military and economic fields. Taking into account the current distribution of troops and NATO military capabilities in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the U.S. heavy brigade group of fighters deployed in Poland on a rotating basis, it can be concluded that Russia has a significant strategic advantage resulting from the number and deployment of troops, by no means in relation to the Baltic States. At present, there is no indication that Russia is preparing an aggression against NATO, but in order to avoid surprises in the future, we should strive to mitigate the areas of vulnerability that exist, which is in the interests of the security of all the Allies. NATO has sufficient resources, personnel and equipment to increase conventional deterrence capabilities against Russia and to increase the cost of Moscow's potential riotous behaviour.

We should not think that Russia's attitude towards the Alliance will change. Russia will continue to use hybrid warfare and cyberspace to intimidate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and weaken NATO's determination to counteract it, at least in the foreseeable future. The conclusions of the study show that more decisive steps should be taken in the east of the area of treaty responsibility because it is necessary to have military capabilities that would stop Russia's aggressive inclinations. It must be recognised that an effective deterrent can be ensured by a permanent presence of U.S. troops. Permanently anchored military bases in the vicinity of the RF will lead to the elimination of strategic disparities in (geographical dimension and in terms of response time to threats) between the parties to the conflict and may be the guarantor of future security.

The assessments of the political and military situation indicate the need to make a final decision on the permanent stationing of American troops in Poland. It is believed that the benefits of such a deployment should be maximized in order to achieve the desired deterrent effect. It is also believed that locating permanent bases in Poland will bring undeniable benefits for NATO, the United States, and Poland. One could mention here, for example, the ability to react quickly in the region of Eastern Europe, synchronising action with Allies, improving interoperability and readiness to implement Article 5 of the Washington Treaty immediately, if necessary. The United States can significantly strengthen Europe and lower the uncertainty threshold before the unforeseeable accounts of the RF. It is estimated that a military presence will not weaken NATO's political cohesion, but it will give opportunities for peace and security in Europe.

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