

Original article

Political-military alliances in shaping the security of Poland in 1918-1939

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INFORMATIONS

Article history:

Submitted: 21 November 2019

Accepted: 18 March 2020

Published: 15 June 2020

ABSTRACT

Poland was forming allied relations in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century due to the state's weakness, mainly in military and economic terms. The Polish state's situation regarding political and military security guarantees on the part of other subjects of the international community was neither stable nor advantageous during that period. That was influenced, among others, by the following phenomena: changes in the international arena that were unfavorable for the Second Republic of Poland, diplomatic activities of Germany and the USSR aimed at revising the borders of the Polish state, political and military rapprochement between the USSR and Germany in the area of economic and military cooperation, conciliatory and ineffective international policy of the Western powers (mainly the French Republic) towards Germany in the late 1920s, impermanence and low effectiveness of bilateral agreements and declarations concluded by Poland with its eastern neighbor – the Soviet Union and its western neighbor – Germany, ineffectiveness of the political-military alliances concluded by Poland with France, Romania, and the United Kingdom, and significant disproportions between Polish and German and Soviet industrial and military potential, combined with the inability of the western powers to fulfil their allied obligations in practical terms.

KEYWORDS

international security, state security, political and military alliances, the Second Republic of Poland



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Introduction

Apart from the balance of power, collective security system, disarmament policy, or policy of non-involvement, a political-military alliance is a traditional way of shaping international security [1, p. 96]. Synonyms such as alliance, coalition, pact, and covenant related to the phrase “political-military alliance” used in the title are in everyday use. In fact, until recently, it was possible to use these terms interchangeably without making a significant mistake, for they meant the oldest principle, the canon of international politics, a method of creating

a favorable balance of power, and a political or political-military agreement of several states to cooperate against one or a group of states [2, p. 396; 3, p. 576].

In identifying the objectives of an alliance, it is imperative to be aware that it should be regarded as an instrument for implementing the international policy of the state(s). At the same time, its participants' specific common interest is expressed throughout the alliance. The interests of the alliance's members (participants) are primary concerning its objectives. In classical terms, the objective of an alliance is to strengthen the position and power of a state that assumes that its capabilities are too limited to achieve a successful outcome when confronted with a specific threat [4, p. 56; 5, p. 72-90].

An alliance can or does have many functions. Generally speaking, the most important ones are external – concerning the environment, and internal – about its participants. The first functions concern the real international order and are expressed in shaping and maintaining balance as well as stabilizing the international environment. The other ones refer to integration, which in the minimum constellation is to deter the allies from non-agreed actions in the field of external policy [6, p. 74 ff]. In overall reflection on alliances in the broadest sense of the term, some basic questions need to be answered. These are as follows: Why do countries form alliances? According to which rules do they select their allies? Why do allies last? Professor Bolesław Balcerowicz, one of the most eminent experts on the issue of international and national security, pointed out to several vital statements, namely: states form (and maintain) alliances against states that threaten them, states enter alliances with states that threaten them, states choose allies with similar ideology, international cooperation and assistance attract to the alliance [5, p. 57-8].

The extensive literature on the subject recognizes, among many others, three key reasons and rationale for creating and maintaining alliances:

- the conviction that the state cannot face the challenges and threats of unfavorable international agreements on its own, and that it will either get the chance or perpetuate the favorable status quo by entering an alliance,
- the mutual gravitation of potential allies towards each other – related goals or the compatibility of interests,
- a sufficient degree of political-military, economic, and cultural interdependence [See more: 7, p. 101-6; 8, p. 13-24].

The first and second premise – which is worth mentioning – had a very significant impact on the formation of the sphere of state security, while the alliances themselves were an instrument of the Second Republic's international policy. The work aims to outline the role and place of the political and military alliances concluded by Poland in shaping its security in the interwar period.

In the first half of the 20th century, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, the Republic of Poland entered alliance covenants because of its weakness. It mainly concerned the socio-economic and military dimensions against the background of its eastern and western neighborhoods, when the need to prevent the outbreak of conflict or to reduce threats became a requirement of that moment. In the Second Republic period, the choice of allies was the Polish authorities' autonomous decision. At the same time, the independence of choosing international alliances was different at that time. The balance of their activities, organizational forms (bilateral and multilateral), mechanisms of managing these structures, and the Polish

influence on their functioning differed as well [9, p. 53-4]. The most critical allied treaties, which became an *indispensable, most real and far-reaching factor of power and sovereignty, a guarantee of success in the great political, military or economic moves* [Cited after: 10, p. 125-6] of the Second Polish Republic, included mainly the Polish-French Allied Agreement of February 19, 1921 (February 21 – a secret military convention, and May 19, 1939 – allied guarantees); the Polish-Romanian Alliance of March 3, 1921, and the Allied Treaty with Great Britain of August 25, 1939¹.

1. Polish-French political-military alliance

France, which the Polish authorities perceived as a strategic partner, turned out to be the most important guarantor of Poland's territorial integrity while securing its strong position in the international arena throughout the inter-war period. The main warp of the Polish-French alliance was primarily a threat from Germany. For French diplomacy, this agreement was a continuation of a long-standing, traditional political line, according to which France should have a strong ally in the East that could check Germany [11, p. 81].

The fundamental political treaty was signed in Paris on February 19, 1921, by France's foreign minister Aristide Briand, and Poland's foreign minister Eustachy Sapiecha. The most important provisions of the Allied Agreement included cooperation in the field of foreign and economic policy (Articles 1 and 2). In the face of an unprovoked attack on any of the allies (Article 3), it was intended to undertake specific actions in defense of endangered interests or territories. The allies also declared that they would be duly consulted on joint agreements falling within the scope of their policy towards Central and Eastern Europe (Article 4) [9]. However, the agreement only took effect after the conclusion of specific economic deals. The analysis of this document, as it appears from the literature on the subject, *raises some doubts about whether security issues or rather economic problems were of paramount importance* [13, p. 74-5].

This agreement was complemented with a top-secret military convention [14, p. 206-8], which in its first three articles stated that *in the event of German aggression against one of the two countries, the two countries are equally obliged to support each other, according to a mutual agreement (...)* *If Poland is threatened by the Soviet Republic with war, or in the event of an attack by the latter, France undertakes to act both on land and at sea to ensure that Poland continues to be safe from Germany (...)* *and to help it defend itself against the*

¹ In the first years of its independent statehood, Poland also participated in allied negotiations with Ukraine (the Polish-Ukrainian Military Alliance of April 22, 1920) and the Union of Baltic States (the political agreement between Poland and the Baltic States of March 17, 1922). It should be pointed out that they were not a priority in shaping Polish security policy. As the researchers of that period emphasize, they turned out to be a phenomenon passing quickly and without much trace. More broadly about the Polish-Ukrainian Alliance and the Union of the Baltic States in, among others: M. Żyła. *Współpraca Polski z Ukraińską Republiką Ludową w okresie wojny z Rosją Radziecką*. Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Obrony Narodowej. 2009;3(76); S. Sajdak. *Polsko-ukraiński sojusz polityczno-wojskowy w 1920 roku*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM; 2005; H. Walczak. *Sojusze polityczno-wojskowe Polski w latach 1919-1926*. In: Wątor A, Walczak H, Sikorski T, Faryś J (eds.). *Z dziejów Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego US "Minerwa"; 2014; D. Semków-Chojko. *Sojusz Polski z państwami bałtyckimi – Litwą, Łotwą i Estonią w okresie międzywojennym*. *Historica*. 2010;6; J. Lubelski. *Związek Bałtycki i Trzecia Europa. Koncepcje reorganizacji Europy Środkowej w polityce zagranicznej II Rzeczypospolitej*. Nowa Europa. Przegląd Natoliński. 2010;1(9).

Soviet army [15, p. 88]. In Article 4, the Republic declared its readiness to introduce two years of military service and undertook to keep nine cavalry brigades, a minimum of thirty infantry divisions during peacetime, as well as dependence on its material and technical supplies and personnel levels, appropriate proportions of formations of the main and technical weapon reserves. The structural and organizational changes and modernization of the Polish Armed Forces were to be supported by the French ally through granting Poland a credit for military purposes in the amount of 400 million French francs (Article 5). Article 6 specified the coordination of cooperation on the military level to be handled by the General Staffs of both countries. The penultimate point of the agreement (Article 7) specifies the conditions for the establishment and operation of the French Military Mission in Poland, the creation of a Communications Office by the Polish authorities at the military attaché in Paris, and the sending of Polish command and staff officers and military engineering to France for education and training [16, p. 130 ff]. This Polish-French military alliance, like the political system, began to acquire legal power only after the conclusion of trade agreements, which were signed on February 6, 1922, along with conventions on the principles of the exploitation of Polish oil fields, property, and individuals [Cited after: 13, p. 75].

This alliance lasted almost until the mid-twenties without major misunderstandings, although it was not an alliance of two equal partners. Poland's leading political and military objective resulting from the alliance was based on deepening and clarifying mutual obligations, especially about strategic and operational planning and the development of command and staff cooperation. The Second Republic of Poland sought to give this alliance optimal effectiveness in the event of a threat from Germany or the Soviet Union. On the other hand, France tried to give the alliance an evident anti-German character and persuade the Polish side to direct its military policy, especially in case of conflict with Germany [17, p. 9 ff].

Nevertheless, the Polish-French Alliance was adversely affected by the Locarno Treaties of October 16, 1925, which confirmed the territorial status quo in Western Europe, leaving the Polish-German border open. The Locarno Agreements did not guarantee the inviolability of Polish territory. The dependence of the Polish-French agreement on the procedure of the League of Nations significantly limited France's ability to fulfill its allied obligations. There were even projects to revise the provisions of the Paris Military Convention of 1921, which among other things, aimed at moving away from clearly identifying Germany and the Soviet Union as potential enemies. After Locarno, France's position in Europe was severely weakened, while Germany's position was strengthened. They were then increasingly committed to achieving their goals through cooperation with the western states. The Polish-French alliance was therefore seriously weakened as the result of the Locarno Treaties, and a Franco-German diplomatic rapprochement took place [See more: 18, p. 160-5; 19, p. 411-2].

In the first half of the 1930s, Polish-French military relations remained so cold that even the signing of the Polish-German declaration of non-violence on January 26, 1934, *boiled down to an analysis of external forms only. Doubts could have been raised as to who Poland was in better relations with, the French or the Germans* [13, p. 76-7; 20, p. 196 ff]. Moreover, the allied mistrust between the two countries was deepened by events related to the unfavorable attitude of the Polish state towards the idea of creating the Pact of Four and the Pact of Collective Security in Central and Eastern Europe – called the Eastern Pact or even the adoption by France of the defensive war doctrine symbolized by the Maginot Line [See more: 21, p. 421-2; 22, p. 233-4].

The complicated political and military situation in the international arena in the second half of the 1930s, especially the Wehrmacht's entry into the militarized zone of the Rhineland on March 7, 1936 [23, p. 195-7], forced the renewal of the Polish-French alliance. The revitalization concerned allied obligations in the political and military sphere. Talks held in mid-August in Warsaw and early September 1936 in Paris on the command and staff level ended in a tangible effect. France was to grant Poland a financial loan of 2.5 billion French francs for the modernization and expansion of Polish industrial and military potential [24, p. 153-7]. It should be emphasized that these talks allowed for the resumption of military agencies' cooperation, but did not mean that France abandoned attempts to modify its alliance with Poland [25, p. 120 ff]. The change in France's attitude towards the Second Polish Republic took place only at the beginning of 1939, which was a consequence of France's deteriorating political and strategic position in the international arena at the end of 1938 and the beginning of 1939 [See more: 26, p. 69-70].

The conclusion of the Polish-British agreement on mutual guarantees on April 6, 1939, resulted in the renewal and clarification of the Polish-French alliance. On April 13, 1939, British guarantees were accepted by French governments, and a month later, on May 12, France and Poland signed a protocol specifying the allied obligations of both countries. The protocol obliged the Second Republic of Poland and the French Republic to *immediately provide all aid and support (...) against any direct or indirect threat to their vital interests* [11, p. 96]. On May 19 of the same year, another protocol was signed in Paris on the French armed forces' immediate assistance in the event of German aggression against Poland. The protocol stated that in such a case, *the French would take limited military action on land and in the air, and, from day 15 of the French mobilization, launch an offensive with the majority of their troops against the Germans* [27, p. 57-8]. The French side made the entry into force of the military protocol conditional on signing a political agreement, which was not concluded until September 4, 1939.

2. Polish-Romanian political-military alliance

For the Second Republic of Poland, the agreement with Romania was the most important political and military alliance – apart from the agreement with France. It was based on the political agreement, and the military convention on the resilient alliance between the Republic of Poland and the Kingdom of Romania signed on March 3, 1921, and later extended several times in the subsequent years [See more: 28, passim]. The main purpose of this alliance was mutual assistance in case of conflict with the eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union, *as well as the possibility of using transit through the territory of the Romanian state in case of military confrontation with Germany. For the Romanian state, the agreement with Poland was significant in the event of a threat to its eastern border and was one of the links in the broader arrangement of states in Central and Southern Europe, which it was constructing* [13, p. 79]. The political agreement was concluded in Bucharest by foreign ministers Fr Eustachy Sapiecha and Take Ionescu [29]. It was open and concerned the mutual assistance of both states *if one of them would be attacked on its current eastern borders without giving any reason* [11, p. 81]. More specifically, the document obliged both sides to assist each other in the event of an unprovoked attack from the east (i.e., from Soviet Russia), and to coordinate their eastern policies.

A secret military convention was a supplement to the political agreement, obliging the non-attacked state to announce immediate mobilization *in the event of a potential threat*

to an ally in any possible aggression from the east in conditions constituting *casus foederis* (§ 1), as well as in a situation related to the concentration of enemy forces *near the eastern borders of one of the contracting states* (§ 3) [See more: 16, p. 148-50; 30, p. 281-5]. The second and fourth paragraphs of the agreement specified the numbers of troops for defensive or offensive operations on the eastern front (*at least 14 normal-type infantry divisions*) or *four infantry regiments and two artillery regiments, or equivalent ones, or cavalry divisions*. What is more, they included the dates of concentration for defensive operations within the country (*Polish Armed Forces in 24 days, Romanian Armed Forces in 18 days*), and readiness for offensive operations outside its border or for possible regrouping (*Polish Armed Forces in 28 days, Romanian Armed Forces in 21 days*). The following points also addressed issues of command during joint military operations (§ 6), issues of inter-alliance communications (§ 7), coordination of services of broadly understood military logistics including administrative issues (§ 8), and cooperation procedures of allied General Staffs [13, p. 79; 30, p. 281-5]. The political and military alliance can be seen as a kind of compromise in the interpretation of the allied obligations by both countries.

In the following year, the issue of strengthening mutual relations became one of the main tasks of the political and military agencies of Poland. It became imperative to eliminate the inconsistency between the current military convention and the political system. The talks in this respect were finalized on September 16, 1922, during Józef Piłsudski's visit to Romania, when a new military convention was signed. In the modified text, one can find that *the obligation to mobilize the troops, which had not been attacked, was replaced by the obligation to take military action (...), and the staffs of both sides soon began to prepare operational studies on possible actions against Soviet Russia* [28, p. 70-1]. However, the attempts made in 1923-1924 to transform the bilateral agreement between Poland and Romania into a tri-lateral Polish-French-Romanian agreement in the event of a Polish-German conflict failed.

Another version of the allied agreement binding Poland and Romania was signed on March 26, 1926, by Józef Wielowieyski and Major General Stefan Majewski, Polish MP in Bucharest Romanian Foreign Minister Ion Duka and General Aleksander Lupescu. The political part was given the name "guarantee treaty" and the military convention – "arrangement techniques" [31; 32, p. 261-4]. The signatory states were obliged to defend each other against any external assault, while the agreement itself, in its form and content, referred to the "Locarno" Polish-French guarantee treaty and was linked to Article 16 of the League of Nations Pact. The military part of the agreement continued to provide for close cooperation in the event of an attack from the east, thus making the accession of the other party to the war in "*casus foederis*" conditions automatic and obliging it to participate in the conflict in a "real and active" manner. Moreover, from a military point of view, an essential element of the effectiveness of the guarantee covenant was the attached nine-point *additional memorandum to the Agreement*, which set out the objectives of joint work and plans and the scope of mutual assistance in the field of training and supply of the Armed Forces [32, p. 265-6]. The guarantee alliance was to last for the next five years.

The Polish-Romanian Agreement expired in mid-March 1931. The Republic of Poland was interested in extending it for another five years without any modifications. The Romanian side did not take an unambiguous stance on the continuation of inter-alliance cooperation, as the Romanian-German agreement was gaining more and more supporters. The growing German influence posed a severe threat to the Polish state, including the Polish-French

Alliance, while also using Romania as a tool of political blackmail, which could be used by Germany to resolve critical international issues [13, s. 81; 18, p. 209]. Finally, the guarantee treaty with the military convention was renewed, although this was not done simultaneously. On January 15, 1931, the political convention was extended, without any significant changes in the content of the allied obligations. In turn, the modified *arrangements techniques* were signed on June 30, 1931. They made reciprocal obligations more precise, providing, among other things, for the entry into the war in the event of an attack on the eastern border of one or both countries, even in the event of prior involvement in the fight against another enemy and in the case that the attacker was not the USSR. That aimed at granting the attacked partner facilitation in terms of supplies, transport, and transit [33]. The agreements concluded were to remain in force for five years, and would be automatically extended if they were not previously terminated.

In the years 1932-1936, the Polish-Romanian alliance experienced a crisis caused by the adverse reaction of Bucharest to the fact of the Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact of July 25, 1932, without taking account of the interests of the allies unable to take a similar step. Then gradual departure of Romania from the principles of the alliance concluded with Poland. However, the Munich Conference was followed by a firm conviction among Romanian society about the need to maintain and develop an alliance with Poland.

At this point, it should be stated that the Polish-Romanian Alliance, as the alliance agreement with France, did not pass the exam in September 1939. Along with economic dependence on the Third Reich, which was reflected in the trade agreement of March 23, 1939, the political and military dependence of the Romanian Republic proceeded quickly. Trying at all costs to maintain neutrality during the beginning of the military conflict between Poland and Hitler's Germany, it evaded the fulfillment of treaty obligations of the allies. Romania made a formal decision on this issue on September 6, 1939, however, accepting the transit through its territory of supplies of military equipment directed to Poland. On September 17, in the face of the aggression of the USSR, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck, on behalf of his government, released the Romanian side from its allied obligations, hoping to grant the right of transit to the chief authorities of the Republic of Poland going to the West [13, p. 82; 34, p. 21].

3. Polish-British military cooperation

The Polish-British political-military cooperation started after the procedures related to the Treaty of Versailles had been completed. It was developed during the 1920s and 1930s, but with several years of interruptions resulting from Polish and British foreign policy priorities. The Polish-British alliance did not occupy an important place in Polish international policy during the interwar period. That was because of the foreign policy interests of Great Britain concerning areas of the world other than Central Europe. Due to its rich traditions and achievements in the broadly understood imperial policy, Great Britain tried to control European issues through the prism of the French Republic's influence. France's attempt to take over dominance in any part of Europe led to an immediate British reaction in that region.

The development of Polish-British relations was not determined by bilateral relations, whose scope was insignificant but by the international situation. It directed the two main events, which started and ended the relationships between these countries in the interwar period,

namely, the recognition of the reborn Polish state by the British government [35, p. 14], and the Polish-British alliance. During that period, the Polish authorities were increasingly busy trying to win the United Kingdom as an allied power, and a gradual but slow process of growing interest in Polish affairs of British diplomacy [Cited after: 36, p. 73-4].

At the beginning of 1939, the Republic of Poland was very active in diplomatic efforts to sign a political-military agreement with Great Britain. The fiasco of the consensual policy of the Western powers concerning the activities of the Third Reich was of significant importance in this matter. The entry of the Wehrmacht into Prague on March 15, 1939, meant the complete liquidation of Czechoslovakian statehood and the end of the Munich era. From that moment on, Germany did not intend to carry out territorial annexations controlled by London and Paris, and Adolf Hitler was to decide on the next directions of aggression. Given that situation, the Western powers were forced to reorient their policy towards Germany and were determined to seek new solutions. One of them was to create new alliances that could stop the Third Reich from commencing a tremendous military conflict. At that time, Poland was in the center of their interest that resulted in the renewal of the already mentioned Polish-French relations at the beginning of 1936 [37, p. 26-7].

The readiness to cooperate was also declared by Great Britain when it began assembling an anti-German block of states with Poland's participation. First, on March 26, 1939, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain gave Poland official security guarantees, and then five days later he confirmed his position by speaking in Parliament. He stated that *in the event of any military action that might jeopardize Poland's independence and which the Polish government would deem necessary (...) to counteract with its national Armed Forces, His Majesty's government would feel obliged to provide the Polish government with immediate support that was in its power* [11, p. 96].

The official confirmation of the British commitments took place on April 6, 1939, during the Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck's visit to London. Mutual guarantees in case of aggression were announced. According to the protocol, both countries decided to replace the unilateral British guarantee with a permanent mutual obligation of cooperation and assistance. Additionally, secret clauses guaranteeing the conditions of cooperation until a formal treaty would be adopted were attached. Among other things, it was stated that the UK would undertake to assist Poland in the event of a direct German attack or *any action threatening Poland's independence and that the Polish government would consider it in its vital interest to oppose the Armed Forces* [36, p. 93]. The UK has also agreed to discuss the granting of a loan to Poland to purchase arms. At the same time, the need for British-Polish command and staff talks was established [38, p. 230-3].

On May 23, 1939, Polish-British staff talks began in Warsaw to demonstrate the value of political guarantees when translated into military ones. Unfortunately, they revealed that there were few possibilities to provide military assistance from the UK to Poland in case of war. London only sought to conduct survey talks, and the Polish side wanted binding arrangements and treated them with all seriousness. Representatives of the British delegation avoided talks on specific military obligations at all costs. The Polish side was particularly interested in British air assistance, including the RAF bombing of German military targets from French bases with stopovers at Polish airports. The British did not agree to those conditions but promised only general air assistance instead. Moreover, they decisively evaded the declaration of maritime operations [36, p. 91-2, 94]. The outcome of those negotiations was a declaration signed by

both countries on May 30, 1939. It stated that they would provide active military assistance to each other within two days of the outbreak of the war. Its scope was to be specified in further Polish-British consultations. Also, the issues of granting the Polish side a military loan for the armament of the Polish Armed Forces came to unfavorable ground in British financial circles. Nonetheless, London postponed its finalization while putting forward various formal, legal, material, and technical obstacles [37, p. 27-8].

The development of the political and military situation in mid-August 1939, mainly due to the failure of trilateral British-French-Soviet staff negotiations and the signing of the German-Soviet Pact, led the United Kingdom to conclude an alliance agreement with Poland. A formal agreement on mutual assistance was signed on August 25, 1939, in London by the British Foreign Minister Edward Halifax and the Polish Ambassador Edward Raczynski. The political alliance obliged the signatories, to *provide all possible help and support to the other party in case of aggression against one of them*². At the same time, it was accompanied by a secret protocol specifying the general formulation of the first document. That was particularly important to specify that the term aggressor should be understood as Germany, and the guarantees also apply to Germany's attempt to seize the *Free City of Danzig* [Cited after: 37, p. 31]. Due to the international situation, the British-Polish alliance entered into force immediately without the required ratification.

Conclusion

To summarize the above considerations, it should be pointed out that the Republic of Poland in the discussed period occupied a significant position in the Central European geostrategic area. This statement was supported by the fact that the most important communication routes of the European continent from west to east and, to some extent, from north to south ran through the territory of the Polish state. It is also worth mentioning that Poland's situation as regards guarantees of political and military security on the part of other subjects of international relations was not favorable nor even more stable.

Throughout the interwar period, the following phenomena affected Poland's position in the international arena:

- changes in the international arena that were disadvantageous for the Polish state (e.g., isolation of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics),
- diplomatic actions of Germany and the USSR aimed at reviewing the borders of the Polish state,
- political and military rapprochement between the USSR and Germany, which resulted in the development of economic and military cooperation (the Treaty of Rapallo of April 16, 1922),
- conciliatory and ineffective international policy of the Western powers (mainly the French Republic) towards Germany in the late 1920s,

² For the full text of the Pact see: H. Batowski. *Agonia pokoju i początek wojny (sierpień-wrzesień 1939)*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza; 1969, p. 182-4 oraz S. Stanisławska (ed.) *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej. Zbiór dokumentów*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe; 1965, p. 35-7.

- the impermanence and low effectiveness of bilateral agreements and declarations concluded by the Second Republic with its eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union (July 25, 1932) and its western neighbor, Germany (January 26, 1934),
- the ineffectiveness of the political-military alliances concluded by the Second Republic with France, Romania, and Great Britain,
- implementation of strategic political and military objectives by the Third Reich and the USSR towards and at the expense of Poland,
- significant disproportions between the Polish and German and Soviet industrial and military potential, combined with the inability of the Western allies to fulfil their allied obligations in practical terms³.

In the final reflection, we can point out that the Western powers treated the Polish state at that time economically since they did not intend to engage in military operations in case of German aggression on the Polish side. As Lech Wyszczelski states: *the true intentions of those countries were evidenced by the findings of the secret British-French talks held in the early spring of 1939. (...) it was agreed, among other things, that the alliance with Poland had limited strategic value because of its small military potential (...) it meant a declaration of not giving effective military assistance to Poland in case of the German attack on it. It seems evident that these were strictly secret arrangements because official offers were made to Warsaw to ensure support and help* [37, p. 27].

The actual position of the Western allies in the context of the September-October 1939 Polish-German conflict was determined at the meeting of the Supreme International War Council in Abbeville on September 12, 1939. The attack on the Siegfried line was ruled out, a defensive strategy was adopted, and the offensive against Germany was ceased. The decisions of the Abbeville Supreme International War Council marked the end of the Second Republic's alliance with the French Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland [27, p. 72-3].

Acknowledgement

No acknowledgement and potential founding was reported by the author.

Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

³ The description of those phenomena was based on Professor Dariusz Kozerański's publication *Polskie planowanie strategiczne przeciw Niemcom przed II wojną światową*. In: A. Peptowski, A. Szymanowicz (eds.). *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. Wrocław: Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Lądowych im. generała T. Kościuszki; 2010, p. 421-2.

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Sojusze polityczno-militarne w kształtowaniu bezpieczeństwa Polski w latach 1918-1939

STRESZCZENIE

W latach dwudziestych i trzydziestych XX wieku Polska zawierała związki sojusznicze z powodu słabości państwa, przede wszystkim w wymiarze militarnym i ekonomicznym. Sytuacja państwa polskiego pod względem gwarancji bezpieczeństwa polityczno-militarnego ze strony innych podmiotów społeczności międzynarodowej w tym okresie nie była ani stabilna ani korzystna. Wpływ na to miały między innymi następujące zjawiska: niekorzystne dla II Rzeczypospolitej zmiany na arenie międzynarodowej; działania dyplomatyczne Niemiec i ZSRR zmierzające do rewizji granic państwa polskiego; zbliżenie polityczno-militarne ZSRR i Niemiec w dziedzinie współpracy ekonomiczno-militarnej; ugodowa i nieskuteczna polityka międzynarodowa mocarstw zachodnich (głównie Republiki Francuskiej) względem Niemiec pod koniec lat dwudziestych XX wieku; nietrwałość oraz mała skuteczność umów i deklaracji bilateralnych zawartych przez Polskę z sąsiadem wschodnim – Związkiem Radzieckim oraz sąsiadem zachodnim – Niemcami; nieskuteczność zawartych przez Polskę sojuszy polityczno-wojskowych z Francją, Rumunią i Wielką Brytanią oraz znaczące dysproporcje między polskim a niemieckim i radzieckim potencjałem przemysłowo-militarnym, połączone z brakiem możliwości wypełnienia zobowiązań sojuszniczych w wymiarze praktycznym ze strony mocarstw zachodnich.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe, bezpieczeństwo państwa, sojusze polityczno-militarne, Druga Rzeczypospolita

How to cite this paper

Cutter Z. *Political-military alliances in shaping the security of Poland in 1918-1939*. Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces. 2020;52;2(196):245-57.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.2530>



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