

Original article

## Possibilities of using the Polish Armed Forces in non-military crises in the aspect of changes in the command and control system

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### INFORMATION

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### ABSTRACT

In the past, the main task of the Armed Forces was primarily to ensure military security in terms of defense of independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the state. However, nowadays, in the national and international dimension, their scope of tasks has been expanded to include projects in the field of supporting public administration bodies and society in crisis situations. That is due to the fact that the Armed Forces have unique, unprecedented in other response forces, opportunities to take effective action in the event of various crises. Thus, they have become an important enhancement of the crisis management system and civil protection. They can often constitute the main element of support for public administration bodies (central and local government) in solving emerging crisis situations. An important factor in the effectiveness of their actions in helping the society is the so-called crisis management system in the Ministry of National Defense. The structure of this system is closely related to the functioning control and command system.

### KEYWORDS

crisis management, civil protection, crisis situation, armed forces, command and control system



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## Introduction

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were many crisis situations, both the results of the forces of nature and human activity as dangerous effects of the progress of civilization. The experience of the past years shows that there is invariably a high probability of a crisis situation arising from new, often unpredictable challenges and threats. The nature of these threats to the security of the population indicates the need to identify their sources as early as possible, to take preventive measures and react efficiently. The awareness of the risk of emergence of crisis situations as a state posing a threat to the population means that a state striving for the security of its citizens should have a system that is able to counteract them and react effectively. In Poland, such a system – capable of effectively preventing the possibility

of various life-threatening crisis situations and human health – is a crisis management system. Its structure is based on the activities of central and local government authorities, as an element managing the system, and the forces and resources that the state allocates in this respect, as an executive element of the system. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, which often constitute the main pillar of solving a crisis situation, can be a significant and unquestionable support in the implementation of tasks in the field of crisis management.

In the past, their main task was primarily to ensure security in terms of protecting the vital interests of the state. At present, however, we can observe a much wider range of tasks assigned to the Armed Forces. In a situation where the remaining forces and resources are insufficient to deal with a difficult emergency, the authority may apply for support from the armed forces in saving lives and population health or securing critical infrastructure.

Therefore, the main objective of the research was to: identify the possibility of military support in non-military crises and assess the impact of changes in the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces on the organization of their crisis management activities.

The main research problem, for the purposes of the conducted research, was expressed in the form of the question: *What are the needs and possibilities of the Polish Armed Forces' support for the authorities and society in the field of crisis management and what is the organization of such support after changing the command and control system?*

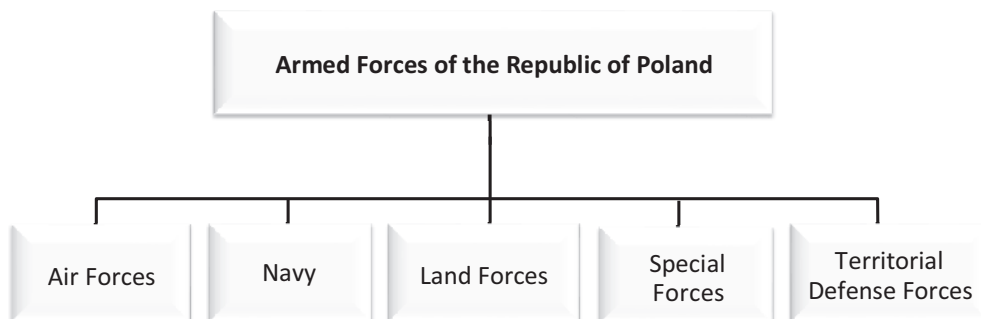
The Armed Forces can be an important, undisputed element of support in solving non-military crisis situations due to the level of training they have, and their specialized equipment and principles of operation. They can often constitute a valuable and effective potential to support public administration bodies (central and local government) in the effective resolution of the emerging crises. The establishment of the Territorial Defense Forces in recent years creates even greater possibilities of support in the field of effective and quick resolution of non-military crisis situations. Newly formed troops are “tied” to a given territory (have areas of responsibility), function within the local population, and are in close relationship with local authorities.

It should be noted, however, that the participation of the Polish Armed Forces (especially operational troops) in solving crises should take place only when the remaining forces and resources are used or prove to be insufficient. The organization of such support is based on the principles set out in legal acts and solutions functioning in the Polish Armed Forces. Military support for civil authorities and society in non-military crisis situations should ensure effectiveness, efficiency, economy, reliability, and rationality of the actions taken.

## **Internal function of the Polish Armed Forces**

The Armed Forces are a specialized organ of the state, intended to protect and defend mainly its vital interests (independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity) by using its deterrent factor against aggression, or, if necessary, to conduct armed struggle until the assumed political goal is achieved [Cf. 1, p. 115]. They constitute the largest, best-organized, and fundamental part of the state organization, the high efficiency of which determines the stability and strength of the state, its sovereignty, and ensuring national and international security. In other terms, the Armed Forces are treated as forces and resources allocated by the state to protect its interests and waging armed struggle, included in an organizational whole, consisting of military units and associations of various types and sizes. Organization, equipment,

and the efficiency of the Armed Forces constitute one of the main determinants of a state's strength, often decisive for its importance and position in international relations. The Armed Forces are the largest and best organized, fundamental part of the state organization. The Polish Armed Forces include, as their branches (Fig. 1): Land Forces, Air Forces, Navy, Special Forces, and Territorial Defense Forces.



**Fig. 1.** Branches of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland

*Source: Own study.*

The structure, composition, dislocation, and equipment of the Polish Armed Forces should follow the nature and specificity of their assigned missions and the need to ensure appropriate operational capabilities. They must enable the implementation of tasks in times of peace, crisis, and war. Even though the division of the Polish Armed Forces into operational and support forces [2, p. 357-75] has not been so expressive recently in the subject literature, it has its justification since we can distinguish operational troops as forces and means of branches of the Armed Forces prepared to conduct joint operations in the country and beyond its territory, within the structures of the Alliance, and within other international security organizations as well as ad hoc coalitions. Support troops are mainly intended to strengthen the activities of operational troops and perform tasks mainly in the territory of the country in cooperation with non-military elements of the national defense system. They include the emerging territorial defense units, the Military Police, military administration bodies and stationary logistics units, stationary medical and other security facilities in a stationary system.

The missions of the Polish Armed Forces are determined by the national interest, the situation of the international security environment, the nature of threats and the function imposed on them in the national security system, as well as Poland's obligations towards the EU and NATO [3, p. 18]. By analyzing the main legal regulations relating to the mission and tasks of the Polish Armed Forces, three basic groups of tasks can be defined, which include, respectively [Based on: 4-7]:

- constant maintenance of the state's ability to ensure independence and the indivisibility of its territory and maintaining readiness to resist aggression as part of allied obligations,
- participation in international stabilization operations as well as crisis and humanitarian response,
- supporting internal security and helping the society in crisis situations when other forces and resources of the state are insufficient.

Security nowadays cannot just be a national issue, the need exists for a global approach to the problem and effective national security systems can be built on the pillars of the international security system. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, in the security policy adopted by our country, constitute its essential tool, both nationally and internationally. The key to understanding their place and role is proper recognition and understanding of the relations that exist between politics and its tools. Politics uses certain means and many instruments to achieve its goals. Three of them should be considered the most important, namely [8, p. 26-7]: *diplomatic means with diplomacy, economic means, and military means*<sup>1</sup>.

Individual political means are assigned different roles and functions depending on the known theories of international relations. As regards tools of military means, throughout history they have always been of primary importance in terms of impact on external (international relations) and internal (political and social relations) relationships. Therefore, the basic functions of the Armed Forces include the internal function and the external function [Cf. 9, p. 85-7].

The external function of the Polish Armed Forces should be perceived through the prism of the state's ability to ensure the security of own country and active participation in shaping international security. Our country's Armed Forces should be able to participate in NATO and EU crisis response operations of various types (e.g., anti-terrorist, stabilization, or humanitarian ones).

The internal function of the Polish Armed Forces is mainly expressed in maintaining the ability to support state bodies in ensuring internal security of Poland and providing necessary military assistance to competent institutions and governmental and local authorities, civil organizations, and the public in responding to various types of threats. As part of the internal function of the Polish Armed Forces, they provide support to the public and authorities in difficult crisis situations.

## The essence of a non-military crisis

When looking for the essence of a non-military crisis situation, it is worth referring to the content of crisis management and civil protection. In the light of the existing legal regulations, crisis management is interpreted as the activity of public administration bodies, i.e., an element of national security management that consists in preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control over them through planned actions, responding in the event of crisis situations, removing their effects, and recovery of resources and critical infrastructure [10, Art. 2]. The essence of civil protection is activities aimed, in particular, at reducing the risk of possible threats to human life and health (prophylaxis and prevention), and when they occur, efficient response, which should be manifested by effective protection. The issues of crisis management are very often intertwined with issues in the field of civil protection, rescue, public safety, social security, and national defense. The common denominator of all these security areas is threats and the possible emergence of a crisis as a threat to people, critical infrastructure, and the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> In the theory of the state's foreign policy, the "typical" set of measures (and methods) of national policy includes political (also diplomatic means of settling disputes), economic, military, cultural-ideological, and other measures (intelligence, state's participation in comprehensive peacekeeping operations). Cf. J. Zając. *Środki i metody polityki zagranicznej państwa*. In: R. Zięba (ed.). *Wstęp do teorii polityki zagranicznej państwa*. Toruń: Wydaw. Adam Marszałek; 2004, p. 79-99.

The interpretation of a crisis situation for the purposes of crisis management is determined, among others, in an essential document in this respect – the Act *on Crisis Management* on April 26, 2007. The definition of a crisis contained therein aroused a lot of controversy, which was a serious argument forcing the amendment to the Act, which ended in July 2009. According to the new interpretation, a crisis is a condition that adversely affects the level of safety of people, property to a large extent, or the environment, thereby causing serious restrictions in the operation of competent public administration bodies due to the inadequacy of the resources and measures available [11, Art. 3].

After less than two years of functioning of the Act on *crisis management*, it was amended in 2009. Such action could be considered right to eliminate controversial provisions, and at the same time, through a statutory interpretation, improve the crisis management system as such an important element of national security. However, the question remains: is it not worth taking advantage of the achievements of scientists dealing with this problem on this occasion? In the subject literature, there are many interesting solutions in this regard, e.g., defining crisis situations. In many publications, the interpretation of crisis situations does not arouse much controversy – it is emphasized that a crisis occurs when such threats (internal or external) appear, which may disrupt the basic characteristics of a given organization, limit the conditions of its functioning, and thus, through it, favor the loss of the ability to develop and even survive [12, p. 31]. In this sense, a crisis is a consequence of existing and emerging threats. However, as long as the level of these threats does not disturb the normal functioning of a given entity (does not limit it), there is no crisis. It follows that crisis situations are subjective, depending on the level of threats accepted by a given entity. In general, it can be assumed that we will deal with a crisis when:

- the level of threats accepted by a given entity is exceeded and they will escalate (build up, increase) – often there is a loss of control over the course of events,
- a failure to act (react) may lead to a crisis as the culminating element of a crisis and, consequently, even disorganization of a given system,
- solving a crisis situation requires special actions and often additional expenditure of forces and resources.

Summing up, it can be assumed that we will deal with a crisis when, in the effect of threats, circumstances (factors), the balance of functioning is disturbed, often control over the development of the situation is lost, and an unacceptable level of threat to the basic values, interests, and goals of the entity in question emerges. All that triggers the need for extraordinary measures to restore balance [Cf. 13, p. 38].

In the subject literature, threats are often indicated as the only source of crisis situations, and yet a crisis may arise in consequence of emerging challenges or weaknesses that a given entity cannot cope with. Another question that may appear is the interpretation of a crisis situation as only the period preceding the introduction of the state of emergency. Will such a situation – as a source of the introduction of the state of emergency – be a crisis? Maybe it should be that the introduced state of natural disaster or the state of emergency are to be a tool of a given entity (e.g., state) to solve a crisis situation (crisis). Therefore, the state of the art requiring extraordinary measures will undoubtedly be a crisis.

The conducted research shows that various criteria can be used to define the type of a crisis. The subjective, objective, spatial, and scope ones are the most popular (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Division of non-military crisis situations

Non-military crisis situations			
subjective	objective	spatial	scope
individual	ecological	indigenous	in the aspect of survival
local	natural	local	
national	technical	sub-regional	in the aspect of development possibilities
international	hybrid	regional	
global	others	global	

Source: Developed based on: [13, p. 40].

The first group in the proposed division of possible crisis situations are situations with respect to the subject. It is possible to distinguish a crisis of an individual (human), a selected group of people (e.g., environmental), a nation (state), several states, or a global crisis situation.

Another group of possible crises can be defined in relation to the subject (what the crisis situations refer to and what the source of their emergence was). Here one can distinguish ecological and natural crises that arise in the result of phenomena occurring in nature (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.). Subsequent situations are related to the civilizational development and the emergence of technical and technological threats (all kinds of technical failures, construction and communication disasters, etc.). Nowadays, a crucial group of crisis situations related to hybrid threats as a combination of many forms of hazards leading to the emergence of dangerous crisis situations. The next criterion for the division of crisis situations is the area of the impact of threats and imbalance in functioning, here it is possible to identify local, local, regional, and global crisis situations. The last criterion for the division is the scope of impact. One can talk about crisis situations in relation to the threat to the basic interests of the entity (disturbing the balance of its functioning), as well as those that may limit the possibility of free development.

The unpredictability and indeterminacy of contemporary threats make that the reality surrounding us abounds in numerous situations that disturb everyday life, and therefore require taking appropriate actions to restore the state of balance in functioning.

## Conditions and possibilities of support by the Polish Armed Forces

There is no single act in the national legal system that would transparently and comprehensively cover the tasks related to the use of Armed Forces in crisis situations. The possibility of supporting the society and public administration bodies by the Polish Armed Forces in the event of a threat and emergence of a crisis situation results from many scattered legal acts<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Among others, the Acts that contain the tasks of the Polish Armed Forces in the field of supporting the society and authorities in non-military crisis situations: the Act of 21 November 1967 on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland (as amended) [Ustawa z 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Dz. U. 2004 Nr 241, poz. 2416 z późn. zm.)]; the Act of April 26, 2007 on crisis management (as amended) [Ustawa z 26 kwietnia 2007 r. o zarządzaniu kryzysowym (Dz. U. 2007 Nr 89, poz. 590 z późn. zm.)]; the Act of April 18, 2002 on the state of natural disaster (as amended)

specifying tasks for military forces. The areas of support and tasks have been defined in laws, regulations, and strategies, as well as in the documents of the Ministry of National Defense (orders, decisions of the Minister of National Defense and orders of the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces).

In accordance with the legal order in force in Poland, specialized units and sub-units of the Polish Armed Forces can be used both to support public administration bodies in crisis situations resulting from the occurrence of non-military threats in the country and abroad. In the event of crises, planning the use of the Polish Armed Forces units is an extremely difficult process due to the unpredictability of the situation, the multitude of factors affecting the direction of crisis development, and the limitations resulting from the legal status, or the availability of measures and resources. The use of the Armed Forces may stem from the Crisis Management Plan of the Ministry of National Defense or from ad hoc needs defined in the applications of local authorities to the Minister of National Defense. When developing the Crisis Management Plan, the Armed Forces attempt to respond to the needs of joint response to threats included in the Report on National Security Threats and in relation to the tasks defined in various legal acts relating to this matter.

As already presented, the basic legal act defining the tasks that can be performed by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in support of the society and public administration bodies is the Act on the *universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland* [5, Art. 3 (2)]. In turn, the Act on crisis management [11, Art. 25 (3)] defines the basic areas of support and tasks for the Polish Armed Forces in the field of crisis management. According to its provisions, units of the armed forces may participate in the implementation of crisis management tasks, according to their specialist preparation, in accordance with the voivodeship crisis management plan. The tasks referred to above include [11, Art. 25 (3)]:

- participation in the monitoring of threats,
- carrying out tasks related to the assessment of the effects of phenomena occurring in the area of hazards,
- performing search and rescue tasks,
- evacuating the injured population and property,
- performing tasks aimed at preparing conditions for the temporary presence of the evacuated population in designated places,
- participation in the protection of property left in the zone of threats,
- isolating the area where threats occur or the place of rescue operations,
- providing security, rescue, and evacuation works at endangered buildings and monuments,
- carrying out works requiring the use of specialized technical equipment or explosives in the resources of the Polish Armed Forces,
- removal of hazardous materials and their neutralization using the forces and resources of the Polish Armed Forces,

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[Ustawa z 18 kwietnia 2002 r. o stanie klęski żywiołowej (Dz. U. 2002 Nr 62, poz. 558 z późn. zm.); the Act of June 21, 2002 on the state of emergency (as amended) [Ustawa z 21 czerwca 2002 r. o stanie wyjątkowym (Dz. U. 2002 Nr 113, poz. 985 z późn. zm.); the Act of April 6, 1990 on the Police (as amended) [Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 r. o Policji (Dz. U. 1990 Nr 30, poz. 179)].

- elimination of chemical contamination as well as biological contamination and infections,
- removal of radioactive contamination,
- performing tasks related to the repair and reconstruction of technical infrastructure,
- participation in ensuring the passability of communication routes,
- providing medical assistance and performing sanitary, hygienic, and anti-epidemics tasks.

During a state of natural disaster, if the use of other forces and means is impossible or insufficient, the Minister of National Defense may delegate at the disposal of the voivode in whose area of operation there is a natural disaster, subunits or units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, together with assigning them to perform tasks related to the prevention of the effects of a natural disaster or their removal [14, Art. 18 (1)]. Then, the Council of Ministers, by way of an ordinance, will define detailed rules for the participation of subunits and divisions of the Polish Armed Forces in preventing or removing the effects of a natural disaster, taking into account [14, Art. 18 (3)]:

- types of rescue or preventive actions in which subunits and units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland may participate,
- how to coordinate and command their activities,
- a way to provide them with logistic security.

During the state of emergency [15, Art. 11], the President of the Republic may decide on the use of units and subunits of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland to restore the normal functioning of the state, if the forces and resources used so far have been exhausted.

It is worth emphasizing that the Polish Armed Forces may support the state authorities and society, but only in the case of insufficient remaining forces and measures at the disposal of the state in the field of security and public order. Another caveat is that the priority is defense tasks and allied obligations. In addition, the principle should be observed that units of the Armed Forces perform their tasks in accordance with their specialized preparation, equipment and executive capabilities, and remain in the organizational structure and command system of the Polish Armed Forces. Such activities may be carried out by individual units independently or jointly with other armed formations and services.

### **Changes in the command and command system of the Polish Armed Forces in terms of military support in non-military crises**

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland have appropriate structures and equipment necessary to carry out their tasks. Thus, they have capability of supporting state bodies in ensuring security and provide necessary military assistance to competent institutions and governmental and local authorities, as well as civil organizations and society in responding to various types of threats. The efficiency and effectiveness of their operation largely depends on the command and control process.

In recent years, the Armed Forces in Poland have been going through a dynamic process of adapting to new challenges and threats. That manifests itself primarily in the professionalism



of the Armed Forces, the creation of the Territorial Defense Forces, greater saturation with new technologies, including IT, increased security capabilities in cyberspace, higher mobility, and an increase in the number of forces. The changes have also affected the command and control system in the Polish Armed Forces, which, in turn, translates into changes in the organization of military support in crisis situations.

Until the end of 2013, the following main elements were in use at the Ministry of National Defense and the Polish Armed Forces in the field of crisis management and the possibility of implementing tasks in the course of solving non-military crisis situations: the decision-maker, the Crisis Management Team of the Ministry of National Defense (ZZK MON), a separate Crisis Management Center of the Ministry of National Defense (CZK MON), as well as the forces and resources provided directly for the implementation of the necessary tasks. As for the decision-maker, it was the Minister of National Defense, who carried out tasks in the field of supporting the society in non-military crisis situations based on applicable legal acts. There was also a Crisis Management Team of the Ministry of National Defense, which supported the Minister in the proper implementation of tasks in this field. It is worth noting that at that time there was an independent unit in the form of CZK MON, established by the decision No. 245/MON of the Minister of National Defense of July 7, 2010, *on the establishment of the Crisis Management Center of the Ministry of National Defense in the implementation of the delegation of the Act on crisis management*<sup>3</sup>. It was a separate organizational unit reporting directly to the Minister of National Defense. The Crisis Management Center of the Ministry of National Defense maintained its readiness to implement the tasks provided for in the Act on crisis management. The tasks performed by the Center, apart from those listed in the aforementioned Act, also included planning and coordinating the use of forces and resources of the Ministry of National Defense assigned to support the non-military system in a crisis situation, participation in civil planning in the national system, and ensuring the participation of the Ministry of National Defense in civil planning of NATO and the European Union in the field of crisis management, analysis, and assessment of the possibility of non-military threats, cooperation with government administration bodies in the field of recognizing, counteracting, and combating terrorist threats, launching, monitoring, and coordinating crisis management tasks carried out by the Ministry of National Defense, participating in organizing training projects in the field of crisis management, and providing services to the Crisis Management Team at the Ministry of Defense National in terms of content and organization [16, p. 67-9; 17, p. 93-7].

The process of activating the units of the Polish Armed Forces to support public administration bodies included an analysis of the request of the authority (voivode) in terms of the legitimacy and possibilities of support by the Polish Armed Forces. The decision about the need to create such a group was made by the Minister of National Defense, who forwarded the decision to the Chief of the General Staff. Under a positive decision of the Ministry of National Defense, the Chief of the General Staff obliged (gave an order) the commanders of individual branches of Armed Forces to deploy the necessary forces and funds from subordinate units to support the response to the crisis situation. The so-called Military Task Force over which

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<sup>3</sup> "Ministers and central bodies of government administration, whose scope of activities include matters related to ensuring national security, including protection of the population or economic foundations of state security, establish crisis management centers". The Act of April 26, 2007, on crisis management..., op. cit., Art. 13 (1).

the Operational Command of the Armed Forces took over command for the duration of the tasks, was formed. Supporters of this solution considered the functioning of the CZK MON as valuable, as it carried out military support tasks in non-military situations, but also fulfilled many functions resulting from NATO and EU crisis management [Based on: 16, p. 69-74].

Changes introduced to the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces [18] in 2014 obviously influenced the shape of the crisis management system of the Ministry of National Defense. The liquidation of the headquarters of the branches of Armed Forces with the simultaneous creation of two commands forced the necessity to change the departmental crisis management system and the method of activating the Armed Forces units to solve crisis situations. The reduction of equal commanders and the introduction of a new direction of thinking in the field of command and control of the Polish Armed Forces simplified relations with the non-military system. Out of existing partners of the Armed Forces only the General Command of Branches of Armed Forces and the Operational Command of Branches of Armed Forces remained to cooperate with the non-military system [18, Art. 3 (3a)]. At the same time, a new dimension of perception of how to launch the Polish Armed Forces to support a non-military system was introduced<sup>4</sup>. The new solution provided for the potential of the Polish Armed Forces to be used in crisis situations to be defined in the Crisis Management Plan of the Ministry of National Defense. The Provincial Military Staff (WSzW) has detailed arrangements regarding the possibility of military support for individual provinces. Thus, the voivodes have an element of the Polish Armed Forces<sup>5</sup> that participates in the meetings of the Voivodship Crisis Management Team [10]. The Head of the WSzW has full information on the available forces and resources to be used in the province as well as in the neighboring provinces. In the event of a crisis, they can directly exchange information with the Operational Command of the Armed Forces, which significantly shortens the decision-making process, and thus the time to allocate forces and resources to support the region in a crisis [Based on: 16, p. 76-8].

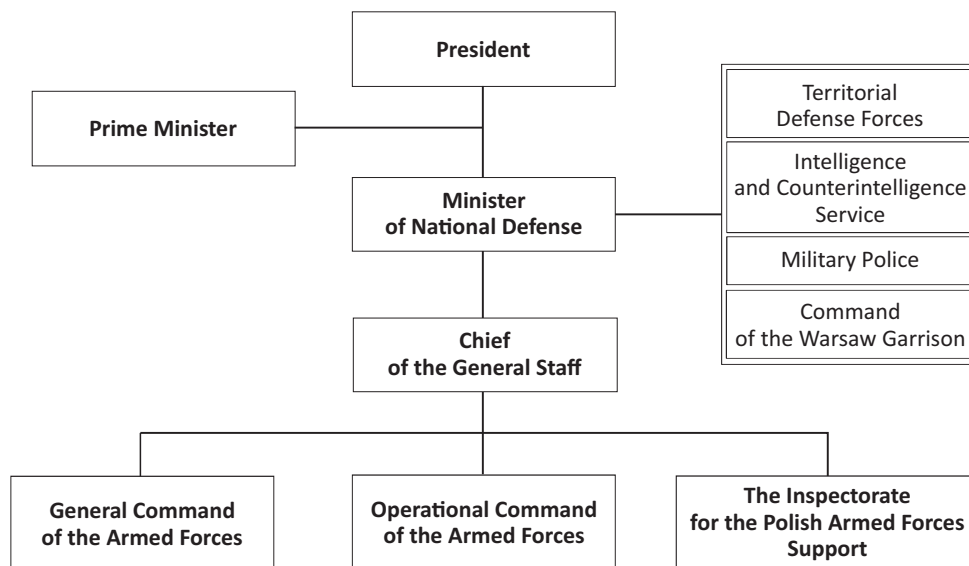
Subsequent changes to the command and control system that took place in 2018 also regarded the organization of the crisis management system of the Ministry of National Defense. It is true that these changes were not as drastic as in previous years, but now the system also requires refinement in several issues, such as the process of involvement of the Territorial Defense Forces. Currently, the Minister of National Defense manages the activities of the Ministry and the Polish Armed Forces with the help of the secretaries and undersecretaries of state, the General Director and the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, and the Commander of the Territorial Defense Forces. The following are directly subordinate to the Minister of National Defense: the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service, the Territorial Defense Forces, and the Military Police (Fig. 2).

The current structure of the command and control system established broader competences of the Chief of General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. According to the law, he became

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<sup>4</sup> The process of activating the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland took place in the Operational Command of the Armed Forces (DO RSZ) as the Crisis Management Center of the Ministry of National Defense as follows: after the voivode's request was submitted to the Minister of National Defense (which at the same time was addressed to the Duty Operational Service or such information was provided by the Head of the WSzW). This was followed by confirmation of the received message, notification of key people from the Command, and activation of the Emergency Response Team.

<sup>5</sup> The Head of the Provincial Military Staff.



**Fig. 2.** The general structure of the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces  
 Source: Own study based on: [19, p. 15-8].

the supreme commander in the Armed Forces. The introduced changes provide for the subordination of the general commander and operational commander of the Armed Forces, as well as the Chief of the Inspectorate for the Polish Armed Forces Support to the Chief of the General Staff.

Law provisions state that the Minister of National Defense manages the Ministry of National Defense, including, in particular, the entirety of the activities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, also in terms of their participation in crisis situations. He/She is part of the Council of Ministers, which is responsible for the security of the state and citizens in times of peace and crisis. Moreover, pursuant to the Act on crisis management, the Minister of National Defense is a permanent member of the Government Crisis Management Team<sup>6</sup>, simultaneously serving as the deputy chairman. Bearing in mind the responsibility of the Minister of National Defense for the preparation of proposals for the use of the Polish Armed Forces and coordinating the activities of the necessary forces and resources in crisis situations in the national and international dimension, the following structure of functional elements in the field of civil protection was adopted: *the Minister of National Defense, a crisis management team of the Ministry of National Defense, crisis management center of the Ministry of National Defense/operational command, response groups and operational groups, operational teams.*

<sup>6</sup> As a member of the Government Crisis Management Team, he/she is obliged, inter alia, to prepare proposals for the use of forces and resources necessary to deal with crisis situations; advising on the coordination of activities of government administration bodies, state institutions and services in crisis situations; issuing opinions on final reports on actions taken in connection with crisis management; expressing opinions on the needs in terms of restoring infrastructure or restoring its original character; giving opinions on and submitting the National Crisis Management Plan to the Council of Ministers. Based on: the Act of April 26, 2007, on crisis management..., op. cit., Art. 9.

The Minister of National Defense is the decision maker in initiating participation and coordinating the activities of the Polish Armed Forces in the field of providing aid to the aggrieved population. For the purposes of efficient management and effective implementation of crisis management tasks in the Ministry of National Defense, the Minister of National Defense, by issuing a relevant ordinance [See: 20], appoints a Crisis Management Team at the Ministry of National Defense. The main purpose of the team is to perform an advisory and opinion-making function in solving crisis situations. The team supports the Minister in making decisions on the legitimacy, possibilities, and appropriate concepts of engaging units of the Polish Armed Forces in activities supporting civil authorities and society in crisis situations.

The composition of the Crisis Management Team of the Ministry of National Defense is presented in Figure 3 [20, § 2(1)]:



**Fig. 3.** Crisis Management Team of the Ministry of National Defense

Source: Own study based on: [20].

The organizational unit responsible for analyzing and assessing risk as well as planning and coordinating the use of units of the Polish Armed Forces in situations of non-military crisis threats is currently the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces, which acts as a crisis management center of the Ministry of National Defense in terms of the Act on Crisis Management [10, Art. 13].

There remains the issue of the possibility of involving units of the Territorial Defense Forces in supporting the injured population and participating in solving crisis situations. The established TDF have areas of responsibility, operate on a daily basis within the local population, and cooperate with local authorities. They know the area, its infrastructure (including elements of critical infrastructure), and the people living there. It is easier for them to assess the risk of a threat and possible consequences. There is no doubt that territorial troops are a valuable potential for this type of tasks due to their territoriality. The time for territorial troops to reach and start operations in the area of a crisis situation is definitely shorter than for operational troops. It opens extensive possibilities of the Territorial Defense Forces' support in the field of crisis management and civil protection. Nonetheless, it requires further conceptual, legislative, and organizational works to properly use such a valuable potential of the state in the field of civil protection.

## Conclusion

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland are an important, often very effective, state potential that can be used in crisis situations, if the remaining forces and resources are insufficient. Thus, the participation of the Polish Armed Forces in solving crises should take place only when the remaining forces and resources are used or prove to be ineffective. The organization of such support should be based on the principles set out in the laws, regulations, and solutions functioning in the Polish Armed Forces. Military support of civil authorities and the society in non-military crisis situations should ensure efficiency and effectiveness as well as rationality of actions taken.

Bearing in mind the ongoing work on changing the command system of the Polish Armed Forces (announcements for 2020 [21]), it can be considered as another variant of the organization of the crisis management system in the Ministry of National Defense. The possibility of separating the Crisis Management Center of the Ministry of National Defense at the strategic level (General Staff) or subordinating it directly to the Minister of National Defense should be considered. It would ensure the improvement of the activities of the entire Ministry, mainly units and organizational units directly subordinate to the Minister of National Defense, in crisis management. The location of a separate element would facilitate and improve the service of the Crisis Management Team, which, together with the experts appointed for this purpose, could create a kind of staff at a strategic level, similar in essence to the EU Military Staff, which is directly subordinated to the military committee, i.e., a strategic body in the military dimension.

The scope of tasks performed as part of solving potential crisis situations (results of terrorist threats, hybrid threats, cyberattacks on elements of critical infrastructure, etc.) indicates that there may necessitate integrating planning and activities of many institutions and national security systems. Such an approach will generate the need to maintain cooperation with entities of the National Crisis Management System (i.e., the Government Center for Security, the Internal Security Agency, the Anti-Terrorist Center, and other cells relevant in the course of this type of response). A new look at the crisis management structure of the Ministry of National Defense should be characterized by the flexibility necessary to respond quickly and decisively to crises of various scope, scale, and nature.

The crisis management process and the content of crisis management plans in relation to changing threats also require necessary changes. They must be a real response to possible modern threats. Some of the defined tasks in the above-mentioned acts were adequate to the Armed Forces, which consisted of conscripts. Currently, the Armed Forces are mainly high-class specialists in various fields, the nature of the threats has also changed, therefore, the legal acts should be updated in the scope of current tasks under the military support. A new approach is also needed to the process of generating and acquiring capabilities, and then using military support in dealing with emergencies. Today, a soldier has too valuable a potential to be defined as tasks such as clearing snow or filling sand bags. It is also necessary to regulate the organization of military support by Territorial Defense Forces units, so perhaps it is worth considering a common territorial defense system related to the local administration, which would take over the most current tasks of the operational troops in this area.

The outlined challenges relating to the needs of improving the crisis management system of the Ministry of National Defense, and perhaps the national crisis management system, may become an inspiration for the implementation of joint projects – scientists and practitioners in this field, combining theory with practice.

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#### **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.

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## Biographical note

**Grzegorz Sobolewski** – Prof. Dr. hab., employed at the Main School of Fire Service, has been dealing with national security issues for many years, specializing in research areas, state security management, security threats (military and non-military), state defense, crisis management in the national, EU and NATO dimensions, civil protection, and rescue.

### **Możliwości użycia Sił Zbrojnych RP w niemilitarnych sytuacjach kryzysowych w aspekcie zmian systemu kierowania i dowodzenia**

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#### **STRESZCZENIE**

W przeszłości głównym zadaniem sił zbrojnych było przede wszystkim zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa militarnego w ujęciu obrony niepodległości, suwerenności i integralności terytorialnej państwa. Jednak współcześnie w wymiarze narodowym i międzynarodowym ich zakres zadań zdecydowanie uległ poszerzeniu o przedsięwzięcia z zakresu wsparcia organów administracji publicznej i społeczeństwa w sytuacjach kryzysowych. Wynika to z faktu, iż siły zbrojne, posiadają unikatowe, niespotykane w innych siłach

reagowania możliwości podejmowania skutecznych działań w wypadku wystąpienia zróżnicowanych sytuacji kryzysowych. Tak więc stały się ważnym wzmocnieniem systemu zarządzania kryzysowego i ochrony ludności. Często mogą one stanowić główny element wsparcia organów administracji publicznej (rządowej i samorządowej) w rozwiązywaniu powstałej sytuacji kryzysowej. Ważnym czynnikiem skuteczności ich działania w ramach pomocy społeczeństwu jest tzw. system zarządzania kryzysowego w resorcie obrony narodowej. Struktura tego systemu jest ściśle powiązana z funkcjonującym systemem kierowania i dowodzenia.

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**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** zarządzanie kryzysowe, ochrona ludności, sytuacja kryzysowa, siły zbrojne, system kierowania i dowodzenia

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