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RUSSIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND THE SO-CALLED GERASIMOV DOCTRINE

ROSYJSKIE OPERACJE SPECJALNE A TZW. DOKTRYNA GIERASIMOWA

Abstract:

The article assesses the possible forms of influence of Russian special services on the states of NATO's eastern flank. The task of Russian special operations is to expand the so-called outer ring of defense, they are also supposed to complement A2 / AD (Anti-Access / Area Denial) undertakings. On the other hand, in a situation of growing crisis or real armed conflict (of low intensity), they are to constitute one of the operational activities of the armed forces. The adopted formula of activities assumes the conduct of mutually coordinated undertakings aimed at influencing the political establishment and public opinion of NATO and EU member states, as well as obtaining influence on economic processes. On the other hand, in the military dimension, they are part of operational activities selectively directed against the most important targets and objects of the enemy. Recognized goals and effects of Russian special operations allow us to conclude that they use both military influence and actions of government agencies and private entities. The dominant formula remains the so-called unconventional operations and indirect actions, adapted to the internal situation in the countries of NATO's eastern flank, aimed at gaining influence over the way their policies are conducted. The adopted formula of influence means that the defense system of NATO member states should take into account not only preparation for a defense operation, an integral part of which is protection against subversion and sabotage, but also the conduct of a full range of counterintelligence activities and the elimination of social disinformation and infiltration of state structures.

Keywords: Russian special operations, Russian army, asymmetric warfare, NATO eastern flank.

Special operations constitute an integral part of Russia's influence on other countries. This is in line with the views of Russian strategists and politicians, who consistently believe that all available instruments should be applied to achieve strategic interests of the state (Cimbala,

2017; Chivvis, 2017). Using these instruments, often described as asymmetric operations and now also as hybrid ones, is sometimes misunderstood by analysts from the NATO area as a means of counterbalancing the strategic advantage of the North Atlantic Treaty and the United States itself (Thornton 2007). We should rather assume that applying these forms of international influence results from the adopted assumption that skilful utilisation of the available means will allow for achieving operational or even strategic success at a significantly lower cost. The Russian concept of carrying out special operations as an international influence factor aimed at reaching national goals is thus a conglomerate of historic experience¹ and theses of Veniamin Semenov Tian-Shanskij (developing a land superpower with significant geographical span along with the necessity to create an external defence ring), and the functioning of Heartland and Rimland zones according to the views of John H. Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman (Mickiewicz, 2018). Equally important are the theses of Tim Benbow that technological development radically expanded the scope and consequences of non-linear influence of international players on a potential opponent and the reactions of the attacked party are limited by barriers in the process of identifying the attack perpetrator, determining their state affiliation (a domestic or foreign opponent) and the assumed goals of influence should be considered to determine the goals of Russia's special operations' conduct (Benbow, 2004, p. 164). Another equally important limitation to the reaction form of an attacked state is the adopted formula of hostile actions, which are not aimed at military defeat of the attacked state, but rather forcing it to carry out policies coherent with the aggressor's interests or discontinuation of a policy to achieve national goals.

Taking into consideration the above theoretical assumptions, the adopted goal of this study is to demonstrate that special operations in the Russian strategy constitute an integral part of international influence and they have been assigned particular significance in the area defined

¹ The need to conduct policy in simultaneously three directions, i.e. western, southern and eastern resulted in the domination in the Russian military thinking of the thesis on the functioning of the state as a „besieged stronghold”, the necessity to conduct a defensive operation in a situation of the aggressors having military advantage and the development of a „security perimeter” around the state borders (zone of influence, external defense ring, etc.). For this reason, the Russian military theorists often referred to the thought of ancient strategists, especially in relation to the role of disinformation or activities described as partisan. Very important for them showed to be theses of Chinese strategists, especially Sun Tzu (*The Art of War*) and Wei Liaozi (*The Master's Books*).

as the NATO's eastern flank. Regardless of whether the Russian military doctrine will comprise a division into three phases of international relations (peace, crisis, war) or whether, according to gen. W. Gerasimov's theses, they have been blurred, their role is to lead to broadening the so-called external defence ring. They are also supposed to supplement A2/AD undertakings (Anti-Access/Area Denial). In turn, in a situation of an arising crisis or a real military conflict (of low intensity) they will constitute one of the forms of armed forces operations. The above proposition will be proved based on an analysis of Russian strategic documents, studies of warfare theorists and Russian General Staff officers, as well as the method of military influence in Syria, Ukraine and special operations undertaken towards the NATO's eastern flank countries.

Evolution of Russian special operations in the 20th and 21st centuries

The Russian security policy adopted as an axiom one of the theses of the Soviet military strategy, which assumed the parallel conduct of two processes: creating a belief in its defensive nature and expanding the offensive potential of the armed forces. Eliminating the advantage of the opponent (gaining an advantage over him) is to be achieved through the implementation of a number of projects limiting his combat abilities. The formula of disinformation activities applied since the Bolshevik revolution was discussed, among others, by Joseph Stalin (1921) himself. In the early period (1920s.-1930s.) the basic toolset for influencing potential opponent was described as ideological diversion (Zhirnov, 2003, p. 7). It was complemented by undertakings such as infiltrating the opponent's army or inciting desertion in order to strengthen internal conflicts in an enemy state. In this thesis we should consider Evgeny Messner's idea to be very accurate. He concluded that in the Soviet strategy, operations such as infiltration, propaganda, sabotage, and armed uprisings are closely coordinated with a frontal political, economic, cultural, diplomatic, and psychological attack (Messner, 1999, p. 370-373, Savinkin, 2005). Equally important for assessing the role of special operations in the Soviet military strategy is the George Kennan thesis, that the plan for the expansion and development of Mackinders Heartland was not entirely based on the exclusive use of strictly military operations. These were to be comprehensive political, psychological and military actions. The participation of the troops was intended to sanction the achieved goal (Kennan, 1961, p 389). However, the goals of influence

and instruments used evolved. In the pre-World War II period, the goal of operations was to create an image of the USSR as a state of social equality, with peaceful policy. This task was carried out by the military intelligence services in which the Department of Disinformation was established. The tasks of the Department included the ongoing assessment of the enemy's knowledge of the Red Army and the preparation of disinformation materials. To this end, he prepared information that falsified the condition of the Red Army (from 1924, the rule was to raise the condition of the Red Army by 50-60%). Obsolete reform ordinances were also obtained, suggesting that they are still in force. A separate task was to combat intelligence activities, especially in Poland and Estonia, which transferred the obtained information to France, Great Britain and Japan. The scope of disinformation activities included as many as 5 forms of influence, preceded by counterintelligence activities (assessment of the state of knowledge of the enemy's intelligence services):

1. creating the possibility of obtaining false documents;
2. preparation of false information, data and analytical materials;
3. preparation of a false official document or information and its publication;
4. providing foreign intelligence with completely false documents that are not valid in the USSR;
5. transferring recalled documents to a foreign intelligence service as binding.

The greatest success of these actions was to bring about a situation in which the intelligence services of European countries, based on false data, recreated the organizational structure and combat potential of the Red Army. This is illustrated in the table 1.

In the second world war and post-war periods, the so-called *maskirovka* became both a political influence means and an element of military operations on the operational and tactical level (Zhirnov, 2003; Pirnie, 1985). Political influence was primarily to support left parties in democratic states and the so-called liberation movements in Third World countries. All of this has also been confirmed by former GRU agent Yuri Bezmenov (Wilczyński, 2020). During military operations on an operational level its essence was to prepare an unexpected attack or to undertake non-obvious forms of combat operations. In turn, on the tactical level its task was to hide the real potential of troops, their deployment and attack goals. On the other hand, the full scope of

Tab. 1. The combat potential of the Red Army in 1923 - actual data and an assessment of the intelligence of European countries

Weapons and armament on the equipment of the Red Army	Arming state		% of equipment for soldiers			
	False	Real	False	Real	False	Real
Rifle	2726	3425	3578	1332	131	38
Heavy machine gun	23	29	27790	19018	120	65
Manual machine gun	59650	-	20836	-	83	-
Weapon:						
3-inch (76 mm) field gun	5942	-	6080	2532	101	100
3-inch (76 mm) anti-aircraft gun	935	-	653	-	69	-
3-inch (76 mm) mountain gun	578	478	386	168	66	35
48 linear (122 mm) howitzers gun	1968	1004	1860	491	94	48
3-inch (76 mm) field canon	612	338	624	142	101	42
6-inch (150 mm) howitzer gun	635	391	655	172	100	48

Source: *Report No. 0226/st.* of the Chief Intelligence Agency of the Headquarters of the Red Army Ya.K. Berzin about the work on disinformation to the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR M.V. Frunze z 21.01.1925, (*Доклад № 0226/стначразведупра Штаба РККА Я.К. Берзина о работе дезинформации председателю Реввоенсовета СССР М.В. Фрунзе з 21.01.1925*), http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/192_dok/19250121berz.php

disinformation activities was set out in a special resolution of the Politburo Russian Communist Party on the creation of the Bureau of Disinformation and its tasks. Such was considered the selection of specially prepared information, the preparation of false information about the internal situation in Russia, the state of the Red Army and the objectives of external influence, the provision of specially prepared information to agents and services of hostile countries, and the preparation of fictitious materials and notes for daily press and thematic magazines. Each of these studies had to be approved by one of the secretaries of the Central Committee (Pirnie, 1985,p. 10-11 and13-14). In the second world war these activities were characterized by distorting the data collected by the German reconnaissance, especially obtained from aircraft and radio intelligence. As a result, especially after losing the Stalingrad battle, the Russians managed to create a situation in which the Wehrmacht's reactions to Russian army's operations were reactive and the selection of operational means was not always adequate to the situation on the frontline. One should also emphasise the skilful distortion of the strategic situation image, taking the form of creating

symptoms of missing production capacity, armaments, and fuel deliveries for the army, etc., which lead to underestimating of the Red Army potential by the German general staff (Pirnie, 1985, p. 2). In the period of the Cold War and the competition focused on building deterrence potential, the falsification of military potential became the basic form of the mask. This task was carried out by specialized departments of disinformation operating under the joint supervision of the GRU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but an important element of these activities was also parades and military exercises in which prototype or even dummy weapons were presented or used. The operations they carried out were described as active measures (*активные мероприятия*), supporting diplomatic activities covering the whole spectrum of undertakings from offensive operations, including intelligence, propaganda influence (disinformation), support and development of opinion shaping centres² to classic espionage operations, to defensive activities, including counter-intelligence and sabotage. In the 1960s, the main formula of influence was economic coercion, building political influence in the centers of power and shaping the content of radio broadcasts. In turn, from mid-1970s. the goal was to create an image of the state subjected to sabotage operations of the NATO, consolidating the modus operandi of communist and national liberation movements with soviet policy, disinformation concerning the Warsaw Pact military potential, goals of international influence, condition of the economic and technical potential of the state as well as economic intelligence and espionage. Realising the latter forms of external influence involved the use of the potential not only of the KGB and GRU, but also other institutions of the Soviet State. Among defensive activities, an important role was played by undertakings aimed at combating activities undertaken by the opponent. The complete set of instruments used was made up of – classical in a way – activities of special services in the form of sabotage actions aimed at interfering with the state's functioning, attacks on selected opponent's facilities, building a certain network of agents aimed at liquidation of USSR traitors, creating partisan movements based on national liberation groups, „delivering” of scientists with unique knowledge about the opponent's

² E. Zhirnov (2003), considered the official release of the international scientific commission, which clearly stated in its report that the USA dropped bacteriological weapons to the area of North Korea to be a disinformation masterpiece. Even more so, as just one Soviet scientist was a member of the commission.

military potential and developing of a nuclear recognition on the NATO footprint (Kolpakidi, Prokhorov, 2001, p. 77-80).

The role of special operations in the Russian policy has not undergone a substantial transformation after the bi-polar world breakup. However, one should point out the significant differences in operations between the civilian and military areas. By 2014, in the first one, a large part of the effort had been focused on combating what was defined as NATO espionage and the disclosure of state secrets. This was especially true of the disclosure of technologies of military significance (currently hypersonic weapons) and space weapons. On the other hand, after that date, the main means of influence are operations aimed at effectively influencing the political establishment of NATO and EU member states as well as social opinions in these countries. They are conducted based on assumptions developed by Vladimir Kvachkov and Gennady Kazachekov, who suggest that operations of this type allow for the achievement of both strategic, operational and tactical goals in the political and military dimension (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Scope and form of Russian special operations

Special operation goal	Result	Form of utilising special forces	
		Political operation	Military operation
Strategic	Change of strategic situation	Special forces operation strengthening or supplementing political and diplomatic activities	Self-sufficient special forces operation in the theatre of war or individual operations within an allocated military component.
Operational	Change of the balance of forces in the region of locating own or opponents' interest in a clearly distinguished area (combat operations area)	Building political and social support for own policy and exerting pressure on the opponents' authorities to resign from pursuing a policy of realising national interests	Activities aimed at changing an operational situation carried out for a tactical association also in the form of supporting the operations of other combat troops.
Tactical	Achieving a short-term goal allowing for realising the long- or mid-term plan	Supporting political or strictly diplomatic activities	Activities aimed at changing tactical situation to the benefit of a regiment or brigade

Source: Own elaboration based on; B.B. Kvachkov (2007).

These operations are carried out both using the means of military influence and through the activity of government agencies and private entities. State agencies mainly infiltrate and affect the political establishment, less often sabotage (both on the territory of a potential enemy and in cyberspace). Private entities mainly focus on espionage activities (economic intelligence), creating a positive image of the

Russian state and implementing a whole range of impacts in cyberspace. On the other hand, the means of military influence have been integrated into the overall operational activities. The modern Russian military doctrine assumes that a military operation should take the form of high-intensity focal strikes, and its aim is to overcome the enemy's ability to act, not to take control of the area. This determined the role of special operations, which were considered an element of operational activities directed selectively against the most important targets and objects of the enemy. They are to complement or support precision strikes by the air and space forces. In practice, special forces should carry out one of nine types of operations within this framework, which can be classified into four groups (Tab. 3).

Table 3. Classification of special operations

Intelligence operations	Special intelligence operations (<i>разведывательные специальные операции</i>)	Gathering and use of information
	Reconnaissance as well as sabotage and diversion operations (<i>разведывательно-диверсионные специальные операции</i>)	Obtaining situational information and possible limitation of the functioning capabilities of the reconnoitred facility, system, etc.
Destabilising operations	Sabotage and diversion operations (<i>диверсионные специальные операции</i>)	Destruction or disorganisation of critical infrastructure functioning
	Formulation and combat preparation of irregular forces (<i>специальные операции по формированию, поддержке и боевому применению иррегулярных сил</i>)	Organisation and equipment of irregular armed formations, diversion, terrorist and partisan groups, protest groups and a reconnaissance and intelligence network
	Psychological operations (<i>психологические специальные операции</i>)	Influence on the society (selected social groups) utilising socio-technical influence, particularly propaganda and disinformation.
Operations for own forces	Operations carried out for other types of armed forces and services (<i>специальные операции в интересах родов войск и служб</i>)	Support for armed forces troops and other formations of the remaining armed ministries
	Search and rescue operations of high- and medium-risk personnel (<i>поисково-спасательные специальные операции</i>)	Lost Personnel Recovery for HRI and MRI groups in the form of Combat Search and Rescue, Combat Recovery, Non-conventional Assisted Recovery and Hostage Rescue,
Defence operations	Protection of assets and rights of the Federation and its citizens abroad (<i>специальные операции поза щит собственности и прав России е граждан зарубежными Российской Федерации</i>)	Reaction to limiting the rights to carry out business, hostile assets seizure, Personnel Recovery for the Other Personnel group, Non-combatant Evacuation Operations
	Internal security assurance operations (<i>специальные операции по обеспечению внутренней безопасности государства</i>)	Protection of constitutional order anti- and counter-terrorist operations and

Source: Own elaboration based on: Kadetov (1995), Kvachkov (2007).

They can also conduct activities in the form of indirect actions focused on conducting preventive operations against irregular formations and using intelligence data. It was also stipulated that the use of special forces could also be undertaken in the area controlled by the enemy. Apart from strictly military operations, they should be prepared to conduct propaganda and information activities (disinformation focused on the civilian population). On the other hand, the purpose of military special forces operations is the critical infrastructure, which is considered to be the objects that determine the way the state and local communities function. The systems of state and military administration, large enterprises in the energy sector and traditional economy (metallurgy, mechanical engineering, oil refineries, enterprises of the military-industrial complex, power plants and energy substations, production, collection and storage points for oil and gas, devices for supporting life for the population, etc.), critical IT infrastructure and transport systems (railway junctions, bridges, strategically important ports, airports, tunnels, etc.), classic critical infrastructure, the damage of which will be caused by the so-called chain of events (dams of hydropower plants and hydropower plants themselves, reactors of nuclear power plants, chemical processing plants, enterprises of the nuclear industry, stores of strong toxic substances, etc.). The purpose of such operations is not only to destroy it effectively, but also to create a sense of threat to the civilian population, to obtain a possible operational advantage in the course of military operations, and to weaken the economic potential of the country subjected to such influence. It was also assumed that the economic goal can be achieved immediately after the attack, and can be postponed (collapse of a given industry sector in the event of a lack of production capacity) and achieved indirectly (e.g. in the form of an ecological catastrophe eliminating the possibility of exploiting resources in a given region).

Potential forms of carrying out special operations on the NATO's eastern flank

Analysing concepts developed by the Russian military, the course of exercises and manoeuvres, practical operations in the Ukraine and Syria as well as the formula of undertakings carried out against selected European states, one can determine the threat level on the NATO's eastern flank. Adopting the initial thesis, that Russia's goal is to limit the influence of the USA in Central Europe through the influence on political establishment and the society of the European Member States, it should

be concluded that the concept of carrying out special operations on the eastern flank of the pact will take the form of indirect and non-conventional operations supplemented with strictly military undertakings. These however cannot create a situation justifying a military reaction of NATO forces or starting a consultation procedure of the Member States, pursuant to the Washington Treaty provisions. Following this assumption, one should accept that they will be varied and dependent on the strategic situation in the region. The main determining factor will be the assessment of threat for the Russian state perceived in the context of limiting the possibility to achieve the Federation's interests and the scale of the ability to achieve these interests by the United States³. For this reason, emphasising that the thesis on the blurring of the distinction between the periods of peace, crisis and war is one of the main theoretical approaches to the Russian concept of carrying out military operations. It is justified to analyse the formula of special operations carried out by Russia in those international relations' states. The period of peace is a time of carrying out operations aimed at dominating or gaining influence on the economy through energy dependency or controlling specific market segments by joint venture companies with Russian capital and the preparation of grounds for evoking a crisis situation, which should arise in the country subjected to aggressive operations with the aggressor's minimal participation. These operations are and will be carried out based on a modified concept of ideological diversion. It assumes the form of propaganda activities, organising networks of agents of influence and defining groups of influence allowing for potential destabilising of the political and social order in a country. Selected political and social groups are subjected to this form of influence, depending on the level of appreciation for Russia and the condition of mutual relations. Authors of this concept assumed that such activities have a long-term character, perceived in the horizon of up to two decades. However, the possibility to use the so-called new media allows for much quicker development of a political and ideological background in the form of protest groups and political and economic supporters. Such activities are carried out, with various outcomes,

³ At the moment, the main determinants should be considered to be realizing the idea of Three Seas, scale of dislocation of American (and allied) troops along NATO's eastern flank and the level of dependency of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on deliveries of Russian energy products and energy itself (the planned takeover by a Polish-Hungarian consortium of the development of a nuclear power plant in the Kaliningrad Oblast and delivering through it energy to the European states.

against the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary as well as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The resulted in penetrating and identifying groups which may perform both the function of Agents of Influence and Protest Groups. In fact, the existence of such groups may be proved in every state of the eastern flank. The level of their susceptibility to Russian influence and readiness to take action is varied, however. Accepting that except for the Czech Republic, which practically functions as a state performing the role of a certain intelligence and information gathering in the EU, these operations are at the stage of realisation. Potential groups of indirect influence should be indicated as niche political parties with radical programmes, the so-called anti-establishment movements, industry groups facing economic crises (farmers, segments of the economy suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic, representatives of niche professions). The aim of indirect influence is to weaken the position of authorities among part of the general public, strengthening groups denying the functioning within the EU and NATO and pursuing/announcing the pursuing of a policy of cooperation with the Russian Federation. Taking up activities aimed at direct influence on parliamentary elections should be expected to a smaller extent. This has been demonstrated by the form of carrying out special operations against Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. It is focused on creating a network of agents of influence, gaining opportunities to do business and classic intelligence operations focused on defence infrastructure and military operational planning. The formula of discrediting the political establishment of states in the region will also be broadened, following the example of operation „Ghost-writer”. Their goal will invariably remain to disclose and interpret the gathered information in a manner allowing for discrediting the political elite, especially the parties in power, broadening the scale of political divisions and eliminating selected politicians from political life. In turn, it has to be assumed that special operations will be carried out in case it is decided that a project carried out by a given state threatens Russian interests. Regardless of the condition of mutual relations, which was proved by the operation of liquidating munitions warehouses in Vrbětice, Czech Republic (16 October and 3 December 2014)⁴.

One should consider the second form of unconventional influence to be the creation of pressure as well as sabotage and diversion groups.

⁴According to the Czech authorities, it belonged to a Bulgarian arms dealer and was supposed to be delivered to the territories of Ukraine and Syria.

Based on Ukrainian experience, social and political associations should be considered to be subjected to such influence, particularly when they can be dominated by agents of influence. Extreme and criminal groups may also be used. Their main task is to create protests; however, they may also be prepared to carry out sabotage and diversion operations. They are conducted in a secretive way, minimising the possibility to identify the principal and prove their engagement in the process of preparation and carrying out an act of sabotage. For this reason, they should be carried out by diversion groups or private military companies created in the area of the state subjected to aggression.

Analysis of special operations carried out in the area of NATO Member States leads to formulating three conclusions. First is the statement that diversion and sabotage groups recruited in a given state subjected to operations will be used only in a situation of an emerging political crisis or when their use will be justified by a strategic situation. Thus, they function as a certain strategic reserve, prepared for action in a specific situation. Hence, it should be accepted that the realisation of on-going operations, resulting from the current state of the international situation, will be the responsibility of Russian special services officers. The so-called „soft” critical infrastructure facilities and systems become the goal of their operations but it is also possible to carry out a sabotage operation in hard infrastructure facilities (the mentioned liquidation of munitions warehouses in the Czech Republic) or liquidating persons deemed to be enemies of the Federation⁵. However, a situation, which could be described as a political coup, should be deemed improbable in the Central and Eastern Europe. It is possible to use elements of this operation to weaken the political coherence of the state and to attempt to gain influence on the economic, political, and social processes in place in the country.

The use of created social uprisings, especially of a separatist character, is a distinctive formula of Russian special operations. It should be assumed that they will take the form of limited military support of destabilising operations or separatist movements. Carrying out an operation limiting the possibility to utilise the military and economic potential by authorities of the state, in which such protests take place, should be considered to be the main modus operandi. Experience from

⁵ The situation with arresting Raman Pratasevich demonstrated that it is possible to come back to operations of secretive kidnapping and transporting such persons to the territory of the Federation.

Ukraine allows for interpreting as such classical sabotage and diversion operations in the form of damaging transportation infrastructure elements, oil transport systems and – to a smaller extent – natural gas transport systems and energy infrastructure. These operations will be carried out by organised diversion groups or separatist troops, however, it is equally probable that Spetznaz troops will be delegated to carry out such operations. In turn, in a situation of the Russian army undertaking strictly military operations, the target form of impact is to be the so-called information-attack operation (*информационно-ударная операция*) which is essentially to destroy IT systems and networks, connectivity and guidance systems, which is to result in decision paralysis supplemented with disinformation activities (Vorobiev, Kiselev, 2008, p. 36; Chibisov, Vodkin, 2011, p. 46-50; Vorobiev, 2007 p. 14-21).

Conclusions

The presented formula of carrying out Russian special operations determines the method of reacting. They involve a few areas of political, economic and social life as well as the defence domain. Thus, the reaction should comprise a conglomerate of mutually connected activities which should also take into account the modus operandi of special forces. Activities mitigating the Russian special operations on the NATO's eastern flank should be based on counter-intelligence operations and limiting the possibility to infiltrate the political, economic, and military areas. The second, equally important, task should be considered to be preventing disinformation and building the net of agents of influence and the possibility to use protest groups. In this classification of threats, the threat of undertaking sabotage and diversion operations seems apparently less important. However, the analysis of the concept of Russian special forces and the transformation of their organisational structure justifies the conclusion that they may realise such operations in the territory of NATO Member States. It should also be accepted that the selection of objects of a potential attack will be largely coherent with the set deemed operationally significant in a situation of carrying out military operations. That is because, according to B. Kruglov's assumption (2000), the Russian military offensive should not be carried out in the formula of territory occupation, but with the goal of controlling strategic points and urbanised areas of economic, and its aim is to limit the scope of defensive operations, including transferring the NATO reinforcement troops. In the system of preventing Russian special

operations, Special Forces should thus focus on combating the operations of diversion and sabotage groups. Analysing the modus operandi in Eastern Ukraine, these should be considered to be teams of operators consisting of 9-12 persons. The goal of their attacks will be critical infrastructure elements. As regards the countries of the eastern flank, one could hazard the guess that concerning Poland and possibly Romania the combat groups will originate from Spetznaz units. In the case of operations undertaken in the area of Estonia and Latvia, these may be groups organised and trained in the area of these countries. In turn in the area of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria these will be both private military companies (persons employed by joint venture companies) and Spetznaz operators. Thus, the defence system of NATO Member States should take into account not only preparations for carrying out a defensive operation, whose integral part is to protect against diversion and sabotage operations but also to carry out a full range of counter-intelligence operations and activities mitigating the scale of social disinformation and infiltration of the state's structures.

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Streszczenie:

W artykule dokonano oceny możliwych form oddziaływania rosyjskich służb specjalnych na państwa wschodniej flanki NATO. Zadaniem rosyjskich operacji specjalnych jest rozbudowa tzw. zewnętrznego pierścienia obrony, mają one także uzupełniać przedsięwzięcia A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial). Natomiast w sytuacji narastającego kryzysu lub realnego konfliktu zbrojnego (o niskiej intensywności) mają one stanowić jedną z form działalności operacyjnej sił zbrojnych. Przyjęta formuła działań zakłada prowadzenie wzajemnie skoordynowanych przedsięwzięć mających na celu oddziaływanie na establishment polityczny państw członkowskich NATO i UE oraz na opinie społeczne w tych krajach, a także uzyskanie wpływu na procesy gospodarcze. Natomiast w wymiarze militarnym stanowią element działań operacyjnych skierowanych selektywnie przeciwko najważniejszym celom i obiektom przeciwnika. Rozpoznane cele i efekty rosyjskich operacji specjalnych pozwalają stwierdzić, że wykorzystują one zarówno wpływy militarne, jaki działania agencji rządowych oraz podmiotów prywatnych. Dominującą formułą pozostają tzw. operacje niekonwencjonalne i działania pośrednie, dostosowane do sytuacji wewnętrznej w państwach wschodniej flanki NATO, nacelowane na zdobycie wpływu na sposób prowadzenia ich polityki. Przyjęta formuła wpływu oznacza, że system obronny państw członkowskich NATO powinien uwzględniać nie tylko przygotowanie do operacji obronnej, której integralną częścią jest ochrona przed działalnością wywrotową i sabotażową, ale także prowadzenie pełnego zakresu działań kontrwywiadowczych oraz eliminowanie dezinformacji społecznej i infiltracji struktur państwowych.

Słowa kluczowe: armia rosyjska, operacje specjalne Rosji, wojna asymetryczna, wschodnia flanki NATO.