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Military Security in the Baltic Sea during Cold War: Analysis Based on the Materials of the Naval Reconnaissance Unit of the Polish People's Republic

**Bezpieczeństwo militarne na Bałtyku w dobie zimnej wojny na podstawie materiałów
Oddziału Rozpoznawczego Marynarki Wojennej Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej**

• Abstract •

The purpose of the article was to present, in the proverbial nutshell, the issues related to the military situation in the 1950s and 1960s during the so-called Cold War in the Baltic Sea, based on the materials of the Naval Reconnaissance Unit of the Polish People's Republic. These materials were very important for analytical teams preparing concepts for operations in the Northern European Theater of Operations, as well as ensuring the security of the maritime borders of the Warsaw Pact countries.

The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by a wide range of reconnaissance activities as a consequence of the changing reality in the Baltic Sea. The naval potential of both NATO countries, especially Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), was expanded, thus the other side began to create the People's Navy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), as well as to strengthen the combat potential of the naval

• Abstrakt •

Celem artykułu było przedstawienie zagadnień związanych z sytuacją militarną na Bałtyku w czasie zimnej wojny, w latach 50. i 60. XX wieku, na podstawie materiałów Oddziału Rozpoznawczego Marynarki Wojennej Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej. Materiały te stanowiły kluczowy element dla zespołów analitycznych przygotowujących koncepcje działań na północnoeuropejskim teatrze działań, a także zapewniających bezpieczeństwo granic morskich państw Układu Warszawskiego.

Lata 50. i 60. XX wieku charakteryzowały się szerokim zakresem działań rozpoznawczych, będących konsekwencją zmieniającej się rzeczywistości na Bałtyku. Potencjał morski obu państw NATO, zwłaszcza Danii i Republiki Federalnej Niemiec (RFN), został rozszerzony, a druga strona przystąpiła do tworzenia Ludowej Marynarki Wojennej NRD oraz wzmacniania potencjału bojowego sił morskich PRL. Jednocześnie usprawniono współpracę flot

forces of the People's Republic of Poland. At the same time, the cooperation of allied fleets of the Warsaw Pact countries was improved, and for this purpose, staff exercises were conducted on maps and in the Baltic Sea.

In retrospect, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact appreciated the military importance of the Danish Straits and the Baltic Sea. In the following years, efforts were made to improve the concepts of naval forces in these waters.

Keywords: Baltic Sea; Cold War; NATO; Navy of the Polish People's Republic; Warsaw Pact

sojuszniczych Układu Warszawskiego – w tym celu przeprowadzono ćwiczenia sztabowe na Bałtyku.

Patrząc wstecz, zarówno NATO, jak i Układ Warszawski doceniały militarne znaczenie Cieśnin Duńskich i Morza Bałtyckiego. W kolejnych latach starano się udoskonalić koncepcje sił morskich na tych wodach.

Słowa kluczowe: Morze Bałtyckie; zimna wojna; NATO; Marynarka Wojenna PRL; Układ Warszawski

Introduction

The first years of the Cold War abounded with political events both on the European continent and in the Baltic Sea basin. As the proverbial light in the lens, it was in this region that the actions characteristic of the Cold War period converged. It was there that the states, standing on opposite sides of the “barricade”, functioned. These were countries that had experienced a lot in their history, both as “perpetrators” and as “victims” of political and military turbulence. Some resigned from being neutral states, and some remained as such and showed no interest in changing their contemporaneous position on the international arena.

The emerging Navy of the Polish People's Republic did not have the combat potential capable of ensuring the security of the sea border. Therefore, most of the tasks related to the defense of the Polish sea border, as well as that of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) later, were taken over by the Baltic Fleet of the Soviet Union. The states subordinated to the Soviet Union were obliged to host on their territory its allocated armed forces. Their deployment on the territory of Poland and East Germany was to ensure the implementation of the Soviet Union's policy on the territories of these countries, and from the military point of view, to counterbalance the NATO political and military pact emerging in Western Europe in conjunction with the USA and Canada. The US foreign policy related to Germany made the Soviet Union consider it a potential threat to its interests in the eastern part of Europe. As a result, all political and military actions carried out in relation to the countries subordinated to Moscow were motivated by a direct threat to their security from NATO. Poland, located in the immediate vicinity of the USSR, was perceived as an important component of its security. Therefore, a number of measures were

taken to secure (not only) the country's sea border. These activities concerned the creation of Polish naval forces in cooperation with the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, as well as with the naval forces of the People's Navy of the GDR. In practice, the Baltic Fleet of the USSR was the most important component of the security of the Polish sea border not only in the initial period of the Cold War, but until its end.

Security of the Polish sea border in the first years of the Cold War

After the end of World War II, Poland found itself in a new reality. According to the propaganda of the time, it became an important ally of the Soviet Union. This was confirmed by the concluded agreements, i.e., "Polish-Soviet Border Agreement between the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) and the Government of the USSR" (Moscow, July 22, 1944), "Polish-Soviet Treaty on Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation" (Moscow, April 21, 1945), "Border Agreement between Poland and the USSR" (Moscow, August 16, 1945), "Agreement between Poland and the USSR on Reparations for Damages Caused by the German Occupation" (Moscow, August 16, 1945) (Zajac, 2005, pp. 47–54).

These documents, the second one in particular, enabled the Soviet Union to act to gradually limit the sovereignty of the Polish state. In this case, according to the division made by Andrzej Werblan, one was dealing with the so-called protectoral control. It was based on the fact that a strong state, here the USSR, secured its interests by influencing the personal composition of country's authorities, and therefore the political system. For the same reason, it was possible for the strong state to enforce the presence of its own nationals on the territory of a given country (Werblan, 2009, p. 104), as it was accomplished. The Red Army (later the Soviet Army) was stationed on Polish territory, and in addition, about 7,000 Soviet officers served in the units of the Polish Army in almost all command and staff positions. In the opinion of Edward Nalepa, "the service of Soviet officers in the Polish Army in the years 1943–1944 was not regulated by any legal acts or normative documents. The 'agreements' at a high political and military level served commonly as guidelines. As late as at the beginning of 1945 (January 15), following the arrangements between the Supreme High Command of the Red Army and the Supreme Command of the Polish Army, the order No. 41 'On the Generals and Officers of the Red Army Detailed to Serve in the Polish Army' was issued" (Nalepa, 1995, p. 14). In order to prepare the place for the Soviet officers to serve in the Polish Army, demobilization was carried out, paving the way for the removal of some pre-war officers with anti-communist views. Shortly afterwards, in the armies of all the

countries subordinated to the Kremlin (except Poland), the Soviet command and organizational structures, as well as a system of military ranks, were introduced.

The “purge” among the officers and non-commissioned officers also covered the Navy of the People’s Republic of Poland. Pre-war officers who returned from captivity and those who came from Great Britain were made redundant. In rigged trials, some of them were sentenced to death and others to long prison terms. The documents regulating the rules of military service were changed by introducing a decree *On the Military Service of Polish Army Officers* and an ordinance of the Minister of National Defence of May 1948 *The Matter of the Military Service of Polish Army Officers* (Będźmirowski, 2007, p. 26). On the basis of these documents, professional service non-commissioned officers were appointed to the rank of the first officer, while some officers from the pre-war and war period did not receive further promotions. In the years 1945–1950, 522 officers were discharged from the Navy (Będźmirowski, 2007, p. 35).

In the period preceding the creation of the Warsaw Pact (in the years 1945–1955), all matters related to the protection and defence of the Baltic Sea were taken over by the Soviet Union. It was its land forces and air force (Northern Group of Soviet Forces stationed in Poland) and the ships of the 4th and 8th Baltic Fleets that controlled the waters along the Polish sea border (although at that time, the border was provisional). These ships “formed [...] a strong combat group. It remained in a state of high alert and was capable of repelling the enemy’s aggression coming from the western sea direction. Both formations [4th and 8th – note by J.B.] joined to organise the cooperation with the land forces and the air force – the 8th Fleet supported the Leningrad Military District, and the 4th Fleet – supported the Baltic Military District and the Northern Group of Soviet Forces in Poland and the Group of Soviet Forces stationed in the GDR” (Przybylski, 2005, pp. 59–60).

The 4th component of the Baltic Fleet, stationed in the port of Świnoujście [former Kriegsmarine base – note by J.B.], not operationally subordinated to the Northern Group of Soviet Forces (but to the Baltic Fleet Command in Baltiysk), played an important role in the performance of these tasks. In the initial period, it was a squadron of minesweepers, whose task was to clear mines along the coast, as well as the so-called approach fairways to ports. Maps with marked minefields, laid during the war by both the Nazi and Soviet navies, were largely in Soviet hands. This was confirmed by an event that took place during the transfer of duties of the commander of the Navy by Rear Admiral Nikolai Abramov to the Polish officer Commander Adam Mohuczy. At that time, i.e., on January 4, 1946, there was a meeting between Cdr A. Mohuczy and the naval attaché at the British Embassy, Captain Harry Petrie. This conversation was presented in the report sent to the

British Ambassador, quoted as follows: “Commander Mohuczy informed me that the Soviets did not intend to carry out further operations to clear the Gulf of Gdańsk from mines [...] what drew my attention was the lack of knowledge which minefields were placed by the Germans in the Gulf of Gdańsk. Mohuczy mainly told me that he had maps showing the location of these fields. He did not know, however, what kind of mines were marked there. [...] he later added that he was not sure where these plans were, or perhaps they might have even got lost. I suspect that they are in the Soviet possession” (Secret Report No. 2 NAP/R/3, 1946, p. 2).

In addition to the aforementioned Soviet naval forces stationed in Świnoujście, there were the following: a Soviet patrol squadron, a maritime infantry battalion, and a coastal artillery squadron, whose task was the protection against enemy actions from the sea. When the Warsaw Pact was created, a squadron of Soviet torpedo boats arrived in Świnoujście. There were also security (logistic) units, an anti-aircraft artillery regiment, and a communication centre. Until 1960, the Świnoujście Naval Base also included the fighter aviation division of the USSR Baltic Fleet, whose task was the air defence of the Polish coast from Świnoujście to Ustka.

It was known that at the outbreak of the armed conflict, the Soviet side assumed the participation of the Polish Army in joint operations under the Soviet command. The Minister of National Defence of that time, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, was the initiator of the preparation of the Polish Army units for these operations. Already at the turn of May and June 1950, the so-called skeleton exercise called the “Organisation, planning and conducting a coastal defence operation in cooperation with the navy” took place. In this exercise, the Polish Army was part of the Coastal Front. The exercise began with the attack of the “enemy” on the central coast, landing near Kołobrzeg. In response, the troops of the Coastal Front carried out a counterattack, destroying the “enemy” forces, and took over the Kiel Canal along with the southern part of the Jutland Peninsula and the island of Bornholm.

In this way, for the first time, the Polish Army participated in the operations of the Coastal Front. This formula, modified, of course, remained operational until the end of the functioning of the Warsaw Pact (Hermann, 2005, pp. 32–33).

What was the situation on the other side, i.e., the one of the potential opponent? Already in October 1953, during a meeting of representatives of the command of the US Navy and West Germany, an agreement was signed on the creation of a naval fleet and the naval bases on the territory of West Germany. The main base was to be Wilhelmshaven, which was also to act as a naval base for NATO forces (AMW, Ref. No. 1584/57/13, Vol. 27, pp. 27, 64). The core of the West German navy at that time included the naval units of the maritime border police. They were organized in 3 flotillas and had guard ships, minesweepers and auxiliary units. The 1st Training

Flotilla was stationed at Cuxhaven and the 2nd and 3rd Training Flotillas at Neustadt. In addition to the maritime border police mentioned above, subordinated to the West German government, there was a maritime police stationed in Bremerhaven (AMW, Ref. No. 1584/57/13, Vol. 27, p. 67).

The work to expand the naval forces was under way not only in West Germany. Denmark was the second country that posed a potential threat to the security of the maritime borders of the states under the jurisdiction of the USSR. According to the plan for the expansion of the Danish naval forces, it received 19 warships. For the most part, these were ships from the USA, including floating base for torpedo boats, or minelayers. The construction of 6 torpedo boats at the expense of the USA began in Danish shipyards (AMW, Ref. No. 1584/57/13, Vol. 27, p. 3).

At the same time, the Soviet side began building the naval forces of the German Democratic Republic. Volksmarine, later the third largest navy in the naval forces of the Warsaw Pact, was established shortly after the creation of the GDR. Initially, it was only the maritime police, i.e., *Seapolizei*. Only after the formation of the *Nationale Volksmarine* in 1956, the maritime police was transformed into the naval forces called *Seestreitkräfte*, which at the end of 1956 changed its name to the *Volksmarine*, i.e., the People's Navy. Already then, thanks to the efforts of the USSR, it became a significant force in the western Baltic, having at its disposal frigates, torpedo chasers, and minesweepers, to name a few. In the 1960s, it was modernized, a new generation of ships was introduced (built in their shipyards), and frigates and torpedo boats were received from the USSR (Śmigielski, 1990, p. 15).

The process of forming the Navy as an independent type of armed forces, lasting over ten years, was concluded by the approval of the plan (August 1956). The navy became an operational union, enabling independent performance of tasks both at sea (based on ships and naval aviation) and on land in defence of the Main Base (coastal units of the Navy). The combat potential of our country's naval forces of that time was much smaller than the Baltic Fleet of the Soviet Union or the naval forces of Sweden, but it exceeded the naval forces of Finland, Denmark, and the forming *Bundesmarine* (AMW, Ref. No. 3533/75/21, Vol. 17, pp. 82–89).

The development of the Navy and the fleet of the Polish People's Republic depended on the development of the Soviet fleet. In January 1956, in connection with the establishment of the Warsaw Pact, as well as the signing of agreements on the reduction of armed forces in NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries, the Soviet side decided to create the Red Banner Baltic Fleet [*Krasnoznamenny Baltijskij Flot*] based on the potential of the 4th and 8th Fleets. Its task was to secure strategic stability in the Baltic Sea to the benefit of the USSR. At the same time, the "Sopka" and "P-15" missiles were included in the armament of Soviet ships (on a large scale,

from 1958). After the sinking of the Israeli destroyer by the “P-15” missile in 1967, “British naval historian Jeffrey Till considered this event as the beginning of a new era in the development of naval forces” (Przybylski, 2005, p. 63).

From 1956, ships from the Baltic Fleet of the USSR were transferred (for a fee, of course) to the Navy of the Polish People’s Republic. In the following years, in the form of a lease or purchase, next submarines of the “Malyutka” type, eight submarine chasers of the “122-bis” design, nineteen torpedo boats of the “183” project and two destroyers of the “30-bis” design (ORP “Wicher” and ORP “Grom”). Assistance was also received in the construction of the “254-K” design of base minesweepers and the “770” design of the landing ships. Among other reasons, these activities resulted from the plans to use the naval forces of the Polish People’s Republic to operate outside the Baltic Sea. The Soviet side believed that the Polish Navy was to be the second in the Warsaw Pact (later in the United Baltic Fleet), capable of performing combat tasks in the North Sea independently or in cooperation with the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the People’s Navy of the GDR (Przybylski, 2005, p. 64).

The Baltic Sea as an area of potential NATO-WP confrontation in the 1950s and 1960s

The Baltic Sea basin was perceived by NATO as an important component of the area of the potential NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontation, covering the region of the Baltic Straits, the Baltic Sea, and the North Sea. Both NATO and the Warsaw Pact recognized the fact that the loss of control over the straits meant that naval forces could neither enter nor leave the Baltic Sea. For NATO, the most urgent and at the same time the most important task was to equip the German and Danish navies with modern ships. Sergei Gorshkov drew attention to this type of operations, assessing the matter in the following way: “Although they do not have strong navies, Denmark, [...] West Germany, Norway [...] occupy an exceptionally convenient strategic position in the maritime theatres of operations and as a result, NATO can exercise permanent control over the exit from the Baltic Sea” (Gorszkow, 1979, p. 257). The significant role of the Danish and German navies in the NATO alliance presented by Gorshkov in the direction of the potential operations: the Baltic Straits – the Baltic Sea – the North Sea, was confirmed by Vice-Admiral Franz Ruge, who had been the commander of the *Bundesmarine* since 1956. He stated that: “The naval forces of the FRG will best contribute to the defence work by defending the Danish straits together with the Danish fleet (18 frigates, 20 torpedo boats, 6 submarines, and 36 minesweepers). If these narrows are closed it means

that there will be 100 to 150 fewer submarines to sow destruction in the Atlantic. It can be said that a future battle for the Atlantic will be decided 50% in the Danish straits” (Ruge, 1959, p. 36).

The confirmation of these postulations was the organization in the second half of the 1950s of a series of training sessions and exercises of the Danish, Norwegian, West German, and Swedish war fleets. And so, in August 1959, for example, naval exercises were held in the western region of the Baltic Sea. The British ships also took part in these exercises. The main objective was to improve the cooperation of the teams of these countries, which in the event of war, might be tasked with blocking the Danish Straits and fighting submarines.

Almost at the same time, i.e., in September 1959, for the first time, the Norwegian naval forces conducted an anti-landing defence and tactical landing exercise. The forces were dropped off on the western shore of the Oslofjord Bay. The main areas of independent combat training of the Norwegian naval forces were the Skagerrak Strait, the southern coast of Norway, and the Westfjord Bay. In May 1959, the naval forces of the German Federal Republic participated in exercises in the Baltic Sea focused on the minesweeping and mine protection of the Danish Straits. In September 1959, the Swedish naval forces on the island of Gotland held exercises aimed at fighting amphibious assaults (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/39, Vol. 20, pp. 16, 36, 42, 43–44).

Creating the so-called condensed naval forces of the Warsaw Pact countries took place practically after the creation of the naval forces of the GDR. J. Przybylski rightly notes that it was a process spread over time. In his opinion: “the formation of the United Baltic Fleet had been undertaken already in the years 1956–1957, when, in accordance with the decision of the authorities of Poland and East Germany, part of the armed forces of both countries was allocated to the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries” (Przybylski, 2005, p. 57). According to the strategic plans of the Soviet Union, it was up to Poland to prepare the allocated potential of its armed forces to execute possible military operations as part of the United Military Forces of the Warsaw Pact in two operational directions: Jutland and North Coast, that were part of the northern strategic direction (Puchała, 2010, p. 67).

The Soviet side decided that in the event of an armed conflict, Poland had to guarantee a base for the naval forces of the USSR Baltic Fleet. An example of this was the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement “On the Partial Stationing of the Soviet Union Fleet in Naval Bases, Ports and Airports of the People’s Republic of Poland, as Required by the Situation” (March 21, 1958) (IPN BU1420/1, pp. 132–148). Article I stipulates: “The contracting parties consider it expedient that, should the situation require it, part of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the

USSR should be based in naval bases, ports and airports of the People's Republic of Poland. The redeployment of part of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR to sea bases, ports and airports of the People's Republic of Poland shall be carried out on the basis of decisions of the governments of the People's Republic of Poland and the USSR". In the next article, the substantiation of getting acquainted with ports, basing and sailing conditions was indicated, therefore, for this purpose, ships of the Polish Navy would be sent to Soviet bases and ports, and the Baltic Fleet ships of the USSR would be sent to Polish ports, including the repairs. The most important content of this agreement was contained in Articles III and V, therefore it is worth quoting them to a large extent. In article III we read, among other things, that "in organizing the defence of the Gulf of Gdańsk and the southern part of the Baltic Sea, and in accordance with Article I of this agreement, the government of the People's Republic of Poland undertakes: a/ in accordance with Appendix No. 1, to allocate port quays, base objects and aircraft carriers for the duration of the stationing of the part of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR; b/ in accordance with Appendix No. 2, to allocate depots and capacities for the deployment and storage of ammunition, fuel and lubricants, ship equipment and other types of supplies necessary to provide for the part of the forces of the USSR Baltic Fleet based in the People's Republic of Poland. Whereas the Polish People's Republic will secure the acceptance of the above-mentioned stocks from the USSR for storage and their protection in the years 1958–1959; c/ for the duration of the temporary stationing of ships and aircraft of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR in the Polish People's Republic, on the basis of an agreement between the commander of the Polish Navy and the commander of the USSR Baltic Fleet, to allocate the minimum necessary number of barracks, accommodation, living and service facilities, or their part, for the seashore stationing of personnel of small surface ships, submarines, aircraft and coastal subunits. [...] The allocation for temporary use of the storage facilities, quays and other facilities listed in this document shall be carried out rent-free; to provide fuel and lubricants as well as other supplies owned by the People's Republic of Poland for the temporarily deployed ships and aircraft of the USSR Baltic Fleet. Payment settlement for the above-mentioned types of supplies shall be carried out on the basis of the current trade agreement".

In the next Article IV, the Soviet side undertook to maintain the efficiency of the quay and buildings, and to carry out repairs of its own ships and planes with its own means. However, in Article V, it was stated that: "During the period of temporary stationing, the staff of the ships and other units of the Baltic Fleet is subject to the current legal status of the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the People's Republic of Poland".

This document was the basis for the appointment of a commission whose task was to carry out the so-called field site inspection, as well as analyzing the possibility of storing equipment and technical and combat materials listed in the above agreement and indicating the places of their storage: Gdynia–Okcywie (Ostrowicki Gorge) and Hel Peninsula Naval Base.

At a joint conference of the representatives of the Navy of the USSR and the Polish People's Republic, on May 26–30, 1958, it was decided that the following issues should be agreed in detail between the staffs of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Navy of the Polish People's Republic: 1/ the development of plan of cooperation between the Soviet and Polish forces at the Świnoujście base for the Pomeranian Bay defence; the above plan should be approved by the commander of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the commander of the Navy of the Polish People's Republic; 2/ the agreement on the instructions for cooperation between the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Navy of the Polish People's Republic in defending the Gulf of Gdańsk, namely: a/ specifying the demarcation line, agreed upon at the conference, between the operational zones of the Gdynia and Baltiysk naval bases, b/ specifying the areas of ship surveillance in the Gulf of Gdańsk by the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Polish Navy, c/ determining the berthing location of Soviet and Polish ships in the harbours in their joint stationing in Polish ports and bases, d/ principles of cooperation between Soviet and Polish search-and-strike groups and supervision in the event of a joint search for submarines, e/ agreeing on the anti-cutter defence zone lines for Soviet and Polish ships jointly stationing in Polish ports and bases, f/ determining the responsibility sectors (zones) of Soviet and Polish ships in Polish ports and bases; g/ determining the (combat training) areas for the forces of the Baltic Fleets of the USSR and the Navy of the Polish People's Republic and the regulations for their use. In addition, it is purposeful to agree on the following issues during the meeting with representatives of the USSR Baltic Fleet: 1/ the method of using the forces of the USSR Baltic Fleet intended to strengthen surveillance and reconnaissance (system defence of the Main Base of the Polish Navy) – in the case of temporary stationing of the Soviet ships in Polish ports and bases; 2/ strengthening the OPL of the Main Base. Anti-aircraft artillery forces should be provided for in the mobilization plans of the Baltic Fleet, and their combat grouping should be determined as a matter of urgency; 3/ rules for deactivating Soviet ships temporarily stationed in Polish ports and bases; 4/ issues regarding the organization of exercises to test the jointly developed documents in real life (AMW, Ref. No. 3596/78/13, 1958, pp. 9–10).

The specified documents confirmed the idea of the operations of allied fleets to build the maritime security of these countries. In order to test their functioning

in the event of a potential threat from NATO fleets, in April 1958 a two-stage command and staff exercises were carried out on maps. Subject of the exercise: "Protection of the stationing and deployment of the fleet forces to carry out the blockade in the western part of the Baltic Sea by the forces of the Świnoujście Base – the Baltic Fleet of the USSR in cooperation with the ships, aviation and coastal troops of the People's Navy of the GDR and the Navy of the Polish People's Republic, while the means of mass destruction have been applied" (AMW, Ref. No. 2158/61/34, Vol. 12, p. 98). During the exercise, the cooperation among the groups of ships of the GDR, the Polish People's Republic, and the USSR was being developed. It had been considered advisable to have liaison officers, as well as to improve radio communication.

A few months later, in July 1958, a joint tactical exercise of the allied fleets was conducted regarding the subject above. Additionally, the aviation of the Northern Group of Soviet Forces and the Group of Soviet Forces stationed in the GDR were involved in the exercise. The entire exercise was led by the commander of the USSR Baltic Fleet, Admiral Kharlamov, together with officers of the Staff of the USSR Baltic Fleet (AMW, Ref. No. 2158/61/34, Vol. 12, p. 106).

In addition to the staff activities, conducting exercises in the waters of the Baltic Sea, officers of the Reconnaissance Unit of the Polish Navy participated in cruises aimed at conducting observations in the sea waters of NATO countries. In 1958, warships made 6 voyages through the Danish Straits. These included training ships, destroyers, submarines, large submarine chasers, and base minesweepers. In total, 220 officers took part in the exercises. During cruises on yachts (10 cruises – 62 officers) and during apprenticeships on merchant ships (in 1954 – 29 officers, in 1957 – 49 officers, in 1958 – 22 officers), they also became acquainted with the potential Theatre of War. The analysis of the area of the Baltic Straits and the North Sea was planned to be the subject of observation developed with the use of 6 voyages of warships, 7 voyages of yachts and through the apprenticeship on merchant ships for 25 officers (AMW, Ref. No. 2636/63/3, Vol. 28, p. 5).

In 1963, the commanders of the three fleets of the USSR, the GDR and the People's Republic of Poland implemented very important documents in order to improve the activities of the naval forces in the Baltic Sea. The documents included the "Instruction on reconnaissance between ships (vessels) of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, the Navy of the People's Republic of Poland and the People's Navy of the GDR". One may read in this document that: "The system of recognising ships (vessels) is intended for determining the nationality of ships while confronting them at sea or when sailing within the visibility range of the observation posts, as well as during joint operations of ships of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, ships of the Navy of

the Polish People's Republic and ships of the People's Navy of the GDR. The system of recognition consists of radar reconnaissance and visual reconnaissance, which complement each other. Timely recognition of the surface ships, submarines in surface position and aircraft by the radar is ensured by the activation of interrogators on the craft flying and cruising in the fleet operating areas, except for: 1/ 20-mile zone along the coast of Sweden and Denmark in the area east of the ARKONA lighthouse meridian; 2/ 12-mile sea zone along the coast of the above-mentioned countries in the region west of the ARKONA meridian. [...] Ship reconnaissance devices are switched on when ships leave their bases for the whole duration of their stay at sea, as well as when staying in unsecured harbours. [...] The interrogation signal in individual recognition systems is sent only after the basic 'same-other' recognition" (IPN, Ref. No. BU02958/87, pp. 350, 351, 354).

Another document included: "Instruction for ships of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, the Navy of the Polish People's Republic and the People's Navy of the GDR performing surveillance". It defined the rules of surveillance by ships of these three countries in the southern part of the Baltic Sea, including the approach to the Baltic Straits. The United Baltic Fleet [Polish: ZFB] included separate naval forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic functioning within its structure. The Armed Forces of the People's Republic of Poland constituted an important component of the ZFB. Owing to this, on the international arena we were perceived as an important component of the Warsaw Pact. This was confirmed by one of the great American diplomats, our compatriot Zbigniew Brzeziński: "Western observers who find Poles hostile to communism and Russia should not forget the fact that more and more Poles are starting to reason according to the following syllogisms: What would Poland mean under the western alliance? In Europe, it would rank below England, Germany, France, Italy and a dozen of other countries on a global scale [...]. Given the fundamental importance of the Germans to America, it would be a losing game in any Polish-German conflict [...]. In the socialist camp, the proportions are reversed. Poland, as the largest people's democracy, is the third on the list of socialist countries after the Soviet Union and China, and the second in Europe" (Brzeziński, 1964, p. 310).

Tasks for the Navy of the Polish People's Republic in the field of defence of the sea border were included in the operational plan for the defence of the country's territory (in 1962). It was then that a decision was made to base our defence system on two sets, the so-called external one and internal. The first one consisted of operational troops separated from the land forces and air force, as well as the Navy strike forces. Meanwhile, the second set consisted of remaining units, which were

mostly logistic units, and the forces that were part of the Territorial Defence Forces [Polish: OTK] were included in the second one.

The Naval Reconnaissance Unit continued to conduct activities aimed at monitoring NATO naval forces intended for operations in a potential armed conflict in the Baltic Sea. The information appearing in the Scandinavian press was analysed, for example, where Norway (in 1963) implemented its own policy including refusal to give the US permission to deploy missiles with nuclear warheads at the Norwegian bases. The Norwegian government also rejected proposals to participate in the so-called NATO's international and multilateral nuclear forces. The Norwegian naval forces that were in the process of implementing a 6-year fleet expansion plan covering the years 1962–1968, were to receive 10 guard ships, 15 submarines, 23 artillery boats, and eight torpedo boats as the result of the US financial support (AMW, Ref. No. 3351/70/10, Vol. 17, pp. 87–88). As for Denmark, the Danish government (in 1963) also refused to grant its consent for the deployment of nuclear weapons on its territory. As part of the implemented 5-year fleet development plan, it would include 1 submarine, 4 minelayers, 3 torpedo boats, 4 coastal defence boats, and 4 patrol boats into its service (AMW, Ref. No. 3351/70/10, Vol. 17, p. 94). Sweden, on the other hand, continued to pursue a policy of neutrality, taking care of the security of its own maritime border (AMW, Ref. No. 3351/70/10, Vol. 17, p. 95).

At the beginning of 1965, a spokesman for the Swedish General Staff reported that in the vicinity of Swedish territorial waters, in the area of the islands of Gotland and Gotska Sandön, and Landsort, units of the USSR and GDR naval forces sank some mysterious cylindrical containers 6–7 meters long and 2 meters in diameter in the sea. The task of dropping the objects took several days. It was assumed that they might have been some kind of alarm system or might have served as a navigation system for submarines. Since the operation had happened outside Swedish territorial waters, no action could have been taken to verify it (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/38, Vol. 20, p. 16). It was also then that the very important information for the Warsaw Pact countries appeared. The Scandinavian press reported that after the expiry of the Atomic Pact, in 1969, Norway would not renew its commitments and would conclude a defence alliance with Sweden. The Norwegian daily “Morgenposten” of October 2, 1965, reported that the Swedish government had established unofficial contacts with the Norwegian authorities regarding a possible defence alliance after the termination of Norway's commitments to NATO. Both the Norwegian and Swedish governments and the Ministry of National Defence denied the above information that was not good news for the Warsaw Pact (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/38, Vol. 20, p. 80).

The Headquarters of the United Baltic Fleet of the Warsaw Pact assumed that leaving the Baltic Straits in the hands of the NATO armed forces would create a situation that would enable NATO naval forces to close the only exit route for the Warsaw Pact naval forces to the North Sea. At the same time, it would enable NATO forces to deliver supplies by sea to the Baltic Sea. Therefore, the tasks carried out by the naval forces of the ZFB, together with the forces of the Polish Navy and the GDR would include: “1/ Destroying the enemy’s naval forces, and mainly its teams; 2/ incapacitating, and on some routes even breaking the enemy’s sea communications; 3/ protecting own sea communications; 4/ securing the operations of the land forces as regarded coastal operational directions” (*Rola i zadania...*, 1979, p. 9).

Taking over the control of the ZFB in the Baltic Sea was the most important element of the fleet operations of the allied countries. Achieving this goal was possible after prior taking control of the Baltic Straits. Therefore, it was necessary to develop effective mechanisms to guarantee the fast and safe transport and disembarkation of sea landing teams. The operation of NATO submarines in the Baltic Sea, whose task would be to destroy transport units and ships protecting the ZFB, was assumed (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/39, Vol. 14, p. 16).

All this required further reconnaissance activities in this area, as well as deep analyses. The assessment of the situation of the so-called Jutland direction indicated that the Danish naval forces could effectively block the Warsaw Pact landing forces on the approach to the Danish Straits with assault units including 3 submarines, about 100 guard ships (frigates) and 15 torpedo boats. It was stated that mine barrages could be expected in this area, which would be laid in the first days of the war, with the use of 10 special ships – minelayers. It was to be assumed that FRG ships including 4–5 destroyers, 3 submarines, and 25 torpedo would participate in the operations in the southern waters of the Baltic Sea in the defence of the straits (AMW, Ref. No. 3351/70/10, Vol. 17, p. 106). Further data confirmed that in the event of a conflict, in order to defend the Danish Straits and the entire western part of the Baltic Sea, not only the naval forces of the aforementioned countries, i.e., Denmark and the FRG, but also Norway would be involved including 3 destroyers, 5 guard ships, 8 submarines, 25 torpedo boats, 8 minelayers, and 11 minesweepers (AMW, Ref. No. 3616/79/5, Vol. 27, p. 370).

At that time, the Warsaw Pact assumed with certainty that for combat operations in the Baltic Sea, apart from the naval forces of the German Federal Republic, Denmark and Norway, the potential enemy would use separate forces of other NATO countries, mainly Great Britain and the USA. According to the analysis of the staff officers of the allied fleets (the USSR, the PPR, and the GDR), the frequency of the previous tactical exercises of NATO naval forces in the south-western Theatre of War

[Polish: TDW] was clearly higher than the frequency of exercises of the WP allied fleets in the Baltic Sea. The frequency of the sea goings and the number of hours that the ships of particular classes of naval forces of the FRG and Denmark spent on sea were, on average, 50% higher than that of the Navy of the Polish People's Republic (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/40, Vol. 21, p. 47). An additional analysis of documents from the reconnaissance of the exercises and other NATO organizational ventures indicated that one of the possible variants of a quick reinforcement of the air forces of the North European Theatre of War within a few days might include: 1/ redeployment of one squadron of British fighters (16 "Lightning" aircraft) to Denmark; 2/ following the completion of the redeployment of general service brigades, the formation of the units of the 38th British tactical group of transport aviation on the territory of Denmark (seven squadrons of C-130 transport planes and three squadrons of "Phantom" fighter-bombers; 3/ the deployment to the Norwegian Sea of the Airfield Strike Team consisting of one British strike carrier with 24 carriers of nuclear weapons and 2–3 US strike carriers; 4/ redeployment from Great Britain to southern Norway of two wings of the US fighter-bombers – 150 F-4 and F-100D aircraft. As a result of the redeployment of tactical and carrier aviation of Great Britain and the USA to the Strategic Area of the Danish Straits, the total number of aircraft in the Northern European Theatre of War would increase by about 400–480 aircraft and would include about 900 aircraft (BG AMW, Ref. No. 06387, p. 10).

This type of information led to the commander of the Navy of Polish People's Republic receive an order from the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces to develop a proposal for the adaptation and use of small civilian vessels (fishing boats, yachts) for reconnaissance in the south-western Baltic Sea and the Danish Straits. The subject of interest included the information on the location of radar stations and other electronic devices, necessary for the operation of NATO air and naval forces. Responding to the above letter, the commander of the Navy stated that: "the use of small civilian units is very limited due to the impossibility of installing appropriate measurement equipment on them. The units conducting radio-electronic reconnaissance would not be provided with full secrecy. The disclosure of active reconnaissance equipment on a commercial flag ship might result in grave disciplinary consequences. Therefore, these tasks could only be performed by units flying the war flag" (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/39, Vol. 20, pp. 251–252).

A question should be asked at this point whether this had been practiced until that time. Archival documents indicate that such activities had been implemented. This is confirmed by the reports on the course of operational studies for 1963, in which, among other things, we can read that: "the Navy, as every year, organized a number of cruises, in which training ships, destroyers, submarines, guard ships and

survey vessels took part. In total, 521 officers, 243 professional non-commissioned officers, and 1,221 non-commissioned officers and sailors of the basic service took part in them. Whereas, 10 voyages on warships and on training ships, yachts and merchant ships were planned to take place in 1964” (AMW, Ref. No. 3376/70/39, Vol. 20, pp. 276–277). Were the reconnaissance activities carried out with the use of yachts effective? Quite so, that is confirmed by reports from such cruises. One of them is the report of the Chief of the Main Staff of the Polish Navy, Rear Admiral Zygmunt Rudomino, to the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Jerzy Bordziłowski, in which we can read that: “Last year (1965) the reconnaissance cruise of the yacht ‘Kacper’ contributed to the acquisition of the valuable materials on the equipment of Danish ports and to study the possibility of dropping the units in Køge Bay”. The following part of this document presents the plan of the “Hetman” reconnaissance voyage on August 1–30, 1966. Cruise route included Gdynia – Travemünde – Kiel – Eckernförde – Flensburg – Frederikshavn – Copenhagen – Køge – Presto – Vordingborg – Nykøbing – Gdynia. What did the tasks involve? 1/ examining the equipment and possibilities of stationing warships in the planned berthing ports; 2/ determining whether there were military facilities in the ports, e.g., warehouses, barracks, observation and communication points, repair workshops and others; 3/ familiarizing officers with the systems of fairways, approaches to ports and the shape of the coastline; 4/ exploring the possibility of dropping the forces in the Romeklint and Begestron area from the sea and land, examining the possibility of placing anti-landing obstacles on the water and the distance of their placement from the shore; 5/ taking photo sketches and photos of characteristic sections of the above mentioned regions (AMW, Ref. No. 3558/76/1, Vol. 29, pp. 2–3, 154–155).

These operations did not go unnoticed by the Danish side, which ended with a diplomatic note addressed to the Polish embassy in Copenhagen. This document prohibited taking pictures in territorial waters and taking pictures of port facilities. On this basis, the chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces forbade the yacht crews to take photos, sketches and notes during their stay in the territorial waters and ports of Denmark and the German Federal Republic (AMW, Ref. No. 3558/76/1, Vol. 29, p. 159).

The collected materials were largely used in exercises on maps in the training group of the commander of the 1st Submarine Brigade in Gdynia on the topic of “Forcing the defensive line against submarines in the Atlantic and conducting and destroying enemy communications in the North Sea”. Another exercise involved the command and staff activities related to the “Organization and performance of amphibious operations in order seize control of the islands under threat of the

nuclear weapons in the initial period of the war”. The subject was dictated by the need for further training of officers in the field of combined sea-air landing operations. This exercise was one of the undertakings preceding the exercises with units planned by the Staff of the United Command of the Warsaw Pact. It took place at the turn of June and July 1967. At that time, a skeletal exercise of the allied forces was carried out under the code name “Bryza” [Breeze]. The entire exercise was led by the commander of the Polish Navy, and his deputies included the commander of the People’s Navy of the GDR and the deputy of the USSR Baltic Fleet and the commander of the Pomeranian Military District. This exercise made it possible to generate a new organizational structure of naval forces assigned by allied fleets to conduct amphibious operations, consisting in the creation of national amphibious teams. To some extent, it simplified and facilitated the command of allied forces during such operations (AMW, Ref. No. 3558/76/2, Vol. 14, pp. 25, 67, 83–84).

After its completion, at the end of July 1966, a multi-level bilateral, operational and tactical exercise was conducted by the High Command of the Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, devoted to the activities of the allied fleets in the Baltic Sea, with the landing of the sea and air units in the Ustka area. It was an exercise called “Baikal”. The aim of the exercise was to check the preparation of the headquarters of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, the Polish Navy, and the People’s Navy of the GDR to conduct landing activities as part of the strategic operation of the Coastal Front taking place in the initial period of the war with the use of conventional weapons, as well as in the case of using nuclear weapons. The exercise was carried out under the leadership of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal of the USSR, Andrei Grechko. It demonstrated that the only correct manner of disembarking troops in modern combat operations was the “shore-to-shore” method with the use of submarines. The adopted organization of the landing team on the basis of nationality passed the test (AMW, Ref. No. 3558/76/2, Vol. 14, pp. 118–119).

Conclusion

The conducted analyses of the direction and methods of training the German and Danish war fleets in the light of NATO tasks in the Baltic Sea confirmed that the naval forces of these countries attached great importance to joint training of minesweepers and minelayers. This resulted from the plans to block the Danish Straits in the event of military operations. In addition, loading of supplies onto ships using the method from the side was exercised. The American fleet was the model for

these activities, and its instructions and procedures were adopted. The implemented tasks included blocking the Danish Straits by laying mines, as well as maintaining sea communication, trawling of fairways, searching waters and fighting submarines, as well as leading convoys by sea and conducting limited offensive operations by air forces, submarines and torpedo boats against the vessels of the opponent (AMW, Ref. No. 3616/79/4, Vol. 7, pp. 147–148).

The location of the naval bases of Denmark, the German Federal Republic and Norway, and the fact that the navies had available the appropriate forces, i.e., destroyers, torpedo boats, minelayers and minesweepers, clearly emphasized the purpose of these units for the defence and blockade of the Danish Straits. Therefore, the potential actions of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries in the coastal operational direction would have to quickly lead to the control of the Danish Straits zone by carrying out activities in which the main role was to be played by land forces with the support of navies, air force and other types of armed forces of the Warsaw Pact. In the opinion of the staff officers, the offensive operation of the Coastal Front in the operational direction of north seaside and Jutland, with the simultaneous landing of sea and air units on the Danish islands, was to be the most logical and purposeful action in the initial period of the war. Gaining control of the Jutland Peninsula and the Danish islands was of particular importance, as it would have closed the exit of NATO naval forces to the Baltic Sea, and at the same time would enable the deployment of its own forces to the North Sea. Such a situation would provide a springboard for operations on the Scandinavian Peninsula and the possibility of supporting the land forces by the naval forces of the allied fleets during operations in the coastal operational direction.

And what about the Polish Navy fleet? Taking into account the role of the Navy of the Polish People's Republic in all tasks carried out by allied fleets, and its capabilities and conditions at the beginning of the war, it should have performed the following tasks: 1/ blockade of the Danish Straits in the direction of Trelleborg-Arkona (Strait of Øresund); 2/ landing of the units on the Danish islands and securing the deployment of naval forces to the North Sea; 3/ joint actions with the Land Forces and the National Defence Forces in defence of own coast; 4/ operations on the enemy's sea lines of communication; 5/ defending own sea lines of communication.

Other tasks were assigned to forces capable of quick action, i.e., missile boats and coastal artillery that would participate in the entire coastal defence: 1/ securing the system of station of own forces; 2/ combating enemy surface ships and submarines in coastal waters and at sea; 3/ fighting landing units at the sea crossing and in the area of landing; 4/ supporting land forces in combating enemy sea landings on the shore.

Apart from these tasks, the Navy of the Polish People's Republic could participate in: 1/ protecting the coastal wing of the land forces from the sea; 2/ supporting the wing of the land forces in operations in the coastal operational direction (AMW, Ref. No. 3616/79/7, Vol. 12, pp. 196–197).

What was the organization of NATO like in the period in question? In times of peace, the NATO military command did not have a combined naval force. However, there were permanently organized naval commands and staffs in all theatres of war. The task of these commands was to develop plans for the use of naval forces of NATO member states in individual waters, as well as to plan and conduct exercises and manoeuvres, and to coordinate the cooperation between individual national commands and integrated NATO commands. However, for the duration of the exercises, individual countries allocated appropriate naval forces under the NATO command. The development of weapons of mass destruction had made it necessary to introduce certain changes in the concept of using NATO naval forces in those years. Particular attention was paid to the development and use of medium-range airborne bombers and nuclear submarines with "Polaris" missiles, which were the main striking force of the naval forces. Intensive development of these forces resulted in an increase in the impact of missile-nuclear weapons of strategic importance from the regions of the North Sea, Norwegian Sea, Bay of Biscay, and the Mediterranean Sea on the areas of Central and Eastern Europe (AMW, Ref. No. 3616/78/4, Vol. 7, pp. 19–20).

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