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Baltic Sea during the Cold War: Polish-Soviet Maritime Cooperation

Morze Bałtyckie w dobie zimnej wojny. Polsko-radziecka współpraca morską

• Abstract •

The end of hostilities on the European continent brought a hot war to a close but started the Cold War. Differences in the approach to many political and military issues of the future world created a divide among the allies. Each of them wanted to play a dominant role in the new reality. The possession of dreadful new weapons, nuclear weapons, singled out two of the most important “players” in the new world – namely, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. They were quickly identified as “superpowers”. The European continent, battered by World War II, was divided into two almost equal parts (arrangements in Tehran between Great Britain and the USSR, confirmed in Yalta), with the border running through the German territory. The dynamics of political changes in Europe led to the formation of the so-called Treaty of Dunkirk.

• Abstrakt •

Koniec II wojny światowej oznaczał wygaszenie działań wojennych na kontynencie europejskim i początek zimnej wojny. Różnice w podejściu do wielu kwestii politycznych i militarnych spowodowały podział wśród sojuszników. Każdy z nich chciał odegrać dominującą rolę w nowej rzeczywistości. Posiadanie broni nuklearnej wzmocniło dwóch najważniejszych „graczy” w nowym świecie – Stany Zjednoczone i Związek Radziecki. Kontynent europejski, zniszczony przez II wojnę światową, został podzielony na dwie niemal równe części (porozumienia w Teheranie między Wielką Brytanią a ZSRR, potwierdzone w Jałcie), przy czym granica przebiegała przez terytorium Niemiec. Dynamika zmian politycznych w Europie doprowadziła do powstania tzw. Traktatu Dunkierskiego.

At that time the Baltic Sea was the lens in which political and military events on the European continent focused. When the temperature in the East-West relations was rising, conceptual work began on the use of NATO and Warsaw Pact naval forces in the Baltic Sea. That work was subsequently verified during exercises that both sides conducted in this water region. The Baltic Straits were the proverbial “apple of one’s eye” – controlled by NATO naval forces but craved for by the naval forces of the United Baltic Fleet, seeking to take them over. And that was the most important problem of the Cold War: what to do and how to move the naval forces of the United Baltic Fleet to the North Sea. NATO, on the other hand, contemplated what to do and how to prevent that undertaking from happening. The Warsaw Pact’s concepts included the conquest of the Baltic Straits, occupation of the Jutland Peninsula, and launch of sea and land operations in the west direction. It was also assumed that NATO naval forces could carry out operations from the sea to the coast of the Polish People’s Republic and to that of the German Democratic Republic. Therefore, those variants were analyzed and exercised within the United Baltic Fleet and under the so-called combined forces (land and air).

This article has been prepared based on Polish and foreign literature as well as archival materials from the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Gdańsk, the Archives of New Records in Warsaw, and the Naval Archives in Gdynia.

Keywords: political and military situation in Europe in 1945–1991; international security; cooperation between the Polish Navy and the United Baltic Fleet; maritime security of a state

Bałtyk był wówczas soczewką, w której skupiały się wydarzenia polityczne i militarne na kontynencie europejskim. Gdy temperatura w stosunkach Wschód–Zachód rosla, zostały podjęte prace koncepcyjne nad wykorzystaniem sił morskich NATO i Układu Warszawskiego na Morzu Bałtyckim. Prace te zostały następnie zweryfikowane podczas ćwiczeń, które obie strony prowadziły w tym akwenie. Cieśniny Bałtyckie były przysłowiowym „oczkiem w głowie” – kontrolowanym przez siły morskie NATO, ale pożądanym przez siły morskie Zjednoczonej Floty Bałtyckiej, pragnące je przejąć. Był to najważniejszy problem zimnej wojny: co zrobić i jak przenieść siły morskie Zjednoczonej Floty Bałtyckiej na Morze Północne. NATO natomiast zastanawiało się, co zrobić i jak zapobiec realizacji tego przedsięwzięcia.

Koncepcje Układu Warszawskiego obejmowały podbój Cieśnin Bałtyckich, okupację Półwyspu Jutlandzkiego oraz rozpoczęcie działań morskich i lądowych w kierunku zachodnim. Zakładano także, że siły morskie NATO będą mogły prowadzić działania od morza do wybrzeży PRL i Niemieckiej Republiki Demokratycznej. W związku z tym warianty te poddano analizie i ćwiczeniom w ramach Zjednoczonej Floty Bałtyckiej oraz w ramach tzw. sił połączonych (lądowych i powietrznych).

Artykuł powstał w oparciu o literaturę polską i zagraniczną oraz materiały archiwalne z Archiwum IPN w Gdańsku i Archiwum Marynarki Wojennej w Gdyni.

Słowa kluczowe: sytuacja polityczna i militarna w Europie w latach 1945–1991; bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe; współpraca Marynarki Wojennej RP ze Zjednoczoną Flotą Bałtycką; bezpieczeństwo morskie państwa

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, Poland has 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., “Agreement between PKWN

and the Government of the USSR on the Polish-Soviet State Border”, Moscow, July 22, 1944, “Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Polish-Soviet Cooperation”, Moscow, April 21, 1945, “Border Agreement between Poland and the USSR”, Moscow, August 16, 1945, “Agreement between Poland and the USSR on Compensation for Damage Caused by the German Occupation”, Moscow, August 16, 1945 (Zajac, 2005, pp. 47–54).

These documents, and especially the second, 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 (2009), we were dealing with the so-called protectorate type restriction. This was due to the fact that a strong state, in this case the USSR, secured its interests by influencing the personal composition of state authorities, and thus the political system. Thus, it was possible to force consent to the presence of one’s own on the territory of a given state (Werblan, 2009, p. 104). It has been realized. The Red Army (later Soviet) was stationed on Polish territory, and additionally about 7,000 Soviet officers served in the units of the Polish Army, almost in all command and staff positions. According to Edwarda Nalepa, “in the years 1943–1944, the service of Soviet officers in the Polish Army was not regulated by any legal acts or normative documents. They were usually guided by ‘arrangements’ at a high political-military level” (1995). It was not until the beginning of 1945 (January 15), after arrangements between the Supreme Command of the Red Army and the Supreme Command of the Polish Army, that order No. 41 “On the Mode of Military Service of Generals and Officers of the Red Army Detached to the Polish Army” (Nalepa, 1995, p. 14) was published. In order to prepare the foreground for Soviet officers in the Polish Army, demobilization was carried out, which paved the way for the removal of some pre-war officers with anti-communist views. In a short time, Soviet command and organizational structures, as well as a system of military ranks, were introduced in all armies of states (except Polish) subordinated to the Kremlin.

The Navy also did not miss the “purge” among the officers and non-commissioned officers. Pre-war officers who returned from captivity and those who came from Great Britain were released. Some of them were sentenced to death in the so-called trumped-up trials, and others to long prison terms. The documents regulating the rules of military service were changed by introducing the decree “On the Military Service of Officers of the Polish Army” and the ordinance of the Minister of National Defense of May 1948 “On the Military Service of Officers of the Polish Army” (Będzmirowski, 2007, p. 26). By virtue of these documents, non-commissioned officers of professional services were appointed to the first officer rank, and some officers from the pre-war and war period did not receive further promotions. In

the years 1945–1950, 522 officers were dismissed from the Navy (Będzmirowski, 2007, p. 35). The aim of the article is to present, in a nutshell, the issues related to Polish maritime security during the so-called Cold War.

Polish-Soviet cooperation after World War II

As in the interwar period, after the war, for the Command of the Armed Forces an urgent task was to create its own system of education and training of personnel. On January 18, 1946, an order was issued to establish the Officers' School of the Polish Navy, while the education process began in July 1946. In 1955, it was transformed into the Higher School of the Polish Navy, and on July 17, 1987, it became the Naval Academy. Despite many difficulties resulting from the lack of didactic base, teaching staff, the education process has begun. For the first dozen or so years, its graduates were second lieutenants of the MW, but with secondary technical education. It was only after 1956 that the first officer rank of the Navy was promoted and received an engineering and master's diploma. This would not have been possible in such a short time if it had not been for the cooperation in the field of officer training with Polish civilian universities (MW officers studied there, and the staff from these universities were lecturers at OSMW or WSMW), military, i.e., the Military Technical Academy and the General Staff Academy, and Soviet naval military universities and East German university in Dresden (before the war British and French naval military universities, and during the war British training centers of the Royal Navy educated staff for the Polish Navy) (Będzmirowski, 2012, pp. 232–233).

When Marshal Rokossovsky took over the post of Minister of National Defense, the officers of the Ministry of Defense, after meeting the criteria (not only ideological, but mainly knowledge of exact sciences and predictions to take up a specific official position), were directed to Soviet naval military universities (there was no such university in Poland). There they gained specialist knowledge at a high level, as well as master's degrees (later also directed cadets of the Ministry of Defense), as well as doctoral degrees. The classes were conducted by Soviet officers (Russians, Ukrainians), many of whom were commanders of flotillas and fleets, with great theoretical and practical knowledge. After returning to the country, graduates (officers of the MW) took up scientific and didactic positions at WSMW, enabling the University to launch postgraduate studies for MW officers. An interesting fact is that the so-called group of ideological subjects in Soviet universities accounted for 9% of the total education program, while in Annapolis (USA) of the American

Naval University, the group of these subjects accounted for 25% of the general education program.

In 1954–1989, 328 officers of the Navy graduated from Soviet universities, and 25 officers obtained a doctoral degree. In the years 1977–1990, 18 officers of the Navy graduated from the military university in Dresden (German Democratic Republic). The MW officers finished their education at Soviet universities and the GDR university in 1990, and returned to Poland (Będźmirowski, 2001a, pp. 367–376).

After the end of World War II, the basic task of the Ministry of Defense, which was to ensure the maritime security of the state border, was hindered not only by staffing problems. It was a matter of equipment and armament, especially ships. The winding ones that returned to the country from Great Britain and Sweden for the most part had their weapons and equipment disassembled. The British dismantled everything that was mounted on them during the war, although the Polish side paid for everything. The PMW had to pay even for ammunition, food, water, and fuel, even though it fought alongside the Royal Navy. Sadly, these are the facts (Będźmirowski, 2001b, pp. 73–74).

In the period preceding the establishment of the Warsaw Pact (in the years 1945–1955), everything that was related to the protection and defense of the Baltic Sea against the potential threat from NATO, was taken over by the Soviet Union. These are its land forces and air force (stationed on the Polish territory the Northern Group of Troops of the Soviet Army [hereinafter PGW AR]), and ships that are part of the 4th and 8th Infantry Divisions. The Baltic Fleet controlled the waters along the Polish maritime border (although at that time it was conventional). These ships “formed [...] a strong combat group. It remained in a state of high alert and was capable of repelling enemy’s aggression coming from the western sea direction. Both formations [i.e., 4th and 8th – J.B.] joined to organize 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 Northern Group of Soviet Troops in Poland and Group of Soviet Troops stationed in the GDR” (Przybylski, 2005, pp. 59–60).

The 4th component played an important role in the performance of these tasks. Baltic Fleet, not operationally subordinate to the Soviet Army PGW (subordinated to the Baltic Fleet Command in Baltiysk), and stationed in the port of Świnoujście [former Kriegsmarine base – J.B.]. In the initial period, it was a squadron of minesweepers, whose task was to demine ports along the coast, as well as the so-called water approach tracks 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 to the commander of the Polish Navy, Polish officer Capt. Adam Mohuczy, by Rear Admiral Nikolai Abramov. At that time, i.e., on January 4, 1946, there was a meeting between Capt. A. Mohuczy and the naval attaché at the British Embassy, Captain Harry Petrie. This conversation was presented in a report sent to the British Ambassador, quoted as follows: “Commander Mohuczy informed me that the Soviets do not intend to carry out any more operations to clear the Gulf of Gdańsk from mines. [...] what drew my attention was the lack of discernment of what minefields had been deployed by the Germans in the Gulf of Gdańsk. Mohuczy first of all told me that he was in possession of boards depicting the arrangement of these fields. He did not know, however, what kind of mines were depicted there. [...] He later added that he was not sure where those plans were, and perhaps they might have even got lost. I suspect that the Soviets are holding them” (*Secret Report No. 2 NAP/R/3*, 1946, 2).

In addition to the aforementioned Soviet naval forces stationed in Świnoujście, there were: a Soviet patrol squadron, a marine battalion, and a coastal artillery battalion, whose task was to protect against enemy actions from the sea. At the time of the creation of the Warsaw Pact, a squadron of Soviet torpedo boats additionally arrived in Świnoujście. There were also security (logistics) units, an anti-aircraft artillery regiment, and a communication node. Until 1960, the Świnoujście Naval Base also included a fighter aviation division of the USSR Baltic Fleet, whose task was to defend the Polish coast from Świnoujście to Ustka.

The stay of Soviet officers in the Polish Navy, as well as the assumption of the position of Minister of National Defense by Marshal Konstanty Rokossovsky, caused that the existing organization of the Command of the Polish Navy and the organizational structure of the MW based in large part on pre-war models was modified. The model was the structures of the 4th and 8th Fleets of the Soviet Union. The basis for the implementation of these and other changes was the order of the Minister of National Defense, dated July 21, 1950, which stated: “The commander and staff of the Navy had no interest whatsoever in combat training, they had not yet been able to organize it and put it at the appropriate level. [...] During the 5 years of its existence, the Naval Command has not developed and issued the necessary, modern regulations and instructions of the Polish Navy. The Navy is still using the outdated RSO [Regulations of Ship Service – J.B.] from 1937. [...] The commander of the Polish Navy will appoint a commission to develop a new RSO – based on Soviet regulations” (AMW, Sign. 231/2, 1950, p. 90).

At the beginning of the 1950s, the Polish navy as a whole did not constitute any tactical or operational relationship, because it consisted of ad hoc units, differing in displacement, armament and equipment, having ships only for the implementation

of the practical training process. Approval of the plan (August 1956) completed more than a decade of building the Navy as an independent branch of the armed forces. It became an operational union, enabling independent performance of tasks both at sea (based on ships and naval aviation) and on land in defense of the Main Base (coastal units of the Polish Navy). At that time, the combat potential of our country's naval forces 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 emerging *Bundesmarine* (AMW, Ref. 3533/75/21, Vol. 157, 1956, pp. 82–89).

According to Jerzy Przybylski, “in the years 1951–1955, all major positions in the PMW were held by Soviet officers. In total, from 1945 to December 1955, 97 Soviet officers served on a rotational basis in command positions and in schools and institutions of the Navy, including 4 admirals and 15 commanders (captains of the first rank)” (2007, p. 15). In the following years, many Soviet officers left their command and management positions, but some of them remained, acting as military advisors in larger units of the naval armed forces.

The Baltic Sea basin was perceived by NATO as an important component of a potential NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation area, covering the Baltic Straits, the Baltic Sea, and the North Sea. Both NATO and the Warsaw Pact were aware of the fact that the loss of control over the straits is synonymous with the inability of naval forces to enter or exit 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. This type of action was pointed out by Sergey Gorshkov, who assessed it in this way: “Denmark, [...] West Germany, Norway [...], although they do not have strong fleets, they occupy an exceptionally convenient strategic position in the maritime theaters of operations, as a result of which NATO can exercise permanent control over the exit from the Baltic Sea” (Gorszkow, 1979, p. 257). The significant role of the Danish and FRG navies in the NATO alliance for potential actions – the Baltic Strait – the Baltic Sea – the North Sea, presented by Gorshkov, was confirmed by Vice Admiral Franz Ruge, who had been the commander of the *Bundesmarine* since 1956. He stated that “the FRG naval forces will best contribute to the work of defense by working together with the Danish fleet (18 frigates, 20 torpedo boats, 6 submarines, and 36 minesweepers) to defend the Danish straits. Closing the straits means reducing between 100 and 150 submarines operating in the Atlantic. Therefore, it can be said that the future naval war in the Atlantic will be half decided in the Danish straits” (Ruge, 1959, p. 36).

Cooperation of Warsaw treaty allied fleets for security in the Baltic Sea Basin

The existence of the Warsaw Pact, and from 1956 the entry of the National People's Army of the GDR and its navy, created at that time, enabled the development of wider cooperation in the field of defense potential development and the development and implementation of a common security policy. It was relatively aimed at defending the land and sea borders of the member states against aggression from NATO countries.

The creation of the so-called condensed naval forces of the Warsaw Pact countries took place practically after the creation of the naval forces of the GDR. Przybylski rightly observes that it was a process spread over time. In his opinion: "the formation of the United Baltic Fleet was already undertaken in the years 1956–1957, when, in accordance with the decision of the Polish and GDR authorities, part of the armed forces of both countries was placed at the disposal of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries" (Przybylski, 2005, p. 57). This was in line with the general assumptions of the strategic plan of the Soviet Union, as pointed out by Franciszek Puchała: "from 1955, the United Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact were to prepare for possible military operations on the Western theater of war [hereinafter ZTDW]. According to the strategic plans of the Soviet Union, it was up to the Polish to prepare a separate potential of its armed forces to conduct possible military operations in the composition of the IMS UW in two operational directions: Jutland and the north-coastal, which were part of the northern strategic direction" (Puchała, 2010a, p. 67).

Both the USA and the USSR very meticulously accounted for the members of the alliances for their military support. An example of this was the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement "On the Partial Basing of Part of the Soviet Union's Fleet Forces in Naval Bases, Ports and Airports of the People's Republic of Poland in Cases When the Situation Requires It" (21.3.1958) (IPN, Ref. BU1420/1, 1958, pp. 132–148). Article I states: "The Contracting Parties consider it expedient that in the event that the situation so requires, 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 transfer of part of the Baltic Fleet forces of the USSR to naval bases, ports and airports of the People's Republic of Poland will be carried out on the basis of the decision of the governments of the People's Republic of Poland and the USSR". In the next article, it was pointed out that it is necessary to familiarize oneself with ports, conditions of basing and sailing, which is why for this purpose the ships of the Polish People's Republic will be sent to Soviet bases and ports, and

the Baltic Fleet ships of the USSR to Polish ports, as well as for repairs. The most important content of this agreement is contained in Articles III and V, which is why it is worth quoting them *in extenso*. In Article III we read, among other things, that “[...] in organizing the defense 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/ to separate port quays, base facilities and aircraft carriers for the duration of basing part of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR – in accordance with Annex No. 1; b/ to allocate – in accordance with Annex No. 2 – depots and capacities for the placement and storage of ammunition, propellants and lubricants, ship equipment and other types of supplies necessary to secure part of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR based in the People’s Republic of Poland. At the same time, the People’s Republic of Poland in the years 1958–1959 will secure the acceptance for safekeeping of the above-mentioned stocks from the USSR and their protection; c/ during the period of temporary basing of ships and aircraft of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR in the People’s Republic of Poland, to allocate, on the basis of an agreement between the commander of the Polish Navy and the commander of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, the minimum necessary number of barracks, residential, living and service facilities or part of them, for the deployment of small surface ships, submarines, aircraft and subunits on the shore. [...] The allocation for temporary use of the warehouses, quays and other facilities mentioned in this document will be carried out without rents; 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 Article IV, the Soviet side undertook to maintain the quay, buildings, repairs of its own ships and aircraft by its own means. However, in the fifth article, it was written: “During the period of temporary basing, the composition of ships and other units of the Baltic Fleet applies to the current legal status of Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the People’s Republic of Poland”.

This document was the basis for the establishment of a commission, whose task was to conduct the so-called site inspection in the field, as well as to analyze the possibilities of storing equipment and technical-combat materials listed in the above agreement and to indicate the places of their storage. And so: in Gdynia–Oksywie (Ostrowicki Gorge), a storage of 25 wagons was proposed. It was necessary to install lightning arresters, lay 500 m² of substrate from wooden sleepers and provide tarpaulins to cover the ammunition. The cost of implementation was about PLN 150,000, and the annual operating cost – about PLN 50,000. In this area, it was

necessary to build one “shed” on a concrete floor, equipped with a manual crane with a load capacity of 1000 kg. Storage area was approximately 300 m². In this room there was to be a place for torpedo heads from 5 wagons and depth charges from 10 wagons. The cost of building a “shed” was about PLN 350,000. In addition, a warehouse with a total area of 25 m² had to be built to store detonators from one wagon. The construction site was estimated at about PLN 40,000 (IPN, Ref. BU1420/1, 1958, pp. 145–146).

But this was not the end of the “wishes” of the Soviet side, which were included in the aforementioned agreement. In the further part we read: “15 torpedo wagons will be stored in Torpedo Hall No. 1. Due to the makeshift and worn-out nature of the bridge that connected the Torpedo Hall with the mainland, the commission proposed to build an additional quay with a crane, enabling the loading of torpedoes for water transport. However, for 30 wagons with trawl equipment, the commission proposed to store them either on the existing concrete slab by the pool No. XI, or in the guarded area of 28 BAS [Permanent Artillery Battery Gdynia-Oksywie – J.B.]. Here, a concrete slab with an area of about 300 m² had to be built, and the cost of this undertaking oscillated around PLN 30,000. If the Soviet side did not accept these proposals, a shelter would have to be built uncovered on a concrete substrate, and the cost is about PLN 300,000. In addition to the 30 wagons, the commission had to prepare suitable places for 15 wagons of shipbuilding, technical and medical-sanitary equipment. It was agreed that the technical equipment would be deposited in the 10th Depot of Technical and Ship Equipment, and the medical-sanitary equipment in the 11th Depot of Medical-Sanitary Equipment. Almost 50 tons of lubricating oils in barrels will be stored in CPN Depot No. 7, and 4 tons of fuel (mazut) only after the construction of the fuel base by the Ministry of Shipping and Water Management as part of the expansion of the port of Gdynia” (IPN, Ref. BU1420/1, 1958, pp. 146–147).

Another place designated by the Soviet side was the War Port of Hel Peninsula. There it belonged: “construction of a shed on concrete ground for 11 wagons with depth charges. The cost of this undertaking – about PLN 300,000. On the other hand, 29 wagons of trawl equipment had to be placed in the technical and ship warehouse of the Hel War Port Command, as well as 400 tons of diesel and 50 tons of lubricating oils. In addition, it was necessary to build a shed for about PLN 40,000” (IPN, Ref. BU1420/1, 1958, p. 147). Also, in the Ustka and Kołobrzeg there were to be stored: equipment, armament, and propellants. The security of material storage in all these ports was to amount to about PLN 1 million, excluding operating costs. In view of the fact that the costs of construction of shelters will be charged to the investment limit of MW, the Commission proposed to apply to the

General Staff for additional loans for the implementation of these projects (IPN, Ref. BU1420/1, 1958, p. 148). Many of these projects have been implemented.

The launch of decisive actions to expand the combat potential of the Armed Forces of the People's Republic of Poland resulted from the concepts that were presented at the forum of the decision-making body of the Warsaw Pact. This is confirmed by F. Puchała, recalling the content of Piotr Jaroszewicz's speech: "despite the alliance with the Soviet Union in the event of a great conflict in the East, Asia or the Middle East, Poland would first of all have to ensure the defense of its western border against aggression, which was not excluded" (Puchała, 2011, p. 176).

At the joint conference of representatives of the USSR and the Polish Navy, which took place 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 Polish Navy: "1/ the development of a plan for cooperation of Soviet and Polish forces of the Świnoujście base, in the defense of the Pomeranian Bay, the above plan should be approved by the commander of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the commander of the Polish Navy; 2/ agreeing on the orders for cooperation of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Navy of the People's Republic of Poland in the defense of the Gulf of Gdańsk, namely: a/ specifying the demarcation line agreed at the conference between the operational zones of the Gdynia and Baltic naval bases, b/ specifying the ship supervision areas of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Polish Navy in the Gulf of Gdańsk, c/ agreement on the location of the berth of Soviet and Polish ships on roadsteads with their joint basing 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 frontiers of anti-cutter defense with joint basing of Soviet and Polish ships in Polish ports and bases, f/ agreeing on sectors (zones) of responsibility of Soviet and Polish ships in Polish ports and bases, g/ agreeing on the regions (training grounds) of combat training of the forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Polish Navy, and the rules for their use. In addition, it is advisable to agree during the meeting with representatives of the USSR Baltic Fleet on the following issues: 1/ how to use the forces of the USSR Baltic Fleet intended – in the case of temporary stationing of Soviet ships in Polish ports and bases – to strengthen surveillance and reconnaissance (defense system of the Main Base of the Polish People's Republic); 2/ strengthening the Main Base OPL. It is believed that the Baltic Fleet should allocate an appropriate number of medium and small caliber anti-aircraft artillery to cover ships based in ports and on the roadsteads of the Main Base. Anti-aircraft artillery forces should be provided for in the mobilization plans of the Baltic Fleet, and their battle group should be determined as a matter of urgency; 3/ rules for the

deactivation of Soviet ships temporarily based in Polish ports and bases; 4/ issues related to the organization of exercises to test jointly developed documents in real life (AMW, Sign. 3596/78/13).

In 1963, the commanders of three fleets: FB USSR, LMW GDR, and MW PRL in order to improve the activities of naval forces in the Baltic Sea, implemented very important documents. Among them was 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”. In this document, among other things, one can find the following records: “The system of reconnaissance of ships (vessels) is designed to determine the nationality of ships while confronting them at sea or while sailing within the range of visibility of observation posts, as well as during joint operations of ships of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, ships of the Navy of the People’s Republic of Poland and ships of the People’s Navy of the GDR. The reconnaissance system consists of radar reconnaissance and visual reconnaissance, which complement each other. Timely recognition of surface ships, surface submarines and aircraft by means of radar shall be ensured by incorporating interrogation devices on them during flights and sailing in fleet operational zones, with the exception of: 1/ 20-mile zone along the coast of Sweden and Denmark in the area east of the ARKONA lighthouse meridian; 2/ 12 nautical miles along the coast of the said countries in the region west of the ARKONA meridian. [...] Ship reconnaissance devices are activated during the departure of ships from bases for the entire period of their stay at sea, as well as during stops on unsecured roadsteads. [...] The interrogative signal in individual recognition systems is sent only after the basic recognition of ‘own-foreign’” (IPN, Ref. BU02958/87, 1963–1974, pp. 350, 351, 354).

The next document was “the Instruction for Ships of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, the Navy of the People’s Republic of Poland and the People’s Navy of the GDR Performing Supervision”. It defined the rules for the surveillance of ships of these three countries in the southern part of the Baltic Sea, including the approach to the Baltic Straits. In the United Baltic Fleet (ZFB), its structure included the naval forces of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic. The Armed Forces of the People’s Republic of Poland were an important component of the ZFB. Thanks to this, we were perceived internationally as an important component of the Warsaw Pact. This was confirmed by one of the eminent American diplomats, our compatriot Zbigniew Brzeziński: “Western observers who state the hostility of Poles towards communism and Russia should not forget about the fact that more and more Poles are beginning to reason according to the following syllogisms: What would Poland mean within the framework of the

Western alliance? It would occupy a subordinate place in Europe after England, Germany, France, Italy and a dozen other countries on a global scale [...]. Given the fundamental importance of the Germans to America, it would be losing the 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" (1964, p. 310).

Tasks for the Navy of the People's Republic of Poland in the field of maritime border defense were included in the operational plan for the defense of the country's territory (in 1962). At that time, the decision was made to base our defense system on two systems, the so-called external and internal. The first one consisted of operational troops separated from land forces and aviation, as well as strike forces of the Polish Navy. In the second, the remaining units, which are predominantly logistic units and forces that were part of the Territorial Defense Forces [Polish: OTK], were placed.

The staff of the United Baltic Fleet of the Warsaw Pact assumed that leaving the Baltic Straits in the hands of NATO armed forces would create a situation that would consequently close the only way out for the naval forces of the Warsaw Pact 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 ZFB naval forces, together with the forces of the Polish People's Republic and the GDR, included: "1/ Destruction of the enemy's naval forces, and mainly of its teams; 2/ incapacitation, and on some routes even interruption of the enemy's maritime communications; 3/ protection of own maritime communications; 4/ securing the activities of the land army in the coastal operational directions" (*Rola i zadania...*, 1979, p. 9).

The takeover of the Baltic Sea by ZFB was the most important element of the operations of the fleet of the allied countries. Achieving this goal was possible after the earlier takeover of the Baltic Straits. Therefore, it was necessary to develop effective mechanisms to guarantee the rapid and safe transport and disembarkation of amphibious landing teams. Among other things, the operation of submarines of NATO countries in the Baltic Sea was assumed, whose task was to destroy transport units and screening ships of ZFB (AMW, Sign. 3376/70/39, 1965, p. 16).

At the beginning of 1976, the Armed Forces of the People's Republic of Poland were bound by: a directive of the Minister of National Defense and a resolution of the National Defense Committee, which regulated, i.a., the scope of work and the responsibility of the Naval Command for the organization of the defense of the maritime border. In particular, the importance of naval forces in defending the

border and Polish interests in the Baltic Sea, as well as the necessary equipment for ships with a new generation of weapons and equipment, were strongly emphasized. The lack of funds for the development of combat potential meant that the Navy of the People's Republic of Poland already in 1980 in terms of combat potential began to give way to the naval forces of the GDR.

Since 1981, a slow but systematic decline in the real forces of the Polish People's Republic has begun. In fact, until the mid-1980s, the basic task of the Polish People's Republic was to participate in allied activities as part of the United Baltic Fleet. Only in 1987, in accordance with the new coalition doctrine, the naval forces of the United Baltic Fleet were for the first time entrusted with the defense task of conducting an anti-landing operation. It also spoke of "the first defensive operation of the fleet", but defensive only in name, because the goal was to "repel the aggression of the enemy and create conditions for the destruction of his forces".

In June 1988, the "SHIELD-88" exercise was carried out, and its topic was: "Preparation and conduct of a coalition-front-front defensive operation in the early period of the war under conditions of the use of conventional means of destruction" (IPN, Ref. BU1420/108 4046/92/655, 1988, p. 6). This exercise took into account the operation of the MW forces, whose task was to participate in the strategic defensive operation on ZTDW, carried out for the first time by the United Baltic Fleet. It consisted in repelling the enemy's aggression from the sea and from the air, and thus preventing it from approaching selected objects located on the territory of Poland. The actions were successful for the ZFB forces.

Conclusion

In 1989, socio-economic changes were initiated in Central Europe, which definitely changed the political and military situation in this region. Farewell ceremonies ending the long-term cooperation of the staffs of the other two allied fleets, i.e., the Baltic Fleet of the USSR and the Navy of the People's Republic of Poland, took place on December 13, 1990, in Hel. Finally, cooperation within the United Baltic Fleet of the Warsaw Pact formally ended on April 1, 1991.

The entire Polish border security system at that time was developed on the basis of arrangements (although not always) with the Soviet side. These arrangements were binding on the other Warsaw Pact countries. They were aimed at consolidating the national armed forces of the Warsaw Pact member states into one common whole forming the United Armed Forces, headed by the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces. In the case of the Polish People's Republic, it was included in the United

Baltic Fleet (as part of the exercises). It should be emphasized that all issues related to defense assumptions were decided by the command of the Warsaw Pact, and the basis was the international situation resulting from the Cold War rhetoric.

The world has changed. Today's allies have become enemies and former enemies have become allies. Unfortunately, politics is created by politicians. Their visions and concepts can destroy world peace in a matter of hours. Security is not given once and for all. It needs to be taken care of.

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