



# A DIFFERENT VARIANT

AN ANALYSIS OF A CHOSEN CONFLICT VARIANT  
ON POLISH TERRITORY



# **A Different Variant**

**An analysis of a chosen conflict variant on Polish territory**

**Ad Arma Foundation**

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# 1. Introduction

Broadly speaking, there has been an observable growth in public interest in matters of external security since 2014. In the Foundation's view, this has been brought about by several factors, including (1) a significant change in the security of the country's neighborhood (events in Ukraine); (2) the entry into adulthood of a generation of Poles who are at once more inquisitive concerning surrounding phenomena and are not saddled with the mental inhibitions derived from the PRL (Polish People's Republic) period and the difficult transition of the 1990s; (3) growth in personal wealth throughout society, facilitating greater pursuit of personal interests or even fads; (4) the revolution in information access both in its primary form (raw accounts direct from the place of the event, or original documents) and in its secondary form (synthesized into reports, lectures, debates, etc.). The significance of media diversity, especially in Internet media such as YouTube, must also be stressed; and (5) the emergence of individuals who, through their work and methods of communication, have been able to inspire interest in external security beyond the amateurial in a wide group of people.

During the PRL period, matters of external (military) security of Poland were reserved exclusively to the higher political (party) institutions. This was mostly hermetically restricted to the SG LWP (General Staff of the People's Polish Army) and a few other institutions concerned with the translation of the strategic directives of the erstwhile hegemon (the USSR) into the local operational language of the plan's executors, e.g. the ministries and army groups of the LWP. For private individuals to take an interest in such matters was considered, at best, an imprudent error of unauthorized analysis. In the darkest part of the PRL period, such actions were considered detrimental to the socialist state, with full consequences. Additionally, limited access to information meant such interests were simply difficult to pursue.

Following an initial period of learning to master the basic concepts of this area and its main descriptive models, as well as the identification of the main security challenges in need of resolution locally, in Poland, and in the broader perspective, public discourse has matured enough to examine specific scenarios. However, in its review of the materials, information and events concerning public or civilian analyses of external security, the Foundation finds discourse is concentrated on one scenario<sup>1</sup> of hypothetical developments through which Poland could become a direct conflict arena. In the present Report, this scenario is designated "Variant 1. The Suwałki Gap".

This Report is (1) a review of the threat variants for Poland and (2) an attempt to analyze in detail one variant other than the "Suwalki Gap".

The Report was authored by the Foundation. While limited by the small size of the team working on the Report, it nonetheless is a concrete attempt to synthesize the results of an analysis of the objective situation (geography, economy, appraisals of the armed forces, etc.) with the comments and conclusions that emerge after examining the publicly accessible documents concerning the direction of development and modernization of the SZ RP (Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland), the actions of allies, coalition members and potential adversaries, and the statements of politicians.

For the team participating in the compilation of the Report, it is also a lesson in humility, being the outcome of the clash of intuitive expectations with the hard and demanding principles associated with the conduct of so-called wargames.<sup>2</sup>

The Report was developed by the Foundation's own initiative and funded from its own means.

The authors would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of the Report, both through direct engagement as well as through their support for the Foundation.

Krobia, November 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequently in this report, the Foundation uses the term "variant" instead of "scenario", even though, given the strategic scale of the models described here, it would be more appropriate to use the term "scenario" for the general models of threats to Poland, reserving the term "variant" for models of actions undertaken at the operational and tactical level.

<sup>2</sup> A wargame is a situation where "human players or actors [make] decisions in an artificial contest environment and then [live] with the consequences of their actions" (*Next-Generation Wargaming for the U.S. Marine Corps Recommended Courses of Action*, RAND Co., October 2019, p. 5).

## 2. Executive summary

The readers of this Report should agree the Report aims have been achieved. A review of the variants posing a threat to Poland have been presented, along with an in-depth analysis of one chosen variant other than the “Suwałki Gap”. The conclusions that emerge from this work are as follows:

1. Already the simple exercise of trying to look at Poland through the eyes of a potential adversary or other entity leads to a different perception of interests, sequences of events, alliances, event consequences et cetera. This perception is markedly different to that to which we are egocentrically accustomed.
2. It is a challenge to construct a coherent variant of a military threat. It is much easier to conceive threats and emergencies of an economic, political or other nature. This fact in itself is positive.
3. Some of the presented variants are playing out before our eyes (almost with our participation). Others are more or less probable.
4. The consequences (threats) of the various variants are different in the scope of costs for Poland.
5. To focus on just one variant (through recklessness or routine thinking) is, in and of itself, a sign of danger.
6. There is a simple correlation between the presented, rather unlikely variant and the probability of its success: the less prepared Poland is for such an incursion by Russian Federation forces, the more likely they are to succeed. Conversely, the higher PL (Polish) preparedness will be, with more alert fighter pairs, more anti-aircraft missiles on duty, training cruises for submarines, et cetera, the lower the incursion’s chances of success will be. Some of the required capabilities can be developed even without increasing the manpower of SZ RP.
7. Poland’s preparedness to respond to such a crisis depends on two essential factors: (1) the state management system and (2) resources available for this management system. Incapacity in either of these areas lowers the capability for adequate response. Failure in both areas is a recipe for disaster.

In the course of the literature review, the Foundation came across the following declaration:

*For the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army, modern, highly mobile armed forces, ready for immediate commencement of action and achieve victory in a multi-domain combined operation, are a priority.*

*Website of the SG WP (General Staff of the Polish Army)<sup>3</sup>, 2 October 2019 [translated from Polish]*

The analyses conducted for the purpose of this Report do not confirm this thesis. The SZ RP operates in a model where during peacetime, contract soldiers serve in units requiring mobilization to achieve full capacity. This fact does not indicate preparedness, or even striving towards preparedness for “immediate commencement of action”.

Media reports do not indicate the existence of fully professional units where soldiers would be on base on a 24/7 basis as a reserve. Even information about NATO spearheads and rapid reaction forces always indicate such elements will become available after a specified number of hours or days.

The soldiers do not know any units where companies would be required to stay in barracks. The same is the case for logistics. One gets the impression the prevailing philosophy is one of undisrupted tranquility, of keeping order on paper and in the supply warehouses. One indication of change is the program establishing logistical regiments attached to divisions. Will they provide supplies for tanks and other subunits?

During the wargame, among other issues a dilemma emerged that fostered extremely contrary opinions from the participants: to deploy the first available (assembled during a weekend) subunits, or to wait to achieve full unit capacity with reservists. Each solution has pros and cons: to seize the initiative and improvise, risking permanent loss of the base upon which planned capacity is built up, or to patiently watch the enemy’s successes until one’s own capacities are sufficiently built up – what to choose?

And what about the state? A review of other available information is frightening. For example, a NIK (Supreme Audit Office) report concludes:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/sgwp/articles/aktualnosci-w/2019-10-02g-szkolenie-w-siach-zbrojnych-rp/>

*Of those required to do so, not all attended military qualification. Reports from Voivodship Military Staffs indicate that, in 2016, 16.2% of all individuals under obligation for military service failed to present themselves (...) for military qualification throughout the country. These indicators were similar in 2015, i.e. 15.7% of individuals under obligation.*

*Among the 24 counties under audit, **in the extreme case the city of Brzeg (Opolskie Voivodship), in 2016 49% of those under obligation failed to present themselves for qualification.** [Emphasis added]. The majority of those under obligation who did not attend military qualification are temporarily or permanently domiciled outside the borders of the Republic of Poland. This fact makes it impossible to effectively notify them of their duty to attend qualification. The present legal means of enforcing obligatory attendance of qualification through the Police or the imposition of fines to force attendance, were either not used by the empowered organs, or proved ineffectual. In 2016, in the 24 municipalities and counties under audit, 1453 men failed to attend qualification without adequate cause, of which only in 339 cases (23.3%) was enforced attendance imposed. These means of enforcement proved effectual only in 54 cases (15.9%). [translated from Polish]<sup>4</sup>*

Where are those volunteers? Where will they be at the hour of need? Does Poland – the government and all of us – truly care about defense? Are the assurances from the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army, cited earlier, just talk? The state seems to signal that “some else will deal with it”. It shuts its eyes as citizens shirk legally imposed military duties. This demoralizes society.

The most succinct summary of the Report is to conclude that the vision of the General Staff needs to be achieved as quickly as possible. We consider it especially crucial for the Polish Army to be prepared for “immediate commencement of action”. But is this the case for the SZ RP circa 2019 A.D.?

### 3. Methodology

In order to accomplish both objectives for the Report, i.e. (1) to review the threat variants for Poland and (2) to analyze one variant other than the “Suwałki Gap”, the authors made use of all the tools available to the Foundation, with the caveat that in light of the Foundation’s limited resources, these may be far from the standards set by public and non-governmental institutions that have, at their disposal, considerably greater human and material resources (compared to the Foundation).

The Foundation thus acknowledges its analysis is not comparable in terms of complexity with analyses conducted by, for example, the SG WP. Nonetheless, such an analysis can still be a starting point for discussion.

Working on the Report, the authors used publicly available information, as well as leveraging the knowledge and experience of the Foundation team. A list of key sources is published online.

To further the analysis, a number of assumptions were used, as documented.

Situations requiring a judgement call were subject to analysis and discussion, in order to ensure that the decisions made (1) had the hallmarks of probability (realism); (2) maintained the coherence and integrity of the analysis and the simulated activities, and (3) indicated potential risks for PL side (they exploited Polish weaknesses as perceived by the Foundation).

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<sup>4</sup> „Wykonywanie zadań zleconych z zakresu rejestracji osób na potrzeby kwalifikacji wojskowej i ich ewidencji” [“The execution of tasks required in the area of the registration of personnel for the purposes of military qualification and record maintenance”], 2018.

In simulating the actions of the adversary, it was assumed that:

1. the situation would be assessed from their point of view,
2. the decisions made would be the corollary of their own interests, and not based on an emotional appraisal of the situation, and
3. the decisions taken would be in alignment with present geopolitical and cultural conditions, as well as historical experience.

The following principles of war were considered<sup>5</sup>: (1) Objective; (2) Offensive; (3) Mass; (4) Economy of Force; (5) Maneuver; (6) Unity of Command; (7) Security; (8); Surprise; and (9) Simplicity.

In practice, this meant the following main “regional” assumptions were accepted:

1. one of the generally accepted significant advantages on the side of RU (Russian Federation) is the centralization of the state leadership ensuring (1) fast decision-making; (2) elasticity; and (3) risk tolerance,
2. in the event of conflict, RU would aim for (1) a fast<sup>6</sup> resolution (fulfillment of operation objectives); (2) control of the escalation ladder; and (3) fast transition into the negotiation phase<sup>7</sup>,
3. the purpose of hostile Russian actions is to: (1) ensure state security and regime durability; (2) the development and maintenance of great power status; (3) increasing influence in the so called “near abroad” area; (4) increasing trade and economic exchange with Western Europe, and (5) undermining NATO and EU credibility and integrity<sup>8</sup>,
4. the first step for a regional order in Europe should be informal dialogue between key global actors<sup>9</sup>,
5. Germany and Poland would serve as the main staging area for a counteroffensive with the goal to recover the so-called Baltic States, and would thus be primary targets for Russian attacks<sup>10</sup>,
6. A US forces contingent would need about 88 days to deploy for a counteroffensive in the Baltic States<sup>11</sup>.
7. it is expected the ground capabilities of the RuAF (Russian Armed Forces) will continue to concentrate on expanding capability for: (1) long range strikes; (2) command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR); and (3) capacity for rapidly deployable forces<sup>12</sup>,
8. the US does not, and probably will not have the capability to significantly reduce regional RU influence<sup>13</sup>,
9. in the event of a military crisis involving RU, facing the necessity for military engagement, a situation may arise where some NATO states seek to fulfil their “other” objectives, including vis-à-vis other NATO states<sup>14</sup>, and
10. a key NATO and UE disadvantage is collective decision-making, causing (1) a drawn-out decision-making process, (2) a lack of elasticity, and (3) low risk tolerance.

The Foundation acknowledges the cited literature also suggests a lack of will and capability for RU to conduct aggressive operations outside of the post-USSR zone, particularly encroaching into NATO and EU territory. However, for the purposes of creating the appropriate pre-conditions to consider the variants (scenarios) in

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<sup>5</sup> *Principles of War*, FM 100-5; see also gen. Franciszek Skibiński's books recommended by the Foundation, e.g., „O sztuce wojennej na północno-zachodnim teatrze działań wojennych 1944–1945” [“The art of war in the north-west theater of war 1944-1945”].

<sup>6</sup> 5-12 days.

<sup>7</sup> *The Russian Way of Warfare*, RAND Co., April 2018.

<sup>8</sup> *Russia's Hostile Measures in Europe Understanding the Threat*, RAND Co., January 2019.

<sup>9</sup> *Rethinking the Regional Order for Post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia*, RAND Co., June 2018.

<sup>10</sup> *America's Strategy-Resource Mismatch Addressing the Gaps Between U.S. National Strategy and Military Capacity*, RAND Co., May 2019.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *The Future of the Russian Military Russia's Ground Combat Capabilities and Implications for U.S. - Russia Competition*, RAND Co., June 2019.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *An Attack Against Them All? Drivers of Decisions to Contribute to NATO Collective Defense*, RAND Co., September 2019.

question, the authors assumed circumstances will either force, or be favorable for RU or other states to take actions detrimental to Poland, and that these actions will be taken in a committed and decisive manner.

## 4. Review of possible variants

The Foundation is aware that from a methodological point of view, it is unprofessional to analyze a situation and prepare plans without considering alternative variants (contingencies) of future developments – something we are currently witnessing in the public discourse in Poland<sup>15</sup>. The obligation to consider other contingencies concerns equally those concerned with analyzing the adversary, and those who produce plans for their own side.

The method applied to perform the first set of the task undertaken by the Foundation, i.e. the review of possible threat variants for Poland, may be simply described as BOGSAT<sup>16</sup>. As the name of the method and its description in the cited literature suggest, this formula indicates the absence of other appropriately systematic analytical tools available to the Foundation.

Nonetheless, in the Foundation's view, a compromise between professionalism and labor-intensiveness is acceptable here, while the analytical outcomes provide a well-ordered basis for further analysis and discussion.

In order to isolate model variants and to avoid mapping new variants by mixing traits from several other variants, the list of variants was compiled using the criteria described in FM 101-5<sup>17</sup>: (1) Suitability; (2) Feasibility; (3) Acceptability; (4) Distinguishability, and (5) Completeness.

### The analysis of a chosen variant

In order to develop the analysis of a chosen variant described in a subsequent section of the Report, initially an attempt was made to conduct its episodes using modified, commercially available strategic wargames in the so-called Hex Game model<sup>18</sup>. This method was ultimately abandoned. Factors that contributed to this decision include its excessively time-consuming nature, the degree of complexity of the game models, lack of accessible force tables and terrain maps appropriate for the variant in question, and finally, a large gap in the possibility of modeling other factors key to determining the outcome of the simulated situation.

Other available methods were reviewed, including the JTLS<sup>19</sup> method commonly used by the armed forces of various states (including Poland), and the methods further elaborated in the RAND Co. report, *Next-Generation Wargaming for the U.S. Marine Corps Recommended Courses of Action*.

In parallel to the Foundation's analytical work, reports emerged in the press that the PL Government (specifically, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland) has announced "a tender for »the preparation and conduct of up to five strategic simulations in the area of defense along with the preparation of collective reports based on these simulations«. The Government allotted 250,000 zł gross for the development of these simulations. The planned wargames are to be concluded by 11 December 2020"<sup>20</sup>.

The Foundation does not have at its disposal the specialized software, infrastructure, technical and instructional expertise or 250,000 zł to develop such capabilities. In the end, therefore, the decision was made not to pursue the above-mentioned methods.

Ultimately, the method chosen is the map exercise, often used in the SZ RP<sup>21</sup>. In this case, the method should be more properly designated as a "Google Map exercise".

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<sup>15</sup> Where the current public discourse (including politicians and soldiers) revolves around Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap.

<sup>16</sup> *Bunch of Guys Sitting Around a Table – Next-Generation Wargaming for the U.S. Marine Corps Recommended Courses of Action*, RAND Co., October 2019.

<sup>17</sup> *FM 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations*, US Army Command, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> A wargame model where the physical representation of the terrain and its properties, as well as the unit movement, make use of a map consisting of hexagonal fields/cells.

<sup>19</sup> JTLS (Joint Theater Level Simulation) – an interactive simulation system that models ground, air, and naval operations, as well as special forces (National Simulation and Wargame Center at the War Studies Academy).

<sup>20</sup> „Rząd przygotowuje się do wojny. Zorganizuje gry wojenne” [“The government is preparing for war. It will organize wargames”], Rzeczpospolita, 24 September 2019.

<sup>21</sup> map exercise – an exercise where a series of events is represented and resolved on a map (thefreedictionary.com).

The analysis made use of genuine geographic, economic, political, et cetera, data, as well as available data about the dislocation of individual military units on both sides.

Due to the methodological simplifications applied, the authors made the conscious decision not to apply the “multi-domain battle”<sup>22</sup> concept currently prescribed in US manuals and reports. This does not mean that the analysis rejects pursuing operations across all domains, or the goal of achieving synergy by synchronizing such operations. The operation descriptions in the Report indicate towards the application of this method of conflict by the sides involved. However, given this concept is still in the process of being adopted by the global powers and is ambiguously documented, it is assumed the concept has so far only in very small part been implemented for actual application in political and military contexts in Poland. Its application would complicate the analytical process as well as making the analysis outcomes more problematic to describe.

The modelling of the political and military planning process of all sides was based on the procedures described in *FM 100-5 Operations*<sup>23</sup> and *FM 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations*<sup>24</sup>. These documents are publicly available, well known, widely used both by analytical teams and the armed forces in many countries, and universal in principles and procedures (even if they differ in detail to the procedures used by the Russian forces). They are also adapted to the conditions of the AirLand Battle<sup>25</sup> concept designed for the operating conditions in Europe. This concept, although it was used in the 1980s and 1990s, remains current in Poland in 2019 due to the current conditions of the SZ RP, and the expected localized nature of the variants under analysis in the subsequent sections.

At the same time, the Foundation must note the lack of access to manuals and instructions that would serve a role analogous to FM 100-5 and FM 101-5 in the Polish (and Russian) Armed Forces. Thus, it was not possible to apply the actual procedures of the Polish (and Russian) Armed Forces, despite a determination to do so.

## Review of possible variants

While reviewing possible variants, the Foundation’s team tried to step into the role of all actors that could potentially undertake actions posing a threat to Poland with consequences at an operational level as a minimum. In the first place, Poland’s immediate geographic neighbors were analyzed. Further discussions analyzed variants involving other actors or groups of actors acting upon their interests. A summary of the developed variants is presented in Table 1.

During analysis, it was not possible to develop variants that would fulfil the Foundation’s criteria while involving as an actor any of the following: Sweden, Czechia, Slovakia, Lithuania, or Belarus (as a separate state).

Nine variants were identified:

- Variant 1. The Suwałki Gap
- Variant 2. USA out - GE/RU in
- Variant 3. JUST Act 447
- Variant 4. The S3 Road
- Variant 5. Germany 1937
- Variant 6. Finalizing the EU project
- Variant 7. Ukrainian territorial demands
- Variant 8. Ukrainian minority
- Variant 9. Little Green Men

### Variant 1. The Suwałki Gap

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<sup>22</sup> The operating concept of simultaneously fighting out a conflict across all available domains of operations, including land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace (including social-informational space).

<sup>23</sup> *FM 100-5 Operations*, US Army Command, 1993.

<sup>24</sup> *FM 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations*, US Army Command, 1997.

<sup>25</sup> AirLand Battle (wikipedia.org).

This variant is described thoroughly and in detail, among others, in dr Jacek Bartosiak's book, "Rzeczypospolita między lądem a morzem. O wojnie i pokoju" ["The Republic between land and sea. Of war and peace"]. It also the variant most frequently analysed in public discourse both in Poland and overseas (under the term *Suwałki Gap*) in relation to this part of Eurasia. A close examination of the discourse and actions of politicians and PL government organs further indicates that this is the most fundamental, publicly perceivable model of threat for which Poland's defensive capacities are being prepared<sup>26</sup>.

The variant proposes an armed conflict between Russia, Poland and NATO forces in the north-eastern part of Poland. The pretext for this conflict would be the disruption/maintenance of the communication route for NATO forces stationed in the Baltic States, whose operational hinterland lies in Poland and further in Western Europe. The area critical to the maintenance of this communication route is a corridor along the Polish-Lithuanian border stretching for about 90-100 kilometers in the Suwałki area. This corridor lies between the Russian, and strongly militarized Kaliningrad Oblast, and the territory of Belarus, which remains in a strong political-military-economic relationship with Russia. A diagram of this variant is shown in Figure 10.

The strategic goal for Russia would be to expose the weakness of the NATO alliance and EU guarantees.

Operational goals would be to: (1) sever the Suwałki Gap corridor; (2) occupy north-eastern Poland; (3) cut off the Baltic States from potential military assistance; (4) break up/isolate parts of the PL (NATO?) Armed Forces; (5) raise the costs of vital PL and NATO state functions (military action, mobilization, etc.), and (6) bring the USA to the negotiating table from the position of the party in control of the regional situation.

In the event of failure of the RuAF operation, a de-escalation (show of force?) through a nuclear strike would be considered by FR in order to force negotiations.

From the Polish perspective, this variant means, in particular: (1) the conduct of war on a parts of PL territory; (2) possibly goading (provoking) Poland into striking first; (3) Poland would bear the brunt of the burden of war; (4) the transformation of the remaining part of Poland into the deep rear for the theatre of war and a line of communication for PL and NATO forces, thus exposed to Russian actions, and (5) the risk of isolation (fighting alone) for PL forces.

Key risks for PL: (1) loss of control over part of territory, and (2) significant losses for SZ RP. Nonetheless, the nature of the conflict in this variant is, for Poland, a local (operational) threat rather than a critical (strategic) one.

Nature of threat: classical military conflict.

### **Variant 2. USA out – GE/RU in**

This variant involves the USA withdrawing from active politics in Europe, and consequently, the strengthening of Germany's position (also as an EU leader). This would probably lead to an understanding between Germany (the EU) and Russia in order to optimize the interests of both sides and strengthen the region's role in a global scale.

The outcome of this variant would be, for Poland, a political (non-military) operational threat. It would involve another change of hegemon (hegemons), changes in the political, social and economic dimensions, and probably deeper integration into *Mitteleuropa*, while maintaining statehood and partial sovereignty.

### **Variant 3. JUST Act 447**

This variant involves (1) an active effort on the part of some Jewish organizations to force an unjustified payout of the so-called "heirless property"; (2) active support of the US administration to further these goals of the Jewish organizations, leaning on the US legislature's JUST Act (so-called "Act 447"), and (3) the enforcement of the aforementioned PL payouts by the US administration (or other states, international organizations, etc.).

The outcome of this variant would be, for Poland, a political threat of a strategic (critical) level. It would signify (1) the turning of a global hegemon, an ally whose forces are stationed in PL territory, against Poland; (2) international opinion responding with an isolationist attitude; (3) Poland being deprived of the freedom to adjust its response to the scale of the threat; (4) the absence of an institutional opponent (from the perspective of international law); (5) the debt collector (USA) simultaneously acting as an ally, and (6) the scale of demands would mean depriving Poland of the foundations needed to maintain in practice Polish sovereignty.

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<sup>26</sup> A fact corroborated, in the Foundation's view, by the transfer of MBT Leopard tanks from the 34BKPanc to the 1BPanc, the establishment of the 18DZ, the expansion of the 14ppanc, the establishment of a NATO battle group in north-eastern Poland, etc.

#### **Variant 4. The S3 road**

(this variant is detailed in subsequent parts of the Report)

This variant, in the Foundation's assessment, while remaining feasible for RU, is also more risky than other variants. The payoff for this risk is Russian interests being comprehensively secured, and, simultaneously, achieving security in the so-called "near abroad". For Russia, Variant 4 is economically more cost-effective than Variant 1.

The core of this variant is a Russian naval-air landing operation in western parts of Poland, with the objective to (1) seize control of Wolin island (including the Świnoujście port and LNG terminal); (2) seize control of the Goleniów and Babimost Airports and turning them into FOBs<sup>27</sup> for Russian forces, and (3) to control the S3 and S6 expressways as well as the western segment of motorway A2. A diagram of this variant is shown in Figure 11.

The strategic aim for Russia would be to deprive the USA and NATO of the possibility to fulfil their alliance obligations (influence) in Central and Eastern Europe and in relation to the so-called in-between states<sup>28</sup>.

Operational goals would include: (1) control of Wolin island, S3 and S6 expressways and the western part of the A2 motorway; (2) isolating the so-called trip-wire zone (new NATO members) from the so-called main NATO allies (old NATO members) along the PL-GE border; (3) cutting the Poland-NATO communication lines along the axis of the S3 expressway; (4) eliminating the operational core for Poland (NATO) in the Western Pomeranian, Lubusz, and partially the Lower Silesian Voivodships; (5) cutting Poland and NATO off from the operational base in the main NATO ally states; (6) depriving SZ RP of a significant part of its heavy capabilities; (7) the maintenance of a simultaneous threat to activate Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap; (8) in the event of the activation of Variant 1, to force PL and NATO forces to operate along a reversed front without operational depth and communication lines; (9) overloading the Polish political-executive apparatus; (10) to raise the costs of Polish battle readiness (mobilization, etc.); (11) to demonstratively trigger a US and NATO westward withdrawal along the A4 motorway into Germany; (12) the establishment of area denial zones in the western part of Poland, and (13) to establish favorable conditions to negotiate key premises of regional and global politics.

In the event of failure of the operation, Russia would consider (1) the passage of Russian subunits into Germany for internment, and (2) a de-escalation (show of force?) through a nuclear strike to force negotiations.

From PL perspective, this variant means, in particular: (1) the conduct of war on a part of PL territory; (2) PL would bear the brunt of the burden of war; (3) the forced transformation of the remaining part of Poland into the operational rear; (4) the termination of NATO forces' communication lines, (5) the risk of isolation (fighting alone) for PL forces; (6) strategic, operational and tactical surprise, and (7) the threat of other states exploiting the situation to force their interests vis-à-vis Poland.

Risks for Poland: (1) partial territorial losses; (2) significant loss of capability for the SZ RP, and (3) definitive loss of American and NATO force projection capabilities in the region. The conflict in this variant would entail a strategic threat for Poland.

Nature of threat: classical military conflict.

#### **Variant 5. Germany 1937**

This variant assumes that Germany, after the reunification of the Federal Republic and the GDR in 1990, is still waiting for developments in the international situation that would enable it to revise the post-World War II borders in order to re-establish the eastern boundaries of Germany as they were in 1937 (Figure 9).

German activities in this area concentrate on the systematic development of political conditions<sup>29</sup> so that decisive action can be taken in favorable circumstances. Auxiliary activities used to further this goal involve administrative, economic and cultural means.

The described German goals are most likely a long-term objective, the accomplishment of which is not expected to involve German Armed Forces.

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<sup>27</sup> Forward Operational Base.

<sup>28</sup> Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. through the policy of European regionalization.

This variant would constitute for Poland a political threat of an operational level. It would involve (1) partial loss of territory, (2) deeper integration into *Mitteleuropa*, and (3) an undermining of the foundations of PL sovereignty.

#### **Variant 6. Finalizing the EU project**

This variant refers to the European Union project aiming to establish the EU as a single entity through political, administrative, economic and cultural means. The declarative basis for this project is neither the Schumann Declaration from 1950, nor the Europe Declaration from 1951, but rather the Ventotene Manifesto written in 1941 by the Italian communist Altiero Spinelli. This Manifesto in turn led to the so-called Spinelli Report of 1984, as the first draft of a constitution of a new communist state. Since 1993, the Spinelli Report is the official program for the European Community and the European Union.

Below (...) a few extracts from the Ventotene Manifesto, the ideological program of the European Union (...):

*“The question which must first be resolved, and if it is not then any other progress made up to that point is mere appearance, is that of the abolition of the division of Europe into national, sovereign states.” (...)*

*“in order to constitute a steady federal state, that will have at its disposal a European armed service instead of national armies; to break decisively economic autarchies, the backbone of totalitarian regimes; that it will have sufficient means to see that its deliberations for the maintenance of common order are executed in the single federal states”<sup>30</sup>*

This variant will constitute for Poland a political threat of strategic magnitude (critical). It means the gradual “dissolution” of Polish statehood in the increasingly integrated EU.

It should be noted, in the present conditions the term “variant” is inappropriate in this case (it is a term of convention), because Poland as an EU member actively participates in the described process, which should be considered as a certainty with an undefined date of conclusion.

#### **Variant 7. Ukrainian territorial demands**

This variant relates to the frequent appeals from Ukrainian nationalists, administration officials and parliamentary surroundings, for the realization of Ukrainian territorial demands vis-à-vis Poland in the so-called Zakerzonja (Trans-Curzonja), specifically the areas around Chełm, Przemyśl, Jasło, Rzeszów, Biała Podlaska, and perhaps even Lublin, as “Ukrainian ethnic lands”.

This variant would constitute a localized, operational-level threat of a law-enforcement or military nature.

#### **Variant 8. Ukrainian minority**

This variant involves a sizable group of Ukrainians living in Poland (Polish citizens or migrant workers) organizing themselves (either spontaneously or with inspiration from outside) in order to establish a force capable of articulating their goals and striving to achieve these goals using various methods, e.g. inciting disorder.

This variant would constitute a localized, operational-level threat of a law-enforcement nature.

#### **Variant 9. Little Green Men**

This variant involves Russia employing against Poland the tactics employed in the events accompanying the so-called annexation of Crimea by Russia. The tactic calls for a maximal inflammation of a local crisis situation without formally crossing the threshold of war. In practice, this meant the conduct of military actions by people described as “little green men” who could not be clearly identified as belonging to the Armed Forces.

This variant, also labelled “hybrid warfare” is, apart from Variant 1 (The Suwałki Gap), the most frequently discussed in public discourse in Poland, including in the governmental project plans of 2016, namely the establishment of the Territorial Defense Forces as fifth branch of the SZ RP.

This variant would constitute a localized, operational-level threat of a law-enforcement nature.

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<sup>30</sup> Polish text from Krzysztof Karoń, <http://www.historiasztuki.com.pl>, English translation of Ventotene Manifesto from CVCE website: [https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/316aa96c-e7ff-4b9e-b43a-958e96afbecc/publishable\\_en.pdf](https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/316aa96c-e7ff-4b9e-b43a-958e96afbecc/publishable_en.pdf)

## 5. An analysis of a chosen conflict variant on Polish soil<sup>31</sup>

*“A few days before the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov opened an exhibition about World War II in Moscow. During the exhibition, the minister took up the issue of Soviet responsibility for the break-out of war. In his narrative, such responsibility does not exist at all; Moscow simply had to sign the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, having been forced into this action by other states that had signed non-aggression treaties with the Third Reich in previous years, starting with Poland. The exhibition places the responsibility for war on Poland, which supposedly enflamed the international situation by rejecting the Soviet proposal of an anti-German alliance.”*

www.pch24.pl, August 2019 [Translated from Polish]

*“As the Russian Ministry of Defense informs, during the Centr-2019 exercise, for the first time in history, a full airborne regiment was successfully landed along with complete armament and equipment. Two thousand soldiers and more than 200 units of equipment were parachuted into the Donguz proving grounds within 20 minutes. The objective of the air landing was to seize control of an airport and to secure the operational area behind the front line. (...)*

*Seventy-one Il-76 heavy transport planes performed the air landing of the full regiment, having flown over a thousand kilometers. (...)*

*The air landing by parachute was carried out not only by two thousand soldiers, but also their supporting heavy equipment, including BMD-2 infantry fighting vehicles, 2S9 Nona self-propelled gun-mortars, and a wide assortment of specialized vehicles. They were dropped from planes using multi-canopy parachute systems. (...)*

*Simultaneously, operations using attack, transport, and multirole helicopters were performed at Donguz. Support for the air drop was provided by 128 rotorcraft, including Ka-52 attack machines, as well as Mi-8 and Mi-26 transports carrying troops and equipment. (...)*

*Russian forces regularly practice, for example, aerial deployment operations of Iskander rocket systems or the Mi-28 and Ka-52 attack helicopters, using heavy transport aircraft. The equipment is not only transported on distances of more than 1000 km, but also put into action effectively immediately.”*

Defence24.pl, 23 September 2019 [Translated from Polish]

Supposing<sup>32</sup>, around 2018, as part of a cyclic strategic review, the Russian executive established the Interministerial Team “Kvadrat” tasked to update the contingency plans in the western direction. The main task would be the periodic synchronization of strategic (global) response scenarios with the current global situation (particularly in Europe) and with the direction and realization of developments in the RuAF.

In mid-2019, “Kvadrat” presented the outcome of their work, including the main recommendations for operational plan “Metro” concerning securing the “Suwałki Gap” and the adjustment of RuAF developments based on operational experiences in Syria as well as the review of the modernization programs, both Russian and observable in other armies.

Additionally, while reporting their results to the highest political and military echelons, the Team pointed out the emergence of circumstances that led “Kvadrat” to develop the guidelines for a new scenario, different to “Metro”, to play out the Russia-USA situation, and in Central-Eastern Europe (the near abroad).

The presented plan was designated „*Машина времени*”<sup>33</sup>...

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<sup>31</sup> Variant 4. The S3 Road.

<sup>32</sup> An implication of this hypothetical scenario is that, in order to maintain coherence of the invented situation, the authors of the Report needed to meld real events with fictional ones. Nonetheless, the introduced fictional events fulfil the criteria described in Chapter 3 – Methodology. This method is commonly used, e.g. when designing military exercises.

<sup>33</sup> Time Machine.

## 5.1. The situation

Despite the loss of strategic initiative capabilities, the USA strives to maintain credibility as an ally, and are taking up positions to improve their response capability against Russia. This is visible in the systematic amplification of US military presence in the NATO states that formerly were Warsaw Pact states, and in the in-between states. These operations intensify as the actual US capabilities diminish. In the 2020-2024 period, given the situation in Turkey and operations in the Middle East, the US may seek to shift its military resources into Georgia and Ukraine (including non-conventional weapons) to highlight its dominance and provoke Russia. Such actions will be calculated to gradually escalate provocation without direct confrontation. Military exercises organized by US forces under NATO aegis in Europe, apart from providing training, serve a similar purpose.

Passive policies on the part of Russia may lead to unfavorable changes in the regional power balance in the 2020-2025 period, which could only be reversed by costly operations or Russian concessions.

The Metro plan, fundamental for Russian planning in the western direction, was designed during the period of American global domination and in the situation of the RuAF still recovering capability. The plan, which remains current and feasible, involves undermining USA, NATO and EU credibility as a consequence of a military confrontation (provoked or worked up) in the region of the Suwałki Gap, where local conditions create certain advantages for the Russian forces while disadvantaging the adversary. Nonetheless, this plan calls for a large-scale commitment of Russian resources (80-90 of the 126 available Russian battalions<sup>34</sup>), intense action in the context of a classic military conflict, and significant (30-40%) losses. The plan is calculated towards a symmetrical engagement, with the USA and NATO efforts and casualties taking place on an unfavorable, imposed theater of operations, in the face of low public acceptance for the costs of conflict, with lowered determination to fight in the defense of difficult-to-define (uncertain) interests, and the absence of quickly available reserves for the blue side. Plan Metro anticipates a “wear-down” of NATO resources and willpower in order to attain a negotiating situation favorable for Russia.

In their situational review, “Kvadrat” proposed a different concept that could, with a much smaller cost for Russia, comprehensively resolve the negotiating conditions between Russia and the USA, as well as forcing the withdrawal of the USA and NATO west of the Oder river, restoring the zones of influence from 1989. The core of the *Машина времени* plan was a surprise air-sea raid (landing operation), with the operational objective of seizing control of the Wolin island and the S3 expressway in Poland. The operation’s goal would be (1) to create a communication barrier between Western and Central Europe along the S3 expressway; (2) deprivation of the SZ RP, USA and NATO forces dislocated in the Suwałki Gap area of operational depth, logistical support and operational reserves positioned in western Poland; (3) the destruction in garrison of the PL units stationed along the S3 expressway in order to deprive the SZ RP of 50% of its heavy capabilities and mobilizational conditions; (4) the regional elimination of the SZ RP as a significant military force (depriving them of the significant ally status) for at least 20 years; another objective would be (5) Russian control of the key pipeline transport routes in the Baltic Sea region, Poland, Germany, Czechia, Slovakia, and the in-between states (Figure 13).

The plan anticipates the use of 20-25 Russian battalions along with the necessary forces for support and maintenance of combat capability in the drop zone with no direct link to Russian territory. *Машина времени* is significantly less expensive than plan Metro yet resolves in Russian favor the situation throughout Central and Eastern Europe (as opposed to the costly, but administratively local Metro plan).

The price of plan *Машина времени* is the necessity to accept a substantially higher operational risk stemming primarily from the challenge of conducting operations in enemy territory with no lines of communication with the operational base (with the necessity of maintaining sea routes and an aerial bridge).

Plan *Машина времени* is justified by the growth in RuAF capabilities and is feasible due to Russia regaining strategic (global) initiative in conjunction with the decline of US capabilities.

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<sup>34</sup> Gen. Gierasimov, the Russian Chief of the General Staff has stated each battalion tactical group (BTG – Batalionnaja Takticeskaja Gruppy) has 700-800 soldiers, some as many as 900. “It is an expanded battalion – he concluded – with all the necessary means of strengthening.” During the Vostok 2018 military exercise, the General confirmed the Russian Armed Forces have 126 land and airborne battalion tactical groups. A brigade and a regiment have at their disposal on average two BTGs composed entirely of contract soldiers (a third battalion is basically composed of draft soldiers). <https://www.defence24.pl/batalionowe-grupy-taktyczne-filar-rosyjskich-wojsk-ladowych-analiza>, 30 June 2019.

Plan *Машина времени* may be implemented independently of other plans. Even then, the very possibility of an RuAF assault on the Suwałki Gap force (plan Metro) will force Poland, the USA, and NATO to divide their forces while operating, or at risk of operating on a reversed front.

The independent implementation of plan *Машина времени* allows Russia to scale the escalation of the conflict. Combining this plan with plan Metro means shifting the conflict to a higher level of committed resources (costs).

Plan *Машина времени* may be implemented in combination with plan Metro. Nonetheless, it then loses one of its core advantages, the economy of combat. Rather than forcing the USA and NATO to withdraw their forces from the Baltic States through the Suwałki Gap, from north-east Poland southward and westward along the A4 route to Germany, this combination would mean wearing down Russian and USA/NATO resources in intensive fighting.

Table 2 shows a comparison of Russian military operations with plan *Машина времени* and with plan Metro in respect to the principles of war.

#### 5.1.1. The blue side<sup>35</sup>

The core SZ RP units representing heavy capabilities are, during peacetime, garrisoned as shown in Figure 1. The grouping of SZ RP forces corresponds to the general challenges posed to Poland by plan Metro.

The SZ RP operates in the formula of an army that requires mobilizational expansion, without enforced conscription (the draft was suspended in 2010). Professional contract soldiers (a total of approx. 110 thousand across all corps) serve on the basis of being in the garrison for about 8 hours a day (8-16, with a 40-hour week being the basic work/service structure).

The SZ RP does not maintain units or combat modules in non-stop rotational combat readiness. Units are not fully staffed. Elements designated as “NATO reaction forces” etc. are also not garrisoned non-stop. Apart from select systems (sapper patrols, radiolocation intelligence, alert pair of fighters, etc.), there is no alert duty (including anti-aircraft defense, airborne or air-mobile troops, surface and submarine vessels, assault helicopters, multirole aircraft, etc.).

In the event of the enemy operation launch (D-Day) during a so-called “long weekend”, PL forces will not be capable of a symmetrical response to RU forces in the period from D-1 to D+4. Outside of service hours, bases are protected by security groups of about a dozen, equipped with personal weapons, and smaller on-duty detachments partially equipped with personal weapons. The estimated time for (unarmed) soldiers to arrive on base is H+8. The estimated time for soldiers to self-organize at the level of individual subunits in the garrison is H+20. From D-1 to D+2, action capacity of the SZ RP will be close to negligible from the perspective of the operation (light, improvised, poorly commanded company-sized groups of soldiers).

Should the operation succeed in partially fulfilling its objectives (passing through garrisons and destroying heavy equipment in the incursion area, as well as blocking roads S3, S6 and A2 and causing traffic blockages along the A4 and A1 motorways), any subsequent Polish mobilization expected to be highly disorganized. Anticipated recovery of SZ RP forces: until D+4 – as above; D+4-D+10 – improvised battalion task forces from 6BPdespow, 25BKPow, 2pr and Territorial Defense Force brigades. It should be noted these improvised battalions will be used in a limited manner due to the threat of plan Metro, the dilemma between generating potential through mobilization and improvisation with the risk of losing the core capability, and limited freedom of maneuver.

From D+10 the availability of more demanding combat modules is anticipated, if the decision is made to shift them from the direction of operation Metro (covering the Suwałki Gap region). No significant Polish Air Force and Navy operations are expected. Localized PL Special Forces operations, without support, anticipated from D+3.

The logistics of the core SZ RP forces is administratively separate, subordinate to the IWsp SZ<sup>36</sup>. The logistical support of army units requires numerous administrative decisions and is both time and work consuming. The command structure is unclear and does not correspond to functional structures. The command structure is additionally hampered by an ineffectual political decision-making structure (required to determine the appropriate level of response, to delegate permission to use arms, for mobilization, etc.).

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<sup>35</sup> PL, US Army and NATO forces.

<sup>36</sup> IWsp SZ – Inspektorat Wsparcia Sił Zbrojnych – Armed Forces Support Inspectorate.

PL forces utilize a mixture of post-Warsaw Pact equipment (the overwhelming majority of all equipment, mostly depreciated) and elements of newer equipment of varied origin. The ongoing modernization process does not ensure full capabilities, e.g. new artillery systems do not have the appropriate surveillance, artillery or sufficient trained contract soldiers and prepared reservists.

There is an estimated 35% chance that ongoing SZ RP reforms would generate positive effects at a level sufficient to render the conduct of operation *Машина времени* impossible by 2028. Given this, it is not anticipated PL forces will reach a capacity to render operation Metro impossible before 2035.

It is anticipated that, through a conjuncture of circumstances, PL units dislocated in the way of the planned incursion will be additionally weakened by, in particular, MBT Leopard modernization (equipment partially away in renovation yards, no possibility of training), and MBT T-72 modifications, general incapacity of the equipment, and the detachment of a component of the 12DZ (12<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Division) for a UN mission in Lebanon. These factors, together with the described formula of SZ RP operations, the overextension of the operational units from the 12DZ and the concentration of 11DKPanz (11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Division), construe one of the plan's elements and are conducive to its overall success. This time window will be in place until 2022.

A risk factor from the Polish side are training groups that may, at D-Day, be temporarily deployed to the proving grounds in Drawsko Pomorskie, Wędrzyn, Żagań-Świętoszów, and Ustka.

The planned area of operation *Машина времени* comprises the operational hinterland for Poland, with reserves, supplies and communication lines used by PL and allied forces. This region is characterized by a higher level of infrastructure than the rest of Poland, including road, rail and airport structures, with a relatively low average population density, the absence of metropolitan-level agglomerations, and few cities larger than 100,000 inhabitants. Cities may be circumvented by a network of beltways (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6).

#### USA and NATO forces in Poland

Figure 2 depicts the dislocation of core US and NATO units (with real combat capacity) in Poland. US forces in Poland comprise the capability of a general brigade substantially strengthened with elements of reconnaissance and support. These forces maintain high combat readiness, with partial supplies (including military equipment). This contingent is being systematically expanded; the US maintains the capacity to bolster these forces to the size of a full division (30 days). The build-up of US forces in Europe to a contingent adequate to participate in operation Metro requires 90 days. The core of these capabilities is concentrated in the area of Żagań (south-west Poland). Additionally, as part of NATO reactive planning for the event of plan Metro, a battalion-sized US contingent is maintained in north-east Poland as part of an international NATO battalion. There are also symbolic contingents of US and NATO forces dislocated in the Baltic States.

The US Air Force does not have significant capabilities in the planned area of operations. NATO air forces maintain Air Policing patrols in the Baltic States, at the level of an alert pair expanded to 6 aircraft.

The US Navy and NATO forces do not have significant capabilities in the Baltic Sea and have no plans to generate such capabilities.

#### 5.1.2. The red side<sup>37</sup>

Following successful reforms, the RuAF in the XXI century are an effective and well-scaled tool for the defense of Russia and to secure Russian interests in their area of influence.

The positive impact of organizational changes, training, experiences in actual combat operations, and rearmament with new or modernized weapons platforms, will result in Russian forces maintaining close to planned potential levels up to 2028.

The current level of the RuAF capabilities is confirmed by the level of performed tasks and the outcomes of battle readiness checks. Commanders and units are prepared to perform complex tasks under combat conditions or close-to-combat conditions, showing a willingness to anticipate the intentions of their superiors as well as independence and initiative as required. The component with highest-rated capability levels is assessed using thorough, multidimensional analyses.

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<sup>37</sup> Russian Armed Forces.

The structure of the RuAF allows for a simultaneous (1) detachment of a component for the execution of plan *Машина времени* in the period between D-30 to D+12; (2) maintenance in readiness for action of the component required for plan Metro between D-30 to D+90; (3) the performance of other RuAF duties at the level required to raise combat readiness on D-Day; (4) the reinforcement and rotation of the plan *Машина времени* component between D+12 to D+20, and (5) maintaining the *Машина времени* component according to decision (given absence of significant situational change). The tasks outlined do not require defense readiness conditions to be raised prior to D-1. They also do not require mobilization (only preparations for mobilization from D-5). Should the situation develop unfavorably, or plan Metro is activated, proposed mobilization date is D+4.

### 5.1.3. Changes in unit subordination

On D-1 RuAF raise battle readiness without mobilization, maintain readiness until assigned operations complete.

For the purposes of the operation, assign from the RuAF: (1) Task Force “Kurta” assigned to the potential execution of plan Metro; in alignment with plan Metro, composed of units from: the Western Military District, the Air Force, and Spetsnaz; readiness to be achieved by D-1; (2) Task Force “Kutuzov” assigned to execute operational plan *Машина времени*; composed of units from: the Western Military District, the Baltic Fleet, the Air Force, and Spetsnaz; readiness to be achieved by D-2; and (3) the new Wolin Military District to be established for the duration of operations in PL territory; to be detached from the Central Military District; readiness to commence duties by D+12.

### 5.1.4. Premises

- (1) Between 2020-2024, RU leadership likely to be transferred to other individuals within current leadership or to different team. This will trigger temporary reduction in RU leadership effectiveness. Consequently, operations requiring maximum leadership effectiveness recommended to be conducted by 2022.
- (2) The USA does not have actual force projection capabilities or a real, full-scale commitment in Eastern Europe. In their activities, they rely on bluffs and provocations focused directly on maintaining integrity of US alliances and indirectly on RU negotiating position. The US may possibly be looking for pretext to reduce their presence and commitments in chosen regions of the globe.
- (3) The strength of NATO and allied western states is debatable. Majority of states assumes procrastinating attitude. The Armed Forces of these states are effectively eroding.
- (4) In the event of a genuine crisis involving RU, it is likely the USA will seek to de-escalate, delaying symmetrical military response and advising allies against immediate symmetrical reaction. An open American return to isolationist policies is possible, or a policy of “preparing a Western counteroffensive”.
- (5) The RU should take advantage of the western states’ “fixation” with the model of RuAF operations employed during the Annexation of Crimea, and the concentration of political and military efforts on preparations for defense in the Suwałki Gap (Plan Metro).
- (6) Germany is interested in its strategic policies in revision of WWII results (without direct engagement). This includes ejecting USA from Europe and establishment of cooperation zone from Vladivostok to Lisbon.
- (7) The most significant NATO weakness is the collegiality of the decision-making process (requiring a long time to reach consensus) and the tendency to procrastination for most states.
- (8) The current governance system in Poland has been shaped by systemic and characterological conditions to render impossible effective and real leadership during political and military crises. An additional factor delaying operational and even tactical decisions is the perceived necessity of consulting such decisions with allies, and a tendency to dramatic theatrics on the international arena without effective action.
- (9) Between D-1 and D+5, PL leadership will be incapable of response adequate to the crisis situation, including establishing decision-making procedures. After D+5 this will improve but will still be a key weakness for blue side.
- (10) In the D-1 to D+4 period the SZ RP will not be capable of an adequate symmetrical response to RuAF action. Between D-1 and D+2, action capacity of the SZ RP will be close to negligible from the perspective of the operation.

- (11) The main US plans assume a determined defense of the main NATO allies (old NATO states) and regard the NATO area east of the Oder as a so-called tripwire.
- (12) Restricting actual US influence to the eastern border of Germany (on the Oder) will force a re-appraisal of the situation of the in-between states, the Baltic States and Poland, as well as the validity of continuing to exert significant influence on these states by the US and its allies.
- (13) The optimal date to launch operation *Машина времени* is the third day (Saturday) of the so-called “long weekend” in Poland in June 2020, 2021, or 2022, so as to take advantage of further disorganization in the SZ RP and Polish political leadership from H to H+48.

## 5.2 The mission

**Accepting an elevated risk factor, execute a combined landing operation in western Poland on the Świnoujście-Bolesławiec axis with the objective to eliminate the basis for USA presence in the states to the east of the Oder river.**

## 5.3. Execution

### 5.3.1. Operational objectives

- (1) Eliminate the foundations of US presence in states east of the Oder river<sup>38</sup>.
- (2) Sever NATO lines of communication along the axis of the S3 expressway.
- (3) Block the Szczecin-Świnoujście port, the A2 route and others.
- (4) Deprive PL (and Polish allies in PL) of operational depth within Poland.
- (5) Destroy (“in the garage”) 40% of SZ RP military equipment representing heavy capabilities and reduce mobilization base for SZ RP reinforcement.
- (6) Destroy SZ RP supplies along the incursion route.
- (7) Partial destruction of military industrial potential in Poland (throughout whole territory).
- (8) Force division of SZ RP (USA, NATO) between plan *Машина времени* and plan Metro.
- (9) Force a channeled withdrawal by US and NATO forces from the Baltic States and Poland in the southern direction along routes S5 and east of S5, then in westward direction along A4 route to Germany.
- (10) Demonstrate the disorganization of Polish political leadership and the SZ RP with the aim of depriving Poland of alliance credibility in the medium-term.
- (11) Establish conditions for discussion concerning the future of RuAF's incursion area in operation *Машина времени* with states other than Poland, including the option of transferring region to GE administration.
- (12) Establishment of new RuAF anti-access zones (Figure 8).
- (13) Establishment of RuAF Wolin Military District.
- (14) RU control of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście and other key energy pipeline transport routes in the Baltic Sea Region, Poland, Germany, Czechia, Slovakia, and the in-between states (Figure 13).
- (15) RU control of conflict level of escalation in the region.
- (16) Maintain preparedness for parallel or subsequent execution of plan Metro.
- (17) Casualties of Task Force Kutuzov not greater than 60%.
- (18) Operation success criteria: (1) full success – objective 1 achieved; (2) optimal success– objectives 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14 achieved; (3) acceptable success – objectives 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 17 achieved.

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<sup>38</sup> Namely, from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

### 5.3.2. Outline of operation *Машина времени*

Assuming execution of the plan in 2020, the proposed date for D-Day is Saturday, 13 June, the third day of the “long weekend” in Poland in relation to the Catholic Corpus Christi holiday. In the event of a different year or date for D-Day, appropriate impact analyses would be required.

At the beginning of 2022, RuAF announces that in light of the provocative manner of the NATO exercise Defender-2020, the RuAF exercise Zapad-20 is going to be moved forward to June 2020.

The exercise Zapad-20 is to be used to prepare the RuAF organizational structures and initial group dislocation up to D-10.

From D-12 to D-8, deploy into the area of: (1) Szczecin, and (2) Międzyrzecz, a total of 800 RuAF soldiers with the objective of operational ground preparations and the performance of preliminary tasks on D-Day. The deployment is to be masked as work immigration by Ukrainian or Belarussian citizens. The soldiers are to be deployed in civilian clothes, without documents and military equipment. On D-Day these soldiers will be equipped by the landing forces in the areas: (1) 12BZ garrison in Szczecin (600 soldiers); and (2) 17BZ garrison in Międzyrzecz (200 soldiers).

From D-4 the Baltic Fleet is to be ready to: (1) control the Baltic Sea; (2) control the airspace in the Baltic Sea and the assigned area of Poland; (3) execute and secure the naval landing operation; (4) provide support in accordance with arrangements; and (5) maintain security of sea routes until D+12.

From D-2 a component of the Russian Air Force is to be ready to seize and maintain air supremacy in PL airspace and provide air support in PL territory.

On D-2, under pretense of carrying out the Zapad-20 exercises, arms sales and RuAF activities in Syria and Venezuela, naval landing groups with escorts depart from RU ports in Gulf of Finland<sup>39</sup>.

On D-1, under pretense of carrying out the Zapad-20 exercises, arms sales and RuAF activities in Syria and Venezuela, naval landing groups with escorts depart from RU ports in Kaliningrad Oblast<sup>40</sup>.

On D-Day:

- (1) at 0400 hours (H-Hour) seize Goleniów Airport (Site “Misha-51”) through a combined aerial landing (using air drop method along with forced landing on civilian landing strip). One VDV (Airborne Forces) battalion is parachuted in with the task of securing the Site perimeter in 5 km radius. Occupation of the Site to be conducted by Spetsnaz assault group augmented with 2 BTR and 1 T-72. Whole group to land in transport aircraft on airport landing strip.

By H+10 Site is to attain readiness to receive aerial bridge shipping in the capacity of a minimum of 700 men and 100 tons of cargo per day through landing operations on airstrip and additional materiel drops on multi-canopy parachute pallets.

By H+15 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force “Misha-11” in strength of an augmented VDV battalion with 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles and command & recon elements.

By D+2 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force “Misha-12” in the strength of an augmented VDV battalion with 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles and command & recon elements.

By D+3 Site is to deploy anti-air defense posts PANCYR-1.

By D+6 Site is to maintain air support elements on 30-minute standby: 4 attack aircraft, 4 attack helicopters, and 3 transport/CSAR helicopters.

- (2) At 0400 hours (H-Hour), occupy Babimost Airport (Site “Monastyr”) through a combined aerial landing (using air drop method along with forced landing on civilian landing strip). One VDV battalion is parachuted in with the task of securing the Site perimeter in 5 km radius. Occupation of the Site to be

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<sup>39</sup> Distance by sea to be crossed from FR ports in the Gulf of Finland to (1) Kaliningrad Oblast – approx. 900 km (approx. 30-hour voyage); (2) to Świnoujście – approx. 1,200 km (approx. 45-hour voyage).

<sup>40</sup> Distance by sea to be crossed from FR ports in Kaliningrad Oblast to Świnoujście – approx. 450 km (approx. 15-hour voyage).

conducted by Spetsnaz assault group augmented with 2 BTR and 1 T-72. Whole group to land in transport aircraft on airport landing strip.

By H+10 Site is to attain readiness to receive aerial bridge shipping in the capacity of a minimum of 700 men and 100 tons of cargo per day through landing operations on airstrip and additional materiel drops on multi-canopy parachute pallets.

By H+15 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force "Misha-21" in strength of an augmented VDV battalion with 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, and 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles along with command and recon elements.

By D+2 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force "Misha-22" in strength of an augmented VDV battalion with 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles and command & recon elements.

By D+3 Site is to deploy anti-air defense posts PANCYR-1.

By D+5 Site is to establish permanent anti-air defense anti-access post with S-400 battalion.

By D+6 Site is to maintain air support elements on 30-minute standby: 4 attack aircraft, 4 attack helicopters, and 3 transport/CSAR helicopters.

- (3) at 0400 hours, occupy port site in Świnoujście (Site "Msta") through naval landing operation. By H+10 Site is to attain readiness to receive sea freight shipping in the capacity of a minimum of 700 men and 500 tons of cargo per day.

By D+1, Site is to deploy PANCYR-1 anti-air defense posts.

By D+1 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force "Misha-31" in strength of an augmented VDV battalion with 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles and command & recon elements.

By D+2 Site is to establish permanent anti-air defense anti-access post with S-400 battalion.

By D+2 Site is to receive and deploy into incursion area VDV task force "Misha-32" in strength of an augmented VDV battalion augmented by 20 BMD-3, 14 BTR, 4 T-72BM3, 1 TOS, 2 sets of microwave crowd control systems on all-terrain vehicles and command & recon elements.

- (4) at 0500 hours, deploy air-dropped landing force "Misha-41" in area of 12BZ garrison in Szczecin; Misha-41 to land strength of an augmented VDV battalion (with 2 BTR and 1 T-72) and to occupy 12BZ garrison. On D-Day: (1) destroy core SZ RP equipment in garrison; (2) destroy SZ RP small arms in garrison; (3) receive 600 RuAF soldiers dropped into the region earlier, form battalion "Misha-42" from these soldiers; (4) by H+15, depart from 12BZ garrison, dispatching Misha-41 and "Misha-42" into incursion area.

- (5) at 0600 hours, occupy coastal area around Dziwnówek through naval landing operation; objective: secure the eastward flank, fortify the landing area for the purpose of maintaining an alternative waterfront and control of roads 102 and 108 in 15 km radius. Establish contact with sites Msta and Misha-51.

- (6) Tasks for the raider groups:

Misha-11 to seize control over a section of the S3 expressway from Goleniów northwards, seizing and holding the crossings in Reclaw (40 km), and a section of the S6 expressway to Kocierz.

Misha-12, Misha-21, Misha-22, Misha-31 and Misha-41 execute southward raid along the S3 expressway in the direction of Międzyrzecz (170 km with Misha-51, and 50 km with Monastyr).

Raider group Misha: by D+1 in order reached:

- [1] occupy the garrison in Skwierzyna, destroy core SZ RP equipment on site; destroy SZ RP small arms in the garrison; continue raid,
- [2] occupy the garrison in Sulechów, destroy core SZ RP equipment on site; destroy SZ RP small arms in the garrison; continue raid;

- [3] occupy the garrison in Wędrzyn, destroy core SZ RP equipment on site; destroy SZ RP small arms in the garrison; continue raid;
- [4] occupy the 17BZ garrison in Międzyrzecz (establish site "Misha-71"), destroy core SZ RP equipment on site; destroy SZ RP small arms in the garrison; join with 200 RuAF soldiers dropped into the region earlier, form battalion "Misha-72" from these soldiers;
- [5] to seize and destroy indicated SZ RP supply dumps along the route of the incursion;
- [6] US and NATO equipment found in captured sites to be destroyed, but US and NATO soldiers not to be engaged (self-defense only);
- [7] do not engage encountered US and NATO columns (self-defense only);
- [8] by D+3 to control the S3 expressway along the Świnoujście-Legnica section;
- [9] by D+1 to block the A2 motorway at the S3 expressway intersection;
- [10] by D+3 site Misha-71 is to deploy anti-air defense posts PANCYR-1.
- [11] Subsequent task: after reinforcement with RuAF land soldiers from the base at site Misha-71, on D+4 deploy brigade battle group "Sharik" to travel along the S3 road to the Legnica area with objectives to control the A4 route in the Jędrzychowice-Legnica sector, control the A18 road, and to provoke encounter with unreinforced, improvised subunits from 10BKPanc and 34BKPanc. Under favorable conditions, lure out and engage 10BKPanc and 34BKPanc in combat. Do not attack 10BKPanc and 34BKPanc home base. Monitor US and NATO force withdrawal towards Germany. Engage in combat with US and NATO forces only in self-defense. Do not destroy US and NATO equipment.
- [12] Expected date of rotation for Misha raider groups: D+12 to D+20.
- [13] Misha raider groups have air support (CAS) priority up to D+12.
- [14] In event of encounter with SZ RP – engage in combat. Armed PL formations to be warned, if they attack – engage in combat. Civilian population to be ignored; in the event of aggression, blockades, etc. – employ microwave crowd control methods, blockades (vehicles) to be pushed to roadside or detonate; do not fire upon civilian population (self-defense only).
- [15] D-Day to D+3: liaise with local PL civilian authorities. After D+3 contact with civilian authorities through GE (EU) commissioners.

Assignments for aviation (in accordance with division of areas of responsibility):

- [1] D-Day from 0300 hours, gain control of the operation's airspace;
- [2] D-Day to D+12: maintain aerial bridge with Misha-51 and Monastyr.
- [3] D-Day at 0600 hours: execute airstrikes with the objective to destroy core equipment: F-16 Air Base Krzesiny; F-16 Air Base Łask; 8pplot Koszalin; 4pplot Czerwieńsk; (4pplot Leszno); MJR Siemiowice; 8BLTr Kraków-Balice; after airstrikes, strike targets to be mined using air-dropped scatterable minefields from underwing pods;
- [4] D-Day at 1800 hours: execute airstrikes with the objective to destroy core equipment: SZ RP radiolocation posts; IWsp SZ in Bydgoszcz;
- [5] D+1 destroy road infrastructure on A2 motorway 50 km east and west of the S3 intersection;
- [6] From D-Day maintain readiness to provide air support (CAS) for RuAF contingent, maintaining 6 pairs of attack aircraft and 6 pairs of attack helicopters on 15-minute standby;
- [7] From D-Day maintain readiness for rescue missions (CSAR) in PL territory maintaining 3 helicopter teams on 15-minute standby;
- [8] From D-Day to D+5, maintain: 4 pairs of fighters in the air; 6 pairs of fighters on 10-minute standby; from H+6 3 pairs of fighters in the air; 4 pairs of fighters on 10-minute standby; from H+12 2 pairs of fighters in the air; 2 pairs of fighters on 10-minute standby.

Assignments for specified artillery battalion in the Kaliningrad Oblast: D-Day at 0600 hours, initiate artillery barrage with the aim of disabling core equipment: 15pplot garrison in Goldap.

Action should be taken to: keep S3 expressway clear of traffic other than RuAF; redirect meridional traffic east of S3 with the aim of overloading (jamming) other roads; sever A2 route; and to control westward traffic on A4 motorway.

From D+12, transform landing-assault operation into military presence in specified administrative zones.

#### 5.3.4. Guidelines for coordination

- (1) The RU Foreign Minister is the coordinator and executive of activities aimed towards: (1) initiating negotiations on D-Day with the objective of concluding the operation in a multilateral format in Helsinki or Berlin with RU, US, GE, and PL representatives, and at the UN Security Council meeting in New York. The Polish political leadership should be drawn into talks; and (2) establishing the conditions for the transfer, to GE (EU) representatives, of administration duties in the PL territories occupied by RuAF with a declaration toward subsequent determination of the region's future administration by either GE or PL through a plebiscite limited to people born in, and domiciled in areas within 1937 German borders. In these negotiations, Wolin island, along with Goleniów and Babimost Airports and the garrison in Międzyrzecz are to be treated as a future RU extraterritorial area under the name of Wolin Military District.
- (2) At H-Hour, RU Minister of Transport will inform the appropriate international agencies in charge of civilian air space and sea routes about the immediate closure of airspace over PL and over PL territorial waters in the Baltic as well as about restrictions on Baltic Sea navigation, in connection with the operation in progress.
- (3) The RU Minister of Finance will lay out a schedule of financial-stock operations aimed at cost optimization with regards to the impact of operation *Машина времени* on the international finance markets.
- (4) Division of airspace areas of responsibility and airstrike targets: (1) Baltic Fleet aircraft – the Baltic Sea and the Baltic coastal strip of Poland to the depth of 50 inland; (2) Russian Air Force aircraft – entire territory of Poland with exception of the Baltic Fleet area of responsibility.
- (5) During the conduct of the operation, temporary entry into air space of the coastal Baltic Sea states is permitted to a depth of not more than 50 km.
- (6) During the conduct of the operation, temporary entry into territorial waters of the coastal Baltic Sea states is permitted.
- (7) Engaging US and NATO forces headed in the direction of the A4 motorway in Poland and further westwards is permitted only in self-defense or by order of the Western Military District Commander.
- (8) The land components of the RuAF are to avoid crossing RU-PL and Belarus-PL borders (avoid triggering plan Metro). In the event of action from the Polish side, respond symmetrically or draw adversary into operating on RU or Belarussian territory. Activation of operation Metro or actions convergent with this plan are permitted only by order of RU General Staff.
- (9) In the event of operational failure or unfavorable tactical conditions, avoid surrender to the SZ RP or heading eastwards. Head west and seek to reach GE for internment at all costs.

#### 5.4. Logistics

- (1) Maintenance of continuous supplies for Task Force Kutuzov via sea routes and air bridge is fundamental to conducting the operation. This is top priority from D-Day to D+12 for Baltic Fleet and Russian Air Force.
- (2) Battle (raid) groups of the Task Force Kutuzov contingent are to secure logistical needs with local supplies in first order, next replenish own supplies; usage of own supplies as last resort. In case of commercial situations, personnel with appropriate clearance are permitted to proffer vouchers for requisition of resources by the RuAF.
- (3) 100% of soldiers from the Task Force Kutuzov contingent deployed into PL territory are to be provided €300 in notes.

- (4) For the purposes of fulfilling operational objective no. 5, 100% of soldiers in Task Force Kutuzov contingent deployed into PL territory to be equipped with 1 thermite grenade each.
- (5) Procedures concerning wounded: where possible, provide assistance to the extent possible within the medical support of Task Force Kutuzov, or evacuate to RU. In grave cases, deliver to PL hospitals in the area of operations and leave without supervision.
- (6) Procedures concerning deceased: where possible evacuate bodies to RU. If difficulties arise, bury in accordance with standard ceremony on Russian/Soviet cemeteries in the region (ceremony to be documented audio-visually). Burial on local cemeteries also permitted. In extreme cases, rapidly disposal of body on site per standard procedure.
- (7) Procedures for damaged equipment: disable and abandon.
- (8) The use of captured equipment is permitted at discretion of officers, under condition of obscuring local markings and adding RuAF and Task Force Kutuzov markings per prescribed pattern. Use of captured small arms and small arms munitions permitted. Use of captured uniforms is not permitted.

### 5.5. Command and communications

- (1) Command of operation *Машина времени* (and Metro, in the event of the plan being executed) – Western Military District Command at headquarters.
- (2) Command of the Task Force Kutuzov in PL territory – Kutuzov Task Force Command in Kaliningrad (D-30 to D+12); from D+12 Wolin Military District Command in Świnoujście.
- (3) 100% of soldiers of the Kutuzov Task Force contingent deployed into PL territory are permitted to carry smartphones. However, SIM cards are strictly prohibited in phones until further notice. From D-5 until further notice it is also forbidden to use the Internet or to add any content whatsoever on social media.

## 6. Analytical commentary to the chosen conflict variant on Polish soil

The method applied in the previous chapter may appear to differ widely from most commonly cited analytical methods.

The authors of the Report decided on this solution for two reasons: (1) in accordance with the chosen method, the presented format corresponds to the method of breaking down and compiling tasks, limitations, premises, targets, etc. from the point of view of Russia (the adversary) and the notation of this data in military documents described in FM 101-5 – this was also the notation format while analyzing the Russian approach to the operation; and (2) to prevent the analysis from sliding into the realm of political fiction (or even science fiction!) by presenting a detailed break-down of the operational plan for the operation.

It must be stressed, the above scenario comprises the operation plans compacted to an acceptable minimum; based on the experience of this analysis, it may be supposed the complete description of a comparable operation would have a thousand (?) pages.

Due to the specific nature of this notation, which is similar to training documents used by the military, there is a need for additional commentary to answer two questions: (1) what did this text actually mean? And (2) how would this play out in reality?

### What did the text actually mean?

The presented operation plan describes in condensed form the assignment of tasks, objectives, methods, the chronology sequence and geographic dislocation through which the political leadership of RU intends to achieve their primary objective (the Mission) and the detailed objectives (5.3.1. Operational objectives).

The strategic level is the mission. On the operational and tactical level, the authors described a surprise landing operation with the objective to seize further sites and complete set tasks in PL territory (Figure 11); this raid was prepared behind a smokescreen of other activities.

The naval component of the landing force was to head out from ports in the Gulf of Finland and the Kaliningrad Oblast to (1) seize the ports in Świnoujście, which, once captured were to provide the gateway to receive

reinforcements by sea, seize control of Wolin island, and to establish the Wolin Military District of the RuAF on the island, establish anti-access/area denial zones using AA systems from the S-400 family, and to receive and deploy combat modules into the operation area; (2) a second (auxiliary) landing force was to be landed by sea in the area of Dziwnówek in order to secure the operation from the east and prepare an alternative improvised naval landing site (improvised harbor).

The premises of the air-dropped landing operation were: (1) executing landings in the area of the Goleniów and Babimost airports and capturing them with assault forces, and (2) a classic parachute drop of an RU VDV battalion in the area of the 12BZ garrison in Szczecin. The objective of the landing on 12BZ was to eliminate the unit's capabilities by destroying its equipment and to occupy the rendezvous point for the soldiers of another VDV battalion dislocated into the area earlier – and then to leave the garrison. The purpose of seizing the airports was to establish airbases to serve as entry points for the aerial bridge and, subsequently, as command points, anti-air defense posts (including anti-access/area denial using AA systems from the S-400 family) and as bases for air support (CAS) aircraft.

The naval and airport gateways were established (occupied) to receive and deploy the heavy modules (with BMD-3, BTR, tanks, etc.) for RU VDV battalions, of which one would head north to Goleniów to secure the S3 and S6 expressways and link up with the landing forces on Wolin island. The rest would head south to secure the S3 expressway, the A2 route intersection, to seize and disable military equipment in garrisons and supply materiel in warehouses along the path of the incursion, the seizure of the 17BZ garrison in Międzyrzecz to establish an operational base (and the assembly point for soldiers of another VDV battalion dislocated into the area earlier), and the detachment of a brigade-sized battlegroup into the Legnica-Żagań area with the task of (1) luring out and destroying the improvised subunits of 10BK Panc and 34BK Panc before they can attain full capability (luring them out of their bases where US forces are also stationed); (2) controlling the western section of the A4, the whole A18 and the southern section of the S3 expressway (i.e. the Legnica-Żagań section) while leaving a corridor for US and NATO forces to withdraw from PL.

Operations on land were to be accompanied by: (1) air operations with the purpose of gaining air supremacy, establishing an air bridge, and the destruction, via air strikes, of SZ RP capabilities that could potentially hinder the RuAF in the first days of the operation, as well as the elimination of SZ RP intelligence; and (2) naval operations to ensure RuAF freedom of maneuver.

The whole operation was based on the premises of (1) a cool-headed US and NATO situation appraisal leading to withdrawal of their forces via the corridor provided by the RuAF: Estonia – Latvia – Lithuania – north-east and northern Poland – A1 motorway south – A4 motorway west – Germany; (2) the absence of, or sporadic interactions with US and NATO forces; (3) surprise and decisional paralysis of the Polish political-military leadership combined with the impossibility of deploying organized elements of the SZ RP in the west and the impracticality of redirecting into the area of units from north-eastern Poland in light of the threat of attack from the Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus, i.e. Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap; (4) drawing Germany into de-escalating the conflict by playing on their interest in the revision of WWII outcomes.

### **How would this play out in reality?**

The decision to execute this variant would in practice mean, for the Russian government, accepting the risk of conducting a landing assault/raid operation in isolation from the logistical base (Operation Market Garden?).

However, is it not worthwhile to analyze this variant, given how exposed north-western Poland is to a landing operation? And what about the perspective of Russia rapidly, comprehensively resolving Russia's problems in the entire region (or even Europe), at a low cost (as compare to the classic "Suwałki Gap" conflict)?

To the critics of this analysis: (1) the authors of the Report have indeed noted the distance from the Gulf of Finland and Kaliningrad to Świnoujście; (2) the authors do note the risks for landing craft operating in the Baltic sea; and (3) the authors do note the challenges in maintaining air superiority... as well as many others, such as the difficult geography of the Wolin island and its vicinity.

Nonetheless, one of the goals of the Report is to consider this possibility.

In the authors' view, the weakest element of the operation's plan is... the attitude of the civilian population of Poland. Would there be peaceful protests? Would there be blockades? Partisans? Mass migration to Germany triggering road congestion? This is the biggest unknown, the second being the logistics of Russian landing forces.

The strength of this variant lies in... Poland's weaknesses.

At this point, two tools will be used the Foundation usually tries to avoid: (1) rubbing salt on wounds (figuratively) and (2) political fiction. To illustrate the practical dimension of the challenges involved with the variant under analysis, we will imagine two situations: (1) The commander of the 12BZ (12<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade), and (2) the Minister of National Defense during the course of an ad-hoc Cabinet Meeting. Time of events: D-Day.

### **The Brigade Commander**

*Saturday, June 13, 2020, 1630 hours. On Thursday, Corpus Christi, the commander of the 12BZ from Szczecin, took advantage of the four-day holiday weekend to escape for a holiday in the mountains. After the grueling period commanding the brigade during the Defender-2020 exercises, he wanted to recompense his family in Świątoszowo the time spent apart. To Zakopane, as befits the middle class. Yesterday evening, he and his wife decided to try the gondola lift to Kasprowy Wierch on Saturday. They would subject themselves to the five hours wait in line. Their greatest concern: to maintain composure as civilized human beings while waiting, and to show their children the beauty of Poland.*

*As it were, the day turned out differently. From the very morning, the phones stopped working. There were breaks in the power supply. All the confusion outside finally persuaded them to switch on the hotel TV. In the news, they heard about a fire and an explosion at Krakow Airport. He tried calling his duty officer from the hotel reception desk but couldn't get through. Around 1300, trying to find some means of obtaining information, he finally went to a crowded police station, explaining who he was. The police were busy, but they asked him to wait, together with two very concerned F-16 pilots from Poznań, and four cheerful commandos from GROM. He quickly realized something serious was going on. Some sort of terrorist attack by Russia, or "little green men."*

*He soon worked out something was also happening in Szczecin. He talked to the police, and around 1500, they gave him 20 minutes on one of their phone center lines. Going through the mobile phone numbers of his officers (no one was even trying landlines anymore!) one by one, he was able to reach one of his infantry battalion commanders. The officer, shouting into the phone, reported there had been a Russian landing in the morning. BTR armored transports driving through Szczecin. At 0800 they seized the army base, killing the defending SUFO team and the duty staff. They had also fired on an MP patrol. The officer said he'd found out about this around 0900. At 1100 he reached the vicinity of the base and waited for the Russians to leave. This they did at 1400 – roughly one infantry battalion in BTRs and BMDs. They also seized a few Polish Star trucks and left the garages partially on fire. Everyone was worried they might have mined the base. They had used thermite to burn through the gun barrels and engines on the Rosomaks and Gvozdikas. In the corridors of the barrack blocks, they left behind stacks of broken Beryl and UKM guns, their barrels bent in the ribbing of the cast iron radiators. By this point, about 40 soldiers from the brigade had assembled. The most dramatic part of the conversation were the questions: what should they do now? Should they mobilize the rest? Call up the others? Form companies from whoever happened to be around? He said he'd managed to get in touch with Warsaw, but they only wanted to collect information, they didn't issue any orders or even explain anything. Is it war?*

*The conversation ended, because some young apparatchik from the political cabinet of one of the ministers needed the line – he was stuck in Zakopane because all the roads were jammed. He was demanding intervention and a police escort.*

*The commander went to the train station. Pushing through the crowds, he asked the station master if he could try calling the station in Braniewo. He was surprised to find this possible, as he thought the Russians would be there by now. He asked to be connected with the commander of the brigade there. Soon he heard on the line the tired voice of one of his colleagues from officer college, who told him the Russians had attacked in the west. It wasn't yet clear exactly where. There had been air raids and landing operations. In their area, the barracks of the 15 pplot (15<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Regiment) had been shelled from across the border. Heavy equipment losses. But nothing else. Total chaos. No orders from division or Warsaw. He was assembling his men, but he only had about 35% of the peacetime troops. No one had any idea about mobilization. He ordered ammo for personal arms to be issued, but there was no decision yet whether he's cleared to obtain supplies for the tanks. Not that he has the crews, anyway. Some of them are on mission in Latvia. He doesn't even know if he has permission to fire upon the attacking Russians. The Americans had asked him to fuel up their vehicles but otherwise weren't saying anything. They're marshaling their own troops.*

*A neighboring commander wanted his brigade's DAS<sup>41</sup> to respond with fire to the shelling from across the border, but he had no munitions, no soldiers, and no idea where to shoot – no recon. And no orders! On top of all else, he had sent some of his T-72 tanks to Łabędy for upgrades, while many others were out of order. The ones in best condition had been sent to Latvia. A young major from Latvia had called him and reported the readiness condition had been increased over there, but nothing was happening. What is he to do? He had to break off, because he was constantly being interrupted. He said his division commander had been summoned to Warsaw for briefing, but got stuck in traffic somewhere on route, and he left behind nothing but chaos.*

*The commander also heard in the background, some female corporal requesting permission to return home. Apparently, she had left her two kids alone, and her husband is working in Ireland...*

## **The Cabinet Meeting**

*Saturday, June 13, 2020, 1830 hours. The Minister's assistant handed him a safety razor. A pink lady's razor. When asked why not a normal men's razor, the young political assistant explained how many shops in the city are closed, credit cards are not working, and the ATMs have run out of cash. People are restless. He bought whatever he could find. "Well, thanks," the Minister replied.*

*Finally. What a day. He had no time to himself since dawn. He barely even found time to eat some soup between briefings at the Ministry. And no chance to shave. Finally, taking advantage of the National Security Council meeting being delayed, he asked a BBN<sup>42</sup> colleague for a place to refresh. His assistant did the shopping, and now at last – he could shave. He looked around the tiny, but modern, freshly renovated bathroom situated behind the office of one of the BBN's directors. The director had not yet come back from his weekend getaway. The tap still had running water, hot and cold. The only trouble was, the bathroom was so tiny, there was nowhere to hang up his shirt and suit jacket. He had to leave them in the office.*

*He couldn't help reexamining all the recent events in his mind.*

*Granted, on Wednesday before Corpus Christi, the Chief of the General Staff had pushed him for a 20-minute meeting, explaining something about a serious situation. But those people always want something, always worry about one thing or other. And earlier, everything had been going so smoothly. First, in May they successfully completed the NATO exercises – December, or Defender, was it? Then, the presidential election campaign running since October last year ended. The people had once again expressed their confidence in the President. As a matter of fact, the Minister thought it was precisely all this, the exhaustion from the presidential campaign and the intense army exercises, that had made the General so twitchy. During the campaign and exercises, the General had actually almost objected to some of the Minister's instructions, only complying after strong pressure. But in the end, all turned out well. So, on Wednesday, the Minister quickly ended the meeting, but promised to revisit to the issue on Monday.*

*Friday was strange – but nothing heralded a Saturday like this.*

*The doorbell woke him before five in the morning. Two soldiers from the State Protection Service. They said there was a crisis, and the Minister is urgently needed. Indeed, both his phones, lying muted on the bedside nightstand, were showing a long list of unanswered calls. They were constantly vibrating. The Minister got dressed quickly, kissed his sleeping wife, and at 0530 got into the government Skoda.*

*In the car, he was stunned as his assistant and the security guard relayed the initial reports about landing operations, blockades, and war. He tried to listen while simultaneously answering calls in three different service phones. Two of them, he passed on to his assistant. As for himself, he answered the party phone.*

*His arrival at the Ministry launched a whole series of briefings. The news was unbelievable. A landing operation? In West Pomeranian Voivodship? The phone call from Operational Command around 0700 was most memorable. The duty colonel called requesting directives for our F-16 pilots of the ORLIK<sup>43</sup> patrol, because NATO in Naples insists they take off. The officer asked how he should respond. "Why, obviously, follow the standard agreements and procedures," the Minister replied abruptly. The officer started bumbling something, but quickly signed off. Just*

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<sup>41</sup> DAS - Dywizjon artylerii samobieżnej – a sub-unit of self-propelled artillery, subordinate directly to the brigade commander.

<sup>42</sup> BBN – Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego – National Security Bureau, a Polish government agency tasked primarily with ongoing analysis of Poland's internal and external security, providing reports for the National Security Council.

<sup>43</sup> ORLIK – the rotational contingent of NATO alert fighters deployed for the *Baltic Air Policing mission* in Lithuania.

20 minutes later, the assistant passed him the phone again. An urgent matter from Operational Command. Though the Minister recognized the voice of the same officer as before, he still wasted time with the ritual introductions. Finally, in his most business-like voice, he declared: "Minister, I must report that five minutes ago, at 0711 hours, our two F-16s were shot down over northern Lithuania. Fate of the pilots remains unknown. They were probably shot down by aircraft of the Russian Federation's Air Force, but we are still establishing the circumstances. I have already notified the President and the Chief of the General Staff." Stunned, the Minister tried to ask for details, but the officer had to end the call, saying there is a crisis on hand. He signed off and disconnected.

*The Minister finished brushing his teeth and applied the shaving cream.*

*In the morning's informational chaos and the maelstrom of endless briefings in the Ministry of Defense, his secretary was able to establish the President was calling a Cabinet Meeting at 1500 at the Presidential Palace. At 1000, the Minister was called to the Office of the Prime Minister for a meeting with the PM and a few other ministers, but in general, everyone was concentrating all their efforts on two matters: (1) getting all the leadership back to Warsaw from their weekend getaways, and (2) figuring out what was going on. The meeting with the PM, had been supposed to take an hour, but stretched to three. The Minister presented everything he had so far established: about landing operations, advancing columns of enemy forces, air raids on airbases and army bases, 70% of the F-16s being lost, et cetera. The news brought everyone down to earth. The Minister also relayed all the questions and requests the Chief of the General Staff had been bombarding him with all morning: to call an emergency session of the Sejm to declare war, pronounce a state of war, or a state of emergency, on part or all of the territory of Poland; to determine the rules of engagement for the army, whether they are permitted to attack across the borders with Russia and Belarus; directives for the arms industry, the voivodes, the police... and many, many more from an endless litany of questions. At the Prime Minister's Office, these issues initially generated some interest, but after a series of equally endless presentation slides from one of the colonels, everyone grew weary with all these tables, maps, charts and questions, constant questions. The Minister warned the General to stick to only the most pressing issues. These soldiers, they have no sense of proportion and tact! Finally, the only decision made was that all decisions would be taken at the Cabinet Meeting with the President.*

*Returning to the Ministry of Defense, it took him another hour to make preparations for the Cabinet Meeting. Shortly after 1400, the Minister set off to the Presidential Palace in a caravan of several cars – accompanied, among others, by the Chief of the General Staff, holding on to a packet of proposed documents, all very important, as he kept stressing. The Presidential Palace was teeming with people, though some key officials were still away, including the Speaker of the Senate, the Minister of Finance, and the leader of one of the opposition parties. The Minister talked to some of the people he met; the news was getting worse. But to the Minister's surprise, his party colleagues were convinced the Ministry of Defense had everything under control. Just before 1500, everyone took their places in the room designated for "war councils" – a large, and normally emptyish chamber, today filled to the brim. At 1500, the President entered with the chief of the BBN, asking the Prime Minister to present the meeting agenda. After a very brief introduction, the Prime Minister pointed to the Minister of Defense. He, in turn, deferred to the Chief of the General Staff. Everyone listened to his report for 40 minutes in absolute silence.*

*Only once, one of the secretaries of state from the President's Cabinet burst in with a question about how their families would be evacuated given the destruction of the CASA aircraft in Kraków. The General carried on, noting these aircraft were the only means of deployment for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> brigades, which, in hastily assembled rump form, were to be transported as quickly as possible via Czechia and Germany to be deployed in the area of Zielona Góra. That plan was no longer an option.*

*Once again, the General concluded his presentation with a long list of questions concerning mobilization, state of war and martial law, rules of engagement for the army, and so on. As everyone remained silent after he finished, the General once again started repeating his questions, this time aiming them at the responsible officials. He started with the Minister of Internal Affairs: "Minister, I want to request a full restoration of resident registration requirements, introduction of curfew, and a decision about how to deal with the numerous immigrant workers from the former USSR states..." he wanted to continue, but the minister in question spluttered with outrage, that the army wasn't doing its job and wanted to pass the buck to the police. And already, 15 policemen had been killed.*

*The argument was nipped in the bud by the President. "Thank you, General. Please, let us keep calm." He tried to speak slowly and with distinction, knowing the meeting was being recorded. At the back of his mind, he thought*

that perhaps – who knows? – this meeting would one day be as famous as the memorable speech by minister Beck in 1939...

Turning to the General, the President asked, “General, why did our air defense systems and fighters fail to disrupt the morning’s events?”

“President, our two alert fighters were destroyed in the morning, on the ground at the Krzesiny airbase. We had no other alert aircraft. And now, we only have 6 fighters left in total. As for our air defense, they did not maintain duty staff on alert. It would take about a week to activate the whole system,” the General explained, intentionally cutting by half the time it would actually take to get the anti-aircraft missiles ready.

“Well, is the 16<sup>th</sup> Division ready for redeployment to Szczecin?” The President asked.

“You may make that decision, but please keep in mind such a maneuver will expose us to attack from Kalinigrad,” the General replied immediately.

The situation was taking a turn for the worse, but fortunately one of the assistants came to the President’s rescue, whispering something in his ear. “Ladies and Gentlemen, please carry on. I’m told the President of the United States is on the line. Mr. Speaker, please preside over the meeting,” he said, turning to the Speaker of the Sejm. Then he left, surrounded by his entourage of advisors.

After he left, the discussion heated up, with several groups arguing in favor of different solutions, and, above all, in favor of their people. The chief of the BBN immediately declared the operation must be led by the Operational Commander. A group of politicians from the ruling party retorted with some heat that in fact, the Chief of the General Staff is the commanding officer. Others claimed that until a state of war or emergency is declared, the whole matter is in the purview of the Minister of Internal Affairs, that an antiterrorist operation needs to be conducted within the parameters of a hybrid war. Though the meeting had been meant to conclude by 1700, the exchange continued to heat up until about 1730. And no decisions. The Minister could see the General’s eyes, silently begging him for some sort of conclusion.

During this second half of the Cabinet Meeting with the Speaker presiding, there was one optimistic note. When they searched for any sort of positive developments, the General Commander asked to speak, and reported there was one army group ready for duty. At the proving grounds in Drawsko Pomorskie, there was a company of 8 Leopard tanks from the 10BKPanc (10<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Brigade), a battalion of 113 Territorial Defense Forces soldiers, and 50 sappers from Jarocin. “Force HUBAL!” someone immediately exclaimed, and everyone immediately started proffering tasks for the “Task Force HUBAL.” The Speaker ordered that this “operational unit” was to be deployed into combat as soon as possible. Doesn’t matter which of the Generals is assigned to lead the operation.

Fortunately, the President then returned. He was pleased, which helped everyone calm down. “Ladies and Gentlemen, I had a conversation with the President of the United States. He has called a UN Security Council meeting in New York tomorrow, 1400 our time, to discuss our situation. My plane will take off within the hour. Please carry on. On my part, I will do everything to resolve this tremendous crisis that has befallen our country.”

The President did not even sit down to deliver this rousing message. As he turned to leave, one of the generals sitting in the second row, seemed rather amused as he loudly proclaimed, almost yelled, “Mr. President, please at least order mobilization, before our full-time soldiers start quitting...” Everyone turned with disdain to see who made this inappropriate proclamation. The President pretended not to hear and walked out the open door.

The Minister sighed with relief. With a hand gesture, he asked the General to stay for a moment longer while everyone else proceeded to leave. They sat at the corner of the long table and the Minister stated that he too, will fly out in the morning to NATO General HQ for a meeting of the NATO defense ministers. Seeing the General’s dismay, he remembered a bit of good news his young vice-minister had relayed to him from a meeting at the US Embassy: “General, given the urgency of the situation, I’d sent a vice-minister to the US Embassy, and he reported back before the Cabinet Meeting. He had good news. The Americans are planning a counteroffensive. They’re regrouping to the south-west and forming a carrier group in the North Sea. They’re asking us to supply fuel, secure the roads, and provide cover from the direction of Kaliningrad,” the Minister happily recited. The General stared at him with disbelief. It was only now that the Minister noticed the sharp lines of sleep deprivation on the General’s ashen face. In fact, he had noted earlier all the officers looked worn and tired now. Even those who were normally ruddy, balding and overweight, today seemed greyer and thinner.

*As for the Ambassador's other request, to hold off with mobilization so as to avoid an escalation, not to mention economic and social upheavals, until the situation is clarified – this, the Minister kept to himself. No need to mention this to the General.*

*"I would like you to prepare orders to the Territorial Defense Forces. They are undoubtedly fully prepared," the Minister added as he got ready to leave.*

*The General rose, straightened his uniform, and replied, "Minister, command of the Territorial Defense Forces is outside of my purview. By decision of the Sejm, they do not answer to me. Now, I need to return to my duties."*

*"It's all decided, then" the Minister finished, also rising.*

*It was 1810 by then. The Minister caught sight of his assistant carrying the requested toiletries and approached him.*

*Now, finally, he finished shaving and started looking around for a towel. Unfortunately, there was none in sight, and he had to wipe off with soft tissue paper. Well, war is war, he thought. Today, our state has passed the exam, but there will be difficult times ahead. And here I thought those soldiers could cope with a challenge.*

## 7. Glossary

act 447 – (US bill) Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act of 2017. In Poland commonly known as “act 447” from its designation in the US Senate. A act of the United States Congress passed in April 2017, with the intention of generating support from the US government for international actions serving to regulate the legal status of assets left behind by Holocaust victims, as well as commemoration and education about the Holocaust, its causes and consequences.

C4ISR – Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

D-Day – First day of operation.

D+1 – Second day of operation (et cetera: D+2, D-1...).

Defender 2020 – NATO military exercise in April and May 2020. As part of this exercise, 37 thousand American soldiers will be deployed through Germany to Poland and the Baltic states. Germany and German infrastructure will play a key role. 20 thousand US soldiers will be deployed from across the Atlantic. This will be the biggest dislocation of US forces into Europe since 1995. The objective is to strengthen combat readiness of NATO forces, and the deterrence of potential opponents. Nineteen states will participate, with the US in command.

H – First hour of operation.

H+1 – Second hour of operation (et cetera: H+2, H-1...).

In-between states – Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

GE – Germany.

Misha-51 – codename invented for narrative purposes, used by RU Forces to denote Goleniów Airport

Misha-71 – codename invented for narrative purposes, used by RU Forces to denote the 17BZ base in Międzyrzecz.

Monastyr – codename invented for narrative purposes, used by RU Forces to denote Babimost Airport.

Msta – codename invented for narrative purposes, used by RU Forces to denote the port in Świnoujście.

Plan Metro – designation invented for narrative purposes for RU plan in Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap.

Plan *Машина времени* – designation invented for narrative purposes for RU plan in Variant 4: The S3 Road.

RU – Russian Federation.

SG WP – Sztab Generalny Wojska Polskiego – General Staff of the Polish Army.

SZ – Siły Zbrojne – Armed Forces; e.g. SZ RP – Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.

UW – Układ Warszawski – Warsaw Pact.

Wolin Military District – fictional administrative unit of RuAF established on the PL territory hypothetically occupied by Russia, with headquarters in Świnoujście.

### 8. Figures and tables

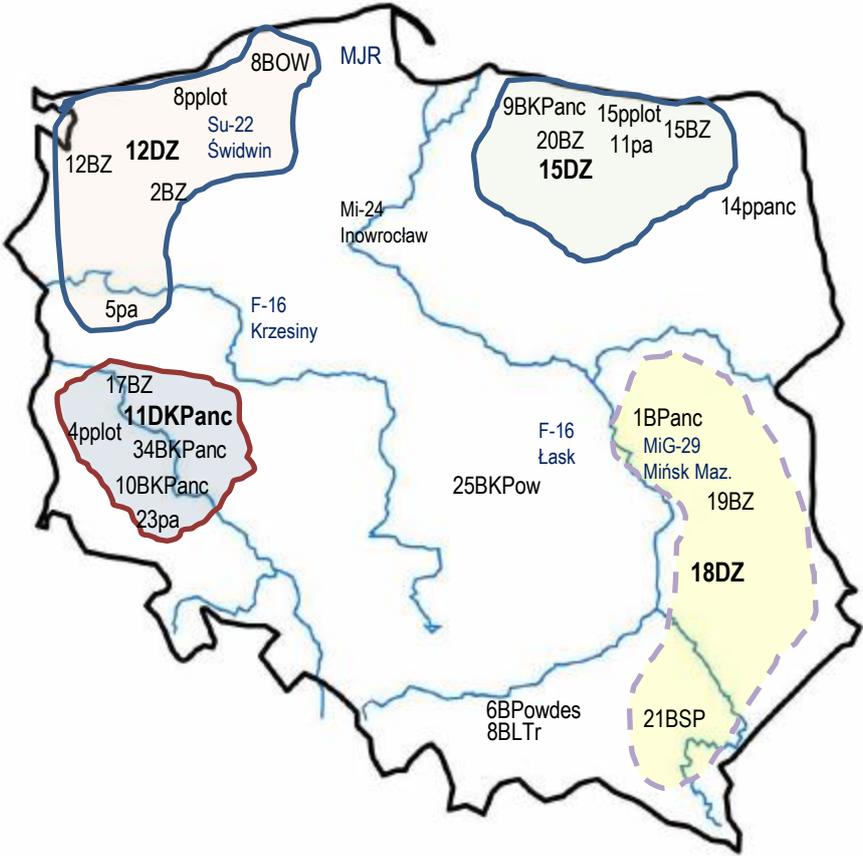


Figure 1 Dislocation of the core tactical groups and military units of the SZ RP throughout Poland. Peacetime. Units are garrisoned. 2019. Source: own work.

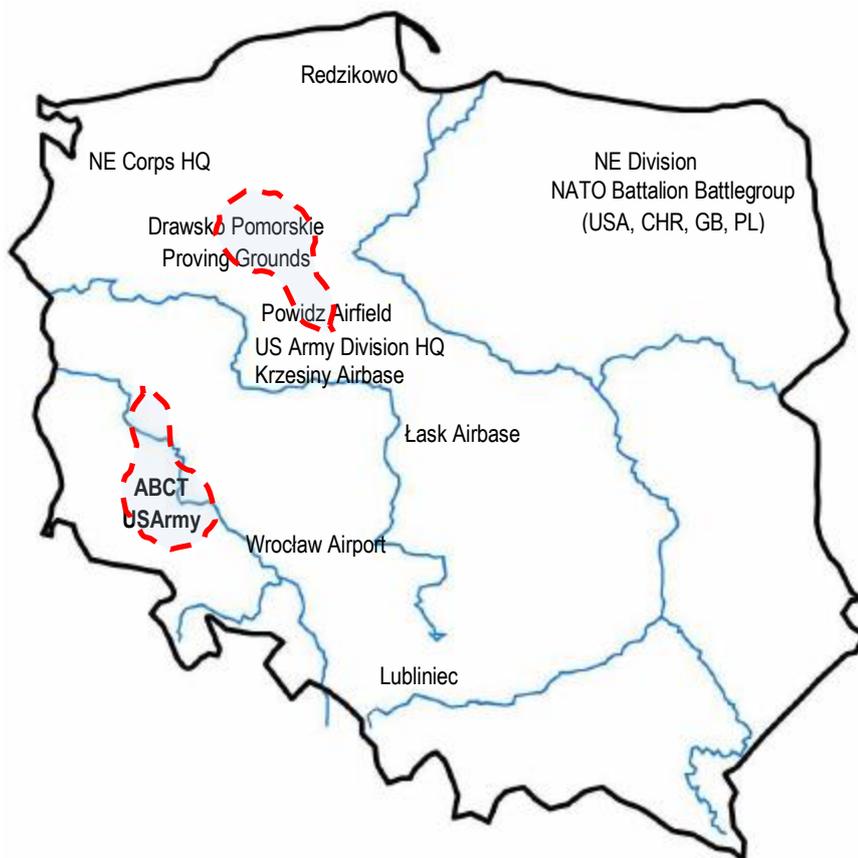


Figure 2 Dislocation of the main allied (USA and NATO) forces throughout Poland. Peacetime. Units are garrisoned. 2019. (ABCT – Armored Brigade Combat Team – permanent, rotational deployment of the US Armed Forces in Poland). Source: own work.



Figure 3 Main road network in Poland circa 2019.

Source: <https://conadrogach.pl/informacje/tak-dzisiaj-wyglada-siec-autostrad-i-drog-ekspresowych-w-polsce.html>



Figure 4 Railroad network in Poland as of 2009.

Source: <http://geopolityka.net/analiza-geopolityczna-aktualnego-stanu-sieci-kolejowej-w-polsce/>

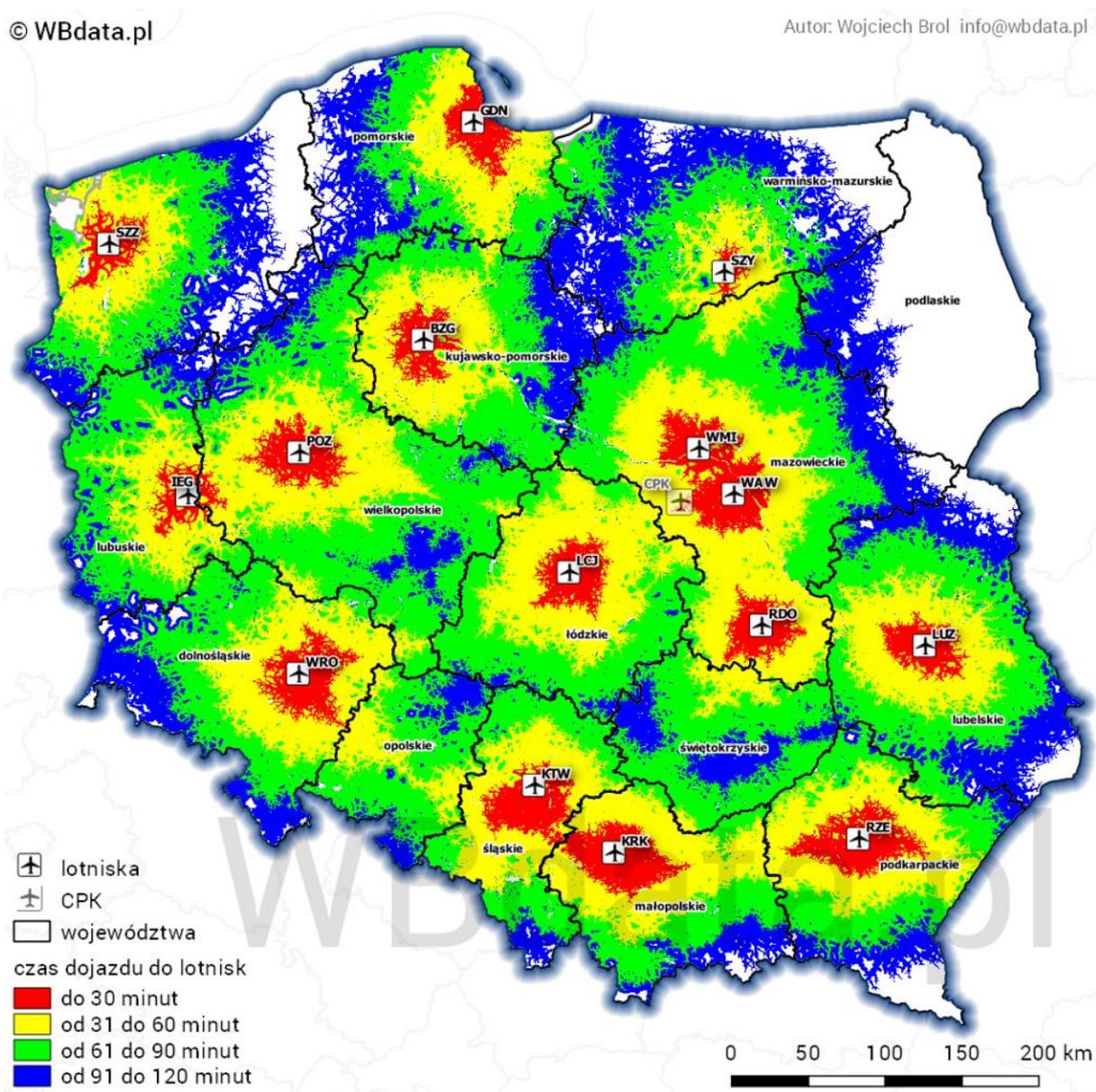


Figure 5 Key civilian airports in Poland as of 2018.  
 Source: <https://wbdata.pl/dostepnosc-czasowa-portow-lotniczych-2018/>

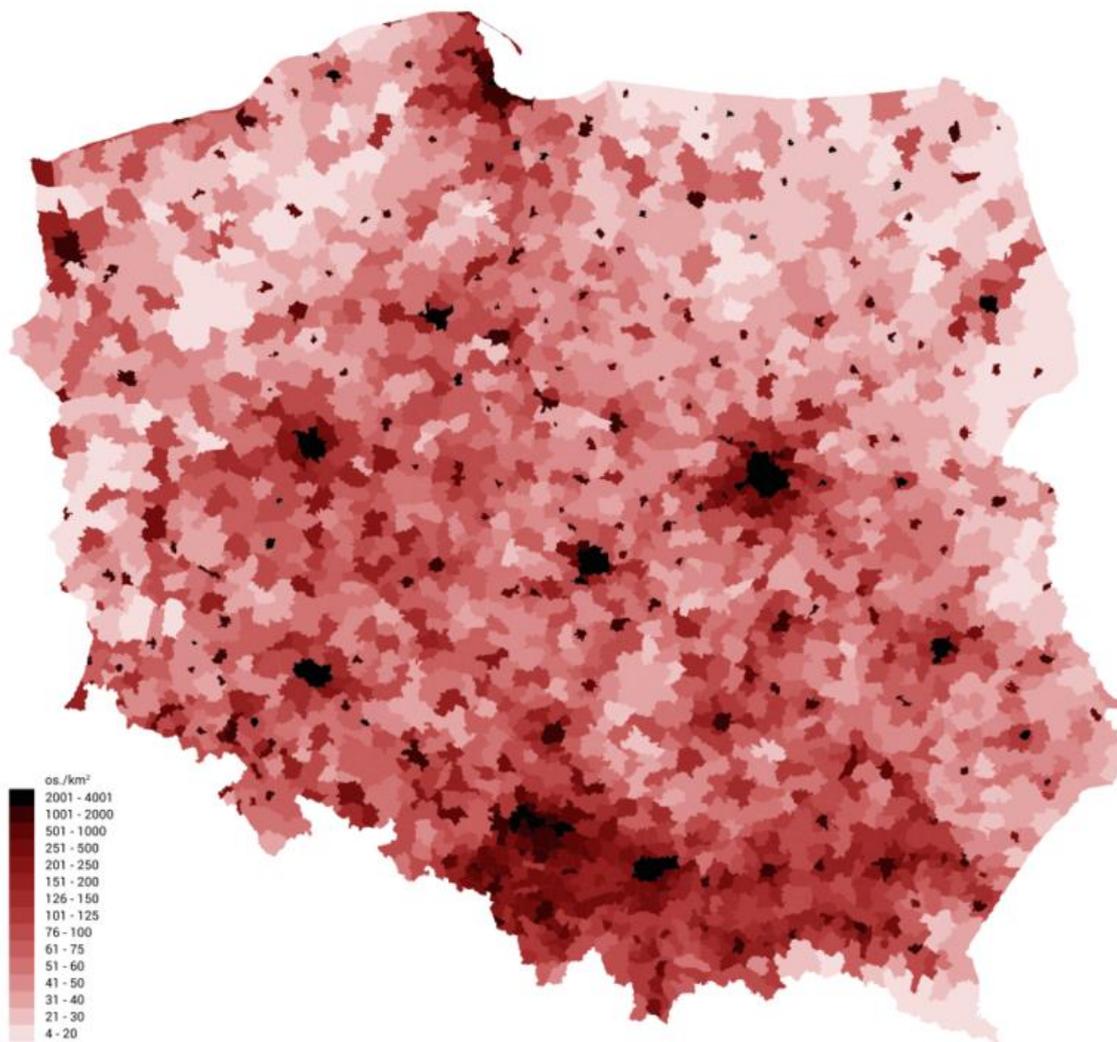


Figure 6 Population density in Poland as of 2016. Source: Wikipedia.

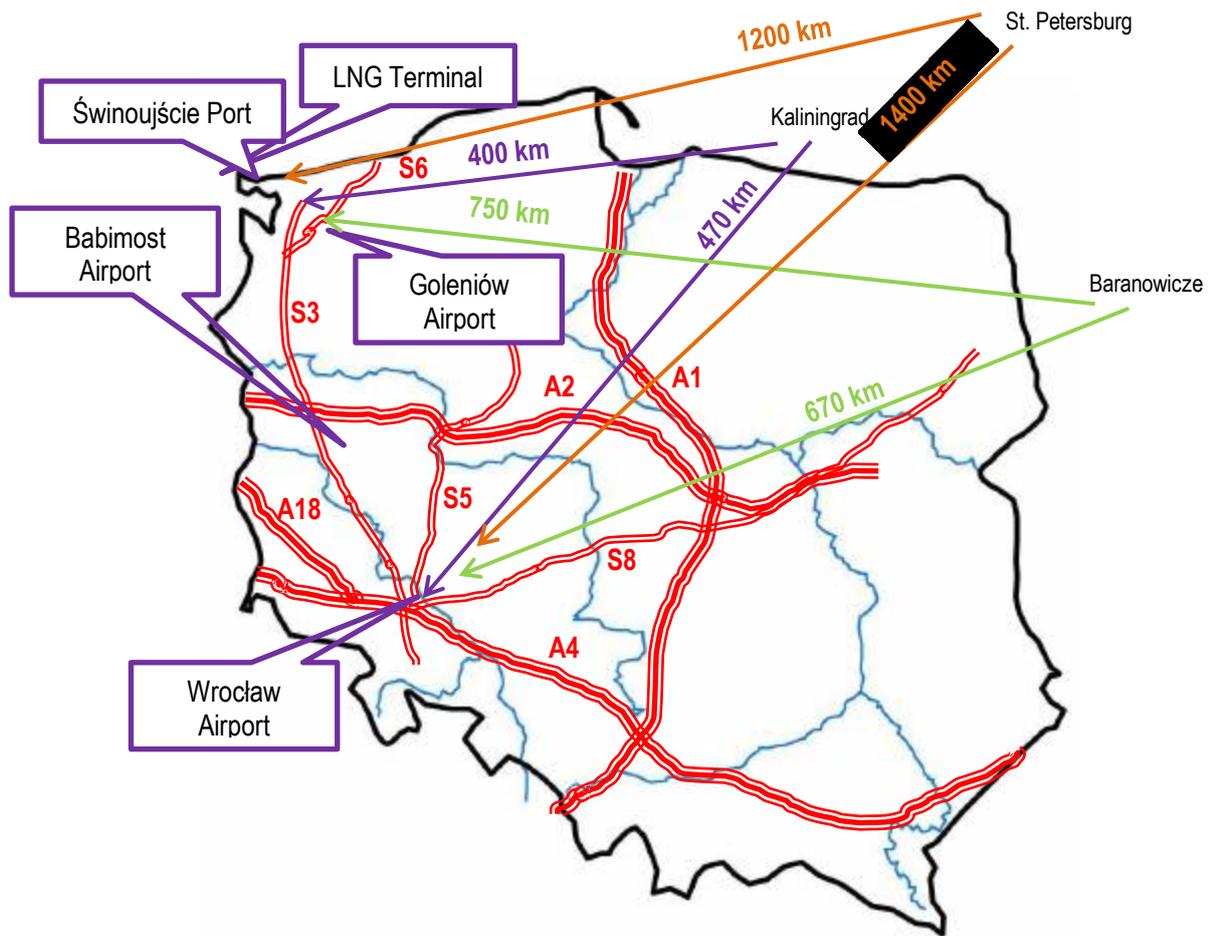


Figure 7 Schematic diagram of the main infrastructural objects and elements considered in the analysis of the S3 Road Variant. Source: own work.

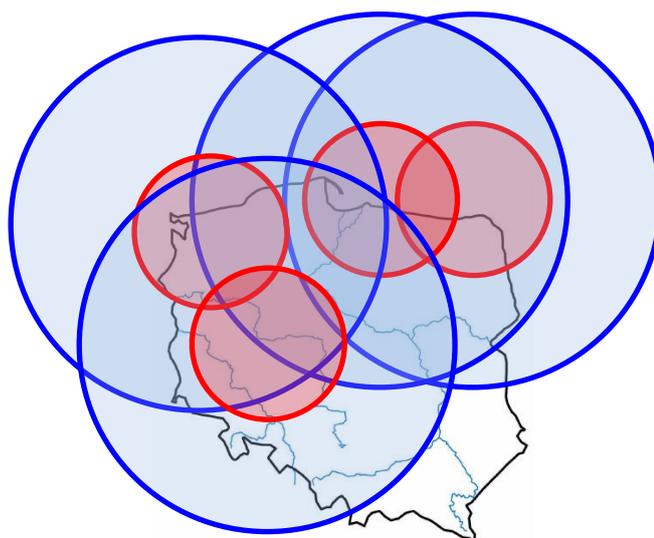


Figure 8 Schematic diagram of the installation of a Russian anti-access/area denial (A2AD) zone for aircraft over Poland. Premise: anti-aircraft systems from the S-300/400 family; engagement range for aerial targets FW/RTW – 100 km (red zone); detection range for aerial targets FW/RTW – 400 km (blue zone). Batteries deployed in Poland: Wolin island and Babimost. Batteries in north-east: Kaliningrad Oblast. Source: own work.



Figure 9 Poland's territorial shift after World War II. Source: Wikipedia.

Table 1 Comparison of threat variant consequences for Poland. Source: own work.

Variant	Variant probability [0 to 1]	Significance of impact for Poland	Brief description of consequences for Poland	Crisis type
Variant 1. The Suwalki Gap	0,4	Operational (local)	Loss of control over part of territory. Losses for SZ RP. Alliances put to the test.	Military
Variant 2. USA out - GE/RU in	0,5	Operational (political-economic)	Change of hegemon(s). Deepening of PL integration into <i>Mitteleuropa</i> .	Political
Variant 3. JUST Act 447	?	Strategic (critical)	Loss of state.	Political
Variant 4. The S3 Road	0,25	Strategic	Loss of control over part of territory. Losses for SZ RP. Foundations for sovereignty broken.	Military
Variant 5. Germany 1937	0,4	Operational (local)	Parts of territory lost. Deepening of PL integration into <i>Mitteleuropa</i> . Foundations of sovereignty reduced.	Political
Variant 6. Finalizing the EU project	1 (ongoing process)	Strategic (critical)	Loss of state. Dissolution into EU.	Political
Variant 7. Ukrainian territorial demands	0,15	Local	Localized conflict/crisis situation.	Military
Variant 8. Ukrainian minority	0,05	Local – dispersed	Dispersed conflict/crisis situation.	Law-enforcement
Variant 9. Little Green Men	0,01	Local	Localized crisis situation	Law-enforcement

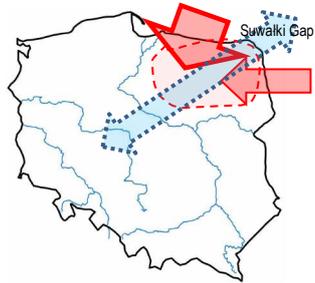


Figure 10 Schematic diagram of Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap. Source: own work.

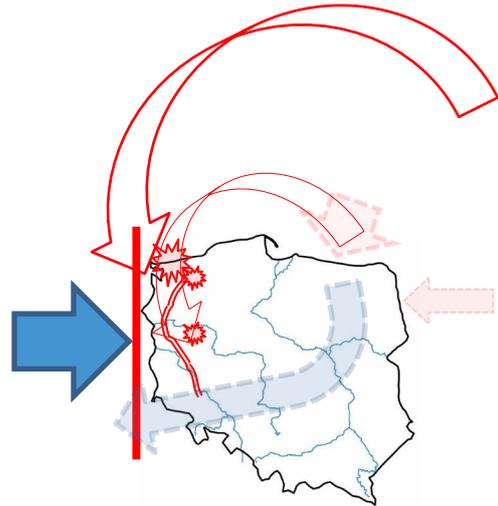


Figure 11 Schematic diagram of Variant 4: The S3 Road. Source: own work.

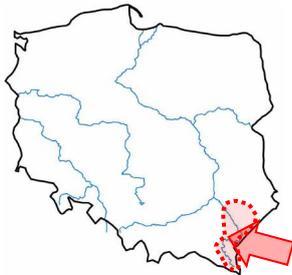


Figure 12 Schematic diagram of Variant 7: Ukrainian territorial demands. Source: own work.

Table 2 Comparison of the Russian Armed Forces operations in Variant 1: The Suwałki Gap, and Variant 4: The S3 Road, in relation to the principles of war. Source: own work.

No.	Principle of war	Degree of application of principle	
		Variant 1. The Suwałki Gap	Variant 4. The S3 Road
1.	Objective	75%	100%
2.	Offensive	80%	100%
3.	Mass	95%	60%
4.	Economy of Force	60%	90%
5.	Maneuver	60%	90%
6.	Unity of Command	90%	70%
7.	Security	80%	principle violated
8.	Surprise	25%	100%
9.	Simplicity	80%	60%



Figure 13 Key investments in energy transit (gas pipelines) projects from Russia into Western Europe.  
 Source: <http://wyborcza.biz>, 24 May 2016.