



Ministerstwo
Obrony Narodowej



25 YEARS OF POLAND IN NATO

DURING THE 25 YEARS OF ITS PRESENCE IN NATO, POLAND HAS COME A LONG WAY TOWARDS CREATING A MODERN MILITARY THAT MEETS THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

DURING THIS TIME, CHANGE OCCURRED NOT ONLY IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND THEMSELVES BUT ALSO IN THE WAY SOCIETY PERCEIVES THEM. THE ARMY WAS PROFESSIONALISED, MODERNISED, AND ADAPTED TO NATO STANDARDS. THE POLISH SOLDIER'S UNIFORM IS WIDELY RESPECTED BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE POLISH ARMY NOW HAS CAPABILITIES AND POTENTIAL VASTLY SUPERIOR TO THOSE WITH WHICH WE BEGAN OUR EFFORTS TO JOIN THE ALLIANCE. POLAND HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT ACTOR ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE AND IS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREATION OF A GLOBAL SECURITY SYSTEM.





THE ROAD TO NATO

MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE WAS OFFICIALLY RECOGNISED AS A PRIORITY OBJECTIVE OF POLISH SECURITY POLICY IN 1992. IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC REFORMS BEGAN WITH THE AIM OF GRADUALLY REACHING NATO STANDARDS. IN 1993, POLISH SOLDIERS PARTICIPATED IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE MILITARY EXERCISE 'BALTOPS 93'. A MILESTONE ON THE ROAD TO NATO WAS POLAND'S ACCESSION, ON 2 FEBRUARY 1994, TO THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE PROGRAMME. AS PART OF THE PROGRAMME, POLISH SOLDIERS TOOK PART IN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISES AND PARTICIPATED IN A NATO MISSION FOR THE FIRST TIME (IFOR OPERATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 1996).





12 MARCH 1999

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRONISŁAW GEREMEK PRESENTED THE US SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT WITH THE ACT OF POLAND'S ACCESSION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO). POLAND BECAME A FULL MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE, COMMITTING ITSELF TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TRANSFERRING AN AGREED-UPON PART OF THE ARMED FORCES TO THE JOINT COMMAND AND FINANCING MEASURES TO MAINTAIN COMBAT READINESS AT THE LEVEL REQUIRED BY NATO AND TO ADAPT THE POLISH ARMED FORCES TO THE STANDARDS OF THE ALLIANCE. ON THE SAME DAY, A CEREMONY OF RAISING THE NATO FLAG TOOK PLACE AT PIŁSUDSKI SQUARE IN WARSAW, ATTENDED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND, ALEKSANDER KWAŚNIEWSKI, AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HIGHEST STATE AUTHORITIES.



PROFESSIONALISATION

BEGINNING IN THE 1990s, THE POLISH ARMED FORCES UNDERWENT A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO ADAPT TO NATO STANDARDS. THE FIRST STEPS WERE TO INTRODUCE CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY, ADJUST THE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS TO THE STATE'S DEFENCE NEEDS, AND START MODERNISING THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE. AFTER JOINING NATO, THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POLISH ARMY CONTINUED. THE FOCUS WAS ON ENSURING MAXIMUM INTEROPERABILITY WITH ALLIES AND IMPROVING THE COMMAND SYSTEM AT ALL LEVELS. AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE REFORM OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES WAS THE SUSPENSION OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE IN 2009 AND THE TRANSITION TO A PROFESSIONAL ARMY. THE PROCESS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE ARMY WAS COMPLETED IN 2010.





INTERNATIONAL EXERCISES

PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER NATO COUNTRIES IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BUILDING THE DEFENCE CAPABILITIES OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES AND IMPROVING COOPERATION AT THE TACTICAL, OPERATIONAL, AND STRATEGIC LEVELS. POLISH SOLDIERS CONSTANTLY RAISE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS AND IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS BY PARTICIPATING IN EXERCISES AND TRAINING ORGANISED IN POLAND AND ABROAD, SUCH AS 'ANACONDA', 'DRAGON', 'BALTOPS', AND 'RENEGADE-KAPER'. MORE THAN 12,000 POLISH SOLDIERS, TOGETHER WITH ALLIED TROOPS AND OFFICERS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND ADMINISTRATION, TOOK PART IN THE 'ANACONDA-23' MANOEUVRES. THE EXERCISES WERE CONDUCTED IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS – IN CYBERSPACE AS WELL AS ON LAND, IN THE AIR, AND AT SEA. THE LARGEST NATO EXERCISE IN EUROPE IN DECADES, STEADFAST DEFENDER 2024, IS PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR.





FOREIGN MISSIONS

OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS, POLAND HAS ALWAYS BEEN READY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. THIS HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE INVOLVEMENT OF POLISH SOLDIERS IN AFGHANISTAN: THE ENDURING FREEDOM (2002-2007), ISAF (2007-2014), AND RESOLUTE SUPPORT (2015-2021) MISSIONS. THE ISAF MISSION WAS THE LARGEST MILITARY OPERATION OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. NEARLY 27,000 POLISH SOLDIERS PARTICIPATED; 43 DIED, AND 869 WERE WOUNDED. DURING OPERATIONS ABROAD, MANY POLISH SOLDIERS DEMONSTRATED HEROISM ON THE BATTLEFIELD. TO HONOUR THEM, IN 2006, AT THE REQUEST OF POLISH PRESIDENT LECH KACZYŃSKI, THE POLISH SEJM ESTABLISHED THE ORDER OF THE MILITARY CROSS, AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING ACTS OF COMBAT IN PEACETIME.





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NATO SUMMIT IN WARSAW

THE NATO SUMMIT IN WARSAW ON 8–9 JULY 2016, ATTENDED BY DELEGATIONS FROM 28 MEMBER STATES AND 25 PARTNER STATES, RESULTED IN IMPORTANT STRATEGIC DECISIONS REGARDING STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE'S EASTERN FLANK. A KEY ISSUE OF THE SUMMIT WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATO BASES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. FOUR BATTALION BATTLE GROUPS STATIONED (ON A PERMANENT ROTATION BASIS) IN THE BALTIC STATES AND POLAND WERE ESTABLISHED. IT WAS DECIDED TO DEPLOY AN ARMoured BRIGADE AND US ARMY DIVISION COMPONENTS IN THE REGION, INCLUDING A COMMAND OVERSEEING THE OPERATIONS OF THE BATTALION GROUPS – IT WAS AGREED THAT THE COMMAND AND MOST ELEMENTS OF THE UNIT WOULD BE LOCATED IN POLAND. POLAND'S ROLE AS THE SECURITY LEADER IN THE REGION WAS EMPHASISED.





MODERNISATION

THE POLISH ARMY HAS UNDERGONE A THOROUGH TRANSFORMATION IN THE LAST 25 YEARS. POST-SOVIET EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN GRADUALLY DISPOSED OF TO BE REPLACED BY MODERN, WESTERN DESIGNS. THE IMPULSE TO MODERNISE CAME FROM THE PARTICIPATION OF POLISH ARMY SOLDIERS IN MISSIONS ABROAD. OPERATIONS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SET THE PATHS FOR ADVANCEMENT.

THE FLAGSHIP EXAMPLE OF THE CHANGES WAS THE KTO ROSOMAK – A PROJECT THAT WOULD NOT HAVE EVOLVED IF NOT FOR THE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN. ANOTHER FACTOR THAT SPURRED THE ACCELERATION OF ARMY MODERNISATION AND A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN DEFENCE SPENDING WAS RUSSIA'S ATTACK ON UKRAINE IN FEBRUARY 2022. THE POLISH ARMED FORCES WERE PROVIDED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT INCLUDING MIM-104 PATRIOT, F-16 AND F-35 AIRCRAFT, AND M142 HIMARS.





MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE US

CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN POLAND AND THE UNITED STATES IS ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE SECURITY OF BOTH OUR COUNTRIES AND NATO'S EASTERN FLANK. ON 15 AUGUST 2020, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SIGNED AN AGREEMENT ON ENHANCED DEFENCE COOPERATION.

THE US LAND FORCES V CORPS FORWARD COMMAND IN POLAND, BASED IN POZNAŃ, IS THE ONLY STRUCTURE OF THIS LEVEL DEPLOYED IN EUROPE. ITS MAIN TASKS ARE COORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES AND SUPERVISION OF US LAND FORCES IN EUROPE, OPERATIONAL PLANNING, AND THE COOPERATION AND SYNCHRONISATION OF US FORCES WITH THE MILITARIES OF OTHER NATO COUNTRIES. ON 30 JULY 2022, THE US LAND FORCES V CORPS FORWARD COMMAND HEADQUARTERS WAS GIVEN THE SYMBOLIC NAME 'CAMP KOŚCIUSZKO'.





75 YEARS OF NATO

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO) WAS ESTABLISHED ON 24 AUGUST 1949 BY THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY SIGNED ON 4 APRIL 1949 IN WASHINGTON. INITIALLY, NATO COMPRISED 12 MEMBERS. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE TREATY, MEMBER STATES MAY, BY UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT, OFFER AN INVITATION TO JOIN NATO TO A EUROPEAN COUNTRY THAT IS CAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE TREATY AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE SECURITY OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC AREA. CURRENTLY, 32 MEMBER STATES BELONG TO NATO. FOR COLLECTIVE DEFENCE, ARTICLE 5 OF THE TREATY PLAYS A KEY ROLE, STATING THAT AN ARMED ATTACK ON ONE OF THE MEMBERS IS TREATED AS AN ATTACK AGAINST THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE.





STRONGER TOGETHER

THERE WERE 12 SIGNATORIES TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY: BELGIUM, DENMARK, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, ICELAND, CANADA, LUXEMBOURG, NORWAY, PORTUGAL, THE US, THE UK, AND ITALY. GREECE AND TURKEY JOINED NATO IN 1952, WEST GERMANY IN 1955, SPAIN IN 1982, POLAND, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, AND HUNGARY IN 1999, BULGARIA, LITHUANIA, LATVIA, ESTONIA, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA AND SLOVENIA IN 2004, ALBANIA AND CROATIA IN 2009, MONTENEGRO IN 2017, NORTH MACEDONIA IN 2020, FINLAND IN 2023, AND SWEDEN IN 2024. COLLECTIVELY, THE NATO MEMBER STATES FOLLOW THE SLOGAN 'STRONGER TOGETHER', WHICH, AT PRESENT, IN TIMES OF NUMEROUS TENSIONS AND THREATS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, TAKES ON PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE.



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