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The Normative Model of the Ideal-Type Soldier in a Democracy: Case of Poland

Polish Case

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Research Project „The Image of the Democratic Soldier: Tensions Between the Organisation of Armed Forces and the Principles of Democracy in European Comparison“

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Introduction

The concept of transferring a normative model into military institutions and their socializing practice is one of the most significant challenges faced by the Ministry of National Defense and its various components as well as practically all those institutions and notables who are involved in the security policy of the Republic of Poland, including its defensive and military aspects.

Reasons why the subject of the investigation at level 2 can be considered complex are both subjective and objective. They are objective because – in spite of the progress that has been made since the turn of the 80s and 90s – there is a need to improve mechanisms of Polish democracy, including principles of the functioning of the armed forces on their way to full professionalism in 2010 (see: investigation level 1). However, what can be noticed in the case of the armed forces is the accumulation of power over the army not only in the hands of the Minister of National Defence but also in the hands of both his first deputy – a former chief of General Staff – and a present Chief of General Staff. Such a distribution of power curbs freedom of expression of opinions and judgments formed by lower rank civilian and military employees of the Ministry of Defence. Objective reasons also include a lack of full consistency in „from the inside” implementation of reforms in the Polish army, which has an impact on its operational, training and fighting capacity, including its activity in those areas which are subject to investigation at level 2 and level 3 of our project.

While the Polish army is in need of more systemic, personally and politically unbiased solutions, there is the possibility of yet another standoff between the government and the President in relation to the concept of the armed forces model. The President of the state belongs to a political camp (the Law and Justice party) whose popularity is plummeting after the fiasco of the elections in November 2007. As the constitutional supreme commander of the armed forces, he is however equipped with instruments which allow him to influence both the activity of the Department of National Defence and, directly, the armed forces. Lech Kaczyński announced that cohabitation with the ruling parties (Civic Platform and the Polish Peasant Party) will not make him cease to exercise this influence. The army people even when they want to remain truly neutral and to declare this neutrality, cannot help feeling that they live in a climate of uncertainty. They are very often burdened with an unnecessary workload, the latter the result of frequent conceptual changes to the armed forces' activity. Their obedience and loyalty towards their civilian and military superiors can easily be transformed into passivity and lead to lower quality work and service, time-serving and opportunism. These are the subjective reasons.

1. Concept and Content of Military Training

Lack of a clear mid- and long-term vision of the armed forces as well as of a comprehensive and consistent legislative framework (I discussed these issues in the first part of the research) is an obstacle to establishing a stable system of education and vocational training for military people (especially at a higher level) which would match the needs of the state in the field of defence.

The issue of direct military training and non-military education, namely prodefensive and patriotic education, are far less complex. Vocational training and education are free of parties' influence and are not political in their nature. Changes which they are subject to result predominantly from service-related pragmatics (I discussed the pragmatic act in the investigation at level 1).

The changes that occurred in the field of soldier's training at the beginning of the Nineties were not considerable. They cannot have been more significant due to the context of those times, characterized by a cautious security policy. Soviet/ Russian troops had been stationed in Poland for two and half years since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Poland was in fact located in the so called buffer, grey zone. A doctrine was adopted, stating that Poland, as regards the defence of its integrity, was on its own. It was emphasised that Poland does not really have an enemy but must be nevertheless prepared for all-azimuth defence, i.e. from East, South, West and North. Poland at that time was struggling against a number of difficulties born in the past which were characteristic of a country of relatively large strategic importance and an uncertain future in the face of a different military alliance than formerly. The vision of the army was unclear in such areas as the structures, financing, commanding, managing, control, armaments, equipment, logistics and many other factors, including replacing the practice of grand manoeuvres with army exercises. All these factors had a negative impact on, amongst other things, the quality of the soldiers' training – there was no clear scope or objective of the training for soldiers. Consequently, so called selective training became a preferred option, helping to both increase effectiveness and minimize the level of investment by reducing training to core components. The method used was that of trial and error – first only a couple of units were given new training on an experimental basis, and only later were proven methods implemented in other units. The participation of Poland and its armed forces in the NATO's programme „Partnership for Peace” hugely contributed to setting direction in training, especially in the area of tactics¹.

The entire military milieu was aware of the low level of training and the urge to change this situation, realizing at the same time that this change cannot be either rapid or easy. However, in order to initiate the change, the decision was made to develop, adopt and implement documents regulating combat training within the framework of an anticipated new defensive doctrine, limited budget and reduced duration of compulsory military service.

1 Compare: M. Huzarski „Impact of integration with NATO on changes in general tactics theory”, published by the Academy of National Defence, Warsaw 1999 rok.

Three courses of action were determined:

- modification of the document entitled *The Code of Combat* – in the section on formations from a team to a division²;
- introduction of new codes for the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland³;
- changing the theory of fighting activities in appropriate types of armed forces, i.e. modifying tactics.

Stabilization of soldiers' training has been taking place for last 12 years. The document entitled *Training Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland* was adopted on the 2nd of January 1996 to be in force until 2010. It defined strategic training tasks. It was assumed that these tasks would be executed in three stages:

- deep transformation of the armed forces to be conducted by 2000. Its objective is to dramatically change the concept of training and allow for implementation of its foundations;
- integration of the structures and synchronisation of the structures command system by 2005;
- Stabilisation of the structures to be completed by 2010.

Polish armed forces' experience of recent years in the area of training – both in Poland (individual training and military exercises and with the participation of allies and partners) and on foreign missions – indicates certain regularities.

First of all, the general quality of soldiers' training has increased, although not all training objectives have been reached yet. Differences between the levels of training depend on military units' categories and types of performed tasks, i.e. foreign missions and defence preparations.

Namely, mobile units, used in rapid deployment to remote areas beyond Polish borders, participate in quite successful training developed according to special curricula. This training helps professional soldiers to be ready to operate in extreme conditions, using modern weapons and equipment. Preparations of selected subdivisions for foreign missions, mostly within ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in Afghanistan, gave opportunities to conduct a so far unwitnessed number of exercises at the level of platoon, company and battalion. These types of exercises are supposed to dominate future training. At the same time, soldiers are to be trained not only for battles in the field, but also in cities (due to asymmetric threats, such as urban guerrilla warfare). Training of the deployment troops lacked in a number of tactical exercises in shooting, which are useful in building teams of professionals who can cooperate in formations of various sizes.

In the case of the other categories, including predominantly compulsory service soldiers, training mostly suffers from inadequate weapons and equipment, e.g.

2 Decision of the Minister of National Defence nr 64/Ministry of National Defence from the 7th of August 1992.

3 Decision of the Minister of National Defence nr 62/Ministry of National Defence from the 5th of July 1994.

ammunition, although there has been an improvement. These insufficiencies often become the source of frustrations and complaints, contributing to a breakdown of the armed forces into so called army „A” and army „B”. This gap is however considerably diminishing.

The aforementioned disproportions will not disappear soon. Moreover, according to many commanders and experts, they should remain unchanged until there is an army which, in the words of the Chief of General Staff, general Franciszek Gągor, has been established „on the basis of clearly defined rules determining the number of units, their assignments and dislocation”⁴. Those units which are located in the proximity of firing ranges and have good training and logistical infrastructure have better prospects.

Training of the Polish armed forces does not focus solely on foreign missions. It also concentrates on the army’s traditional duties, such as defence of the territory. - „Can the experience acquired in patrol units in the deserts of Afghanistan be used in a regular battle with an equal enemy?” one military journalists has recently inquired⁵. The meaning of this question is clear only for those who realize (investigation level 1) that the primary function of the Polish armed forces consists in confronting a symmetric military conflict. The majority of the military share this official viewpoint which anticipates threats to Poland’s territorial integrity. Scenarios of large scale exercises on firing grounds include counteracting hostile invasion (such as exercises under the cryptonym „Anakonda” which took place in 2006). Foreign missions are therefore an opportunity for the Polish Army to translate a scenario of defending the Republic of Poland into reality; however, soldiers who participate in foreign missions are mostly members of formations which report to the Land Forces and Special Forces whereas Air Forces and the Navy play a key role in defending a country’s territorial integrity.

The aforementioned national guidelines are in line with directions set out by the North Atlantic Alliance; Poland is in the course of implementing the armed forces development plan for the years 2007 – 2012. The 2009 – 2018 plan is currently under development. These plans mostly determine education in various types of higher education centres. The Minister of Defence defines each year the number of seats at officer schools depending on the needs of the armed forces. Given plans for full professionalization of the armed forces, widespread promotion of this initiative in society and the rather exclusive character of Polish military academies, this type of education will probably become increasingly popular.

1.1 Education Matching Defence Needs

Military academies are considered an integral part of Poland’s defence capacities on one hand, and on the other, they are a key component of the higher education system. Military academies are always public (in their case, no other form of proprietary supervision exists). They are supervised by the Minister of National Defence and are

4 „Polska Zbrojna” (Armed Poland), nr 5/2007.

5 Norbert Bączyk, „Polska Zbrojna” (Armed Poland) nr 45/2007.

considered to be military units. They are headed by a military person in the function of a commander-rector.

The Academies' main goal is to educate future commanders and experts. Graduates should have general and specialized knowledge, and such professional skills which enable them to operate successfully both in fighting conditions and in times of peace. There is increasingly more focus on education within the scope of international security, armed conflicts and war law. The school system consists of five academies (including three military-civilian schools and two officer academies) and eight N.C.O schools.

Presently two models of educating a future officer staff are used within the system of military education. The first model is employed in the case of graduates of secondary schools who would like to become professional soldiers (which is possible after graduating from a Technical Military Academy and academies educating officers for three types of armed forces: land forces, air force and navy)⁶. The aforementioned system of education centres was developed in the years following the end of the Second World War and it does not really meet present and future challenges. Therefore a reform of educational curricula is required.

1.2 Civic Education

Political/ideological/mental training *a priori* does not exist in contemporary Poland. It is one of the axioms adopted by civilian management and the armed forces in their policy on the army as a response to the practice of such training dating back to the time when the People's Republic of Poland was a member of the Warsaw Pact and also as a reaction to some remnants of that period, which could be still felt in the mid-Nineties.

A new educational doctrine has been developed since the beginning of the Nineties. An educational model started to emerge. It referred to traditional civic and patriotic values. Political education (including also vital questions and other issues interesting to the milieu) was replaced by civic education. Its objective was to raise defences-oriented awareness and encourage patriotic attitudes, concentrate military milieus' attention on the superior interests of the state and nation, discipline and fighting readiness of the armed forces and to provide motivation.

A centrally managed educational process also ceased to exist at that time. It was replaced by elements which were meant to emphasise a specific character of a given type of the armed forces and of the region in which a given unit is residing. Simultaneously, the difficult task of defining commanders' responsibilities was completed. Commanders gained much room for manoeuvre, being responsible for developing and implementing patriotic-civic education curricula, organizing cultural-educational activities and building partnerships with civilian milieus

6 A Master's degree can be obtained in the course of studies, the second model is targeted at master's graduates of colleges and universities and enables them to graduate from the officer's faculty at officer academies. Three military academies may educate civilian students, which creates yet another opportunity for the latter to become professional soldiers.

The educational doctrine has remained practically unchanged since the beginning of the Nineties, but its particular components have undergone modifications. Claiming that an educational process is centrally managed would be a far-fetched statement, nevertheless the competencies of the Ministry of Defence and the general flavour the ministry gives to the process result in little discrepancy between educational scope and methods applied in particular types of armed forces and subordinate units. The principle of uniformity of the vocational training process and education has been maintained; however it turned out that those educational duties imposed on commanders exceeded their potential, particularly in the case of so called line commanders. A separate educational body is currently being formed.

In spite of these, however natural, changes to original assumptions, the eradication of ideological education and the abolishment of former party structures can be considered to be one of the most spectacular achievements of the Polish army.

Membership in a political party, association and other civic organizations and movements which pursue political goals is forbidden during military service⁷. This restriction applies to participation in political assemblies and pursuance of political activity. Professional soldiers have a right to participate in central and local elections, provided that they will not be wearing a uniform, military distinctions and badges. A professional soldier may be a candidate in parliamentary elections, in elections to high elective posts and institutions of local government. During an election campaign professional soldiers are required to take an unpaid leave. Membership in an association must be terminated on the day the service commences.

In instances of membership in organizations and associations with non-political aims the regulations are not as restrictive, but a soldier has a duty to notify the unit's commander in writing of this fact. In case of membership in a foreign or international organization a soldier must file an official request to the Minister of National Defense, stating name of the organization, its seat on the territory of Poland, and the post held in the organization. Additionally, in certain circumstances, a request to submit a statute of the organization or an excerpt from a register may be raised. Minister of National Defense has a right to turn to the organization in question for further information.

Polish armed forces are no longer a place for indoctrination and all educational solutions are inspired by the national heritage or modelled on best practices in democratic armies. Nowadays it is self-evident that educational processes in the army are free of any ideology, politics and party affiliations. They result from the consensus of various political forces (although there were attempts on the part of political parties' representatives to interfere with the processes). However, the democratisation of social

7 Judging from conversations and interview the personnel would like to create a labor union which is, thus far, not possible from a legal point of view. The verdict of the Constitutional Court from March, 2000, has been used as a legal basis for this standpoint. The Court has not decided that creating labor unions in the armed forces is illegal, stating only that provisions of legislative acts are in force and do not violate the Constitution. However, according to a general opinion, there is no suitable climate for the heads of the Ministry to decide about a consent for a change in legislation that, in practice, forbids creation of a labor union.

relations in the army (e.g. filing complaints and appeals) and soldiers' empowerment (i.e. providing them with a clear definition of responsibilities and enforcement of soldiers' rights) leaves much to be desired.

1.3 Lesson of Democracy

Civic education in the army is nowadays considered to be a component of the process of society's education, offering lessons in democracy and self-governance. It is supposed to facilitate understanding of modern phenomena. At least theoretically, civic education is a concept according to which a key duty of the members of society is to learn how to perform civic functions and become familiar with duties and rights ensured by the legislative system. Civic education helps to shape a civic society.

Civic education takes place in a group or in a commander-subordinate relationship, i.e. in a military subdivision, which should provide best practice of behaviours and attitudes. Civic education occurs therefore in natural conditions, and lectures on this subject are just one of its components.

9-month long military service includes 72 hours (compulsory 62) spent on the subject of civic education. Classes are conducted according to the themes developed by (for the time being) commanders at particular commanding levels⁸.

The subject matter of civic education was determined by the Ministry of Defence⁹. It covers the following areas:

- constitutional values: civic freedoms and rights, principles of the State of law, respect for property, democratic values, concept of self-governance, social justice, the State's independence and sovereignty.
- national and Polish arms' traditions
- civilisational output and Polish scientific and cultural achievements
- universal values which underlie European civilisation, in particular: freedom, equality, justice, peace and truth
- principles of soldier's ethics and honour
- rights and civic freedoms in the conditions of military service, soldiers accountability in cases of law and military discipline violations;
- international law on armed conflicts;
- protection of cultural treasures during foreign missions;
- knowledge of NATO and EU;

8 Guidelines of the Minister of Defence on civic education in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, i.e. decision Nr 289/Ministra of Defence from the 28th of September 2004.

9 Guidelines of the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defence from the 1st of February 2006 on socio-educational, social and reconversion-oriented activity and promotion of defences in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland for the years 2006-2007.

- constitutional rights of state executive bodies in the security system.

1.4 New Polish Patriotism

A vital rule in force in the Polish Army states that vocational training should be associated with general education so that a soldier is a patriot.

The contemporary understanding of patriotism is to some extent in conflict with traditional notions of patriotism. The latter is somehow a trademark of the Polish mentality and is immediately associated with the active defence of the homeland. Undoubtedly very positive changes of political circumstances and the security status of Poland give a new meaning to patriotism. What is this new meaning? It goes straight back to diligent learning, service, work and activity for the country's sake in the state of peace, and for the sake of redefined reasons of State, co-responsibility for protecting them, combat for peace and security in more than just a domestic dimension. In the face of the erosion of a traditional approach to patriotism, soldiers are strongly required to possess general knowledge on priority issues in the security policy for Poland and to commit to defend Poland and its allies alike. Soldiers should be ready to „fight” in the case of calamities and disasters, counteract asymmetric threats, terrorist attacks and whenever there is a need to protect life and health of another person (or group of persons).

According to theoreticians - scientists linked to the Academy of National Defence of the Ministry of National Defence or civilian experts collaborating with the Ministry of Defence – patriotism can be defined as an attitude based on the principles of unity and solidarity with one's homeland and other countries, but also the sense of social bond and community spirit shared with other citizens. „Patriotic education is an integral part of civic education which develops the civic identity of soldiers, their attachment to family home, local community, region, military unit and their homeland, including its past and present, the sense of responsibility for its multidimensional development and its place among other countries”¹⁰.

„Old school” Polish patriotism was associated with romanticism and bravado; modern patriotism places more stress on the rationalism and pragmatism of a contemporary civic society.

The Polish Army is supported in the process of shaping patriotic and defence-oriented attitudes by the Polish Church and its high representatives, including army priests. It is commonly known that Poland is a Catholic country and many young service-persons are Catholics, often practicing (it is especially noticeable during foreign missions when they feel the need of a Christian service, a mass and national-Catholic rites). As far as its activity in a military milieu is concerned, the Church follows the rule of perceiving patriotism as an „absolute obligation to the homeland”, any of its resources and permanent values, respect for one's homeland understood as a whole country and a

10 M. Kaliński: „Rola wychowania patriotycznego i proobronnego w kształtowaniu świadomości obywatelskiej żołnierzy” (Role of patriotic and defences-oriented education in developing civic awareness in soldiers”, MON, Warszawa. 2005.

patrimony which was once defined as a piece of land, now- as a region. It also stipulates readiness to help others and perform one's daily duties¹¹. Consequently, there is no conflict between an official policy of the Ministry of National Defence and the Church. On the contrary, the approach to tradition and soldiers' duties is practically identical on both sides. This fact has an unquestionable impact on soldiers' and officers' attitudes.

1.5 Shortcomings and Plans

Audits conducted by the Ministry of National Defence in military units indicated serious gaps in the ways commanders organise civic education, e.g. classes on this subject are considered by the staff as a so called necessary evil, attendance is low, lecturers' competencies are inadequate, supplies of instructive materials are insufficient, there is lack of appropriate monitoring of classes of civic education, etc. One of the major proposals suggested assigning patriotic and pro-defence education to a specialized officer's body, which is currently being formed.

The aforementioned conclusions inspired the management of the Ministry of Defence¹² to propose changes to the education system. Modifications of the original concepts¹³ can be, however, translated into a reduction of requirements to be met by the soldiers. The objectives are as follows:

- defining minimum curricula for particular groups of persons,
- determining vital requirements for officers, professional subofficers, professional privates, participating in the courses and basic requirements for compulsory service-persons;

The „Corps of Education Officers” is currently being formed. The body will report to the Director of the Department of Education and Promotion of Defences in the Ministry of National Defence and to the educational divisions at the level of brigade, regiment, and self-sufficient structural battalion. This decision¹⁴ means a rejection of the original concept which assigned to the commander the responsibilities of an educator. Approximately 70 % of commanders on various levels called for the separation of these two kinds of responsibilities. Commander-educators report to commanders at a given level of command; however, the development of a strong corps requires more time.

11 Compare: next issues of biweekly of the Field Ordynariat of Polish Army entitled „Nasza służba” („Our service”), Warsaw.

12 There is a function of Undersecretary of State for Social and Parliamentary Affairs in the Ministry of National Defence. The Undersecretary is responsible for the development and monitoring of socio-educational policy in the whole department, including diagnosing and analysing atmosphere in the army, coordination of educational activities, building relations and discipline in the army, prevention of pathologies, coordination of activities within the scope of psychoprophylactics, civic education, promotion of tradition, cooperation with non-governmental organisations (non-military ones), cultural and educational activity, pedagogical education. The Division headed by the Undersecretary of State includes the Department of Education and Promotion of Defences. The role of the latter is to tackle all the aforementioned issues and to achieve particular links in the armed forces.

13 Decision Nr 285 of the Minister of National Defence from the 19th of July 2006.

14 Decision nr 285/Ministry of National Defence from the 19th of July 2006.

Members of existing staff are employable only to a limited extent; the willing and eligible candidates need to complete post-graduate studies in humanities. Presently neither officer schools nor academies offer education to graduates in the field which appears to be quite important to the Polish Army. In an alternative scenario graduates of humanities and arts at civilian universities could become educating officers, provided they graduate from an officer's college and pass the officer's exam.

Officer-educators would teach the following topics:

- constitutional principles of defence policy in a democratic State of law ;
- civic rights and duties of soldiers and army employees;
- principles of tolerance, political neutrality and civilian democratic control of the army;
- integration of civic education and other forms of professional and training practice
- specific character of a given type of the Armed Forces and of particular kinds of military service

1.6 Clash of the Old and the New

After the change of the political regime in Poland and reorientation of the security and defence policy, the key message of the armed forces was „democratization” and „humanization” of the military service, transition to the Western European type of democracy. It required dramatic changes in such areas as: formal-legal foundations for building interpersonal relations in the army, streamlining rules of military life (with focus on the military code), promotion of a new military culture and new types of relations between soldiers and officers, improvement of standards of military service in barracks and outside, new principles of civilian-military cooperation (so that the army does not play the role of a „host” anymore) and also sharing new principles of political life in conditions of pluralism. There is truth in the following statement of one military affairs analyst¹⁵: „the initiation of systemic changes in the State led to a clash of the authoritarian character of the Polish Army and the vision of target systemic solutions”. In my opinion this statement is of paramount importance. It contains both a very apt and concise description of the situation at the beginning of the transformation process. This description will be pertinent as long as the Polish Army struggles against ghosts of the past – for instance in terms of mentality – and no sooner than democracy reigns in its ranks. It will not lose its relevance until there is a common perception of a soldier as a citizen (investigation level 3).

Mentality related problems constitute in my view the biggest challenge for Polish military men and compulsory service-persons in particular. It is less of a problem for

15 Jerzy Zalewski, „Wojsko Polskie w przemianach ustrojowych 1989 – 2001” (Polish Army and System Transformation), wyd. Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa. Warsaw 2002.

soldiers from fully professionalized units, but not so in the case of commanders, especially those at a mid-level. Observation of the military milieu suggests that, paradoxically, more problems can be noticed in the ranks of Staff military persons than in the case of so called line military men. Extreme behaviours range from „inner dependence” on a superior (which is usually explained by the uniquely hierarchized character of the armed forces) to acceptance of everything which is inspired by the „top” to „silent boycotting”.

For the above reasons, responsible, ultimate goal-oriented (democratization being the target) management of the armed forces, including the General Staff, should be considered a priority.

2. Style of Leadership

Leadership in the army is a fairly common topic of theoretical discussions¹⁶. The term „leadership” is, however, still used alternatively with¹⁷ such terms such as „commanding”, or „managing”.

Management style based on a „top-to-bottom” approach to giving orders, forced obedience, or even manipulation of subordinates in order to stress one’s importance as a commander - the group’s manager - is prevalent in everyday relations between superiors and their subordinates. „This is not a desirable leadership model in a modern army which is trying to find its own place in the structure of a democratic state and to optimise the potential of collective effort and coalition-based collaboration”, note the aforementioned authors.

The harsh reality of the army’s functioning contributes to the emergence of a model which does not benefit a contemporary democratic state. The army operates nowadays in smaller but mobile teams, in irregular structures, in divisions formed of soldiers who were originally members of other divisions (frequently without a prior solid team building process). Soldiers, who used to leave in whole groups for manoeuvres and large scale exercises, are now facing a situation when they suddenly end up in a division located far away from their own unit, being therefore deprived of the sense of a certain stability and lacking support.

Effective and direct commanding in the battlefield in a situation of imminent danger of, for example, a terrorist attack, commanding in small structures, for instance in a light armoured vehicle prone to explosions of booby-traps, in a helicopter under sniper fire or in a reconnaissance team in difficult terrain requires a firm approach which can easily

16 Polish dissertations on this topic date back to the period of the emergence of Polish People’s Republic, namely the years 1947/1948.

17 Compare with: Leszek Kanarski: „Od skutecznego dowodzenia do efektywnego przywództwa w wojsku” (From efficient commanding to effective leadership in the army) and „Włodzimierz Fehler: „Skuteczne przywództwo jako wyzwanie dla polityki personalnej...” (Effective leadership as a challenge in personal policy).

transform into an arbitrary style. The complex circumstances of a foreign mission do not allow for, as in Poland, „fooling around”. Response to every kind of threat must be rapid, resolute and responsible. Commands and orders must be therefore acted upon immediately.

Considerable technological improvements to the communication process between commanders and their subordinates allows at the same time for unambiguous verification of commanding skills. Consequently, the importance of direct commanding has rather increased. It is one of the most significant lessons learned by the various types of Polish armed forces during a number of different foreign missions.

The inclusion of the army in irregular activities, combined tasks or activities different than war ¹⁸ requires – regardless of the commanding abilities and skills during a military operation – the ability to boost common effort and motivate the managed teams. In such circumstances commanding or managing based on the traditional approach reduced to procedures of formal subordination is no longer sufficient. Modernized battlefield technology as well as the equipment and hardware necessary in stabilization and reconstruction missions require better and more comprehensive organisation of a team’s work than on a battlefield. A number of Polish researchers of the issue of leadership note that both professional and compulsory service soldiers need to observe many detailed rules which regulate the aspect of pragmatics in all types of the armed forces. The level of fulfilment of duties is at the same time a key criterion of a soldier’s evaluation. Under such circumstances becoming a leader is difficult.

There is a whole spectrum of leadership styles in the Polish armed forces, ranging from an autocratic style of managing a team of soldiers and officers to a „paternal” style („our commander is like a dad”) to a democratic style, where superiors fully respect their subordinates. Circumstances favouring autocratic activities are less frequent whereas there is more room for manoeuvre for democratic leaders, which is in itself a positive trend. It can also be assumed that a positive development is taking place especially in those formations which collaborate with armies of the allied states and are included in cooperation with bi- and multilateral fighting structures, and also with organisations which represent soldiers.

2.1 Formal Authority and Credibility

Theoretically there is a common belief that the formula of commanding based on a superior’s formal authority does not fit democratic transformations in the state and its armed forces. Such a formula would remain in conflict with beliefs which underpin the functioning of NATO member countries’ armies, especially those at a higher level of development such as the German army. Poland has been aware of the change in commanding or leadership style since the Polish army started collaborating with Western

¹⁸ Such activities include: conflict prevention, armament control, actions against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, peace supporting actions, medical emergency services, delivering humanitarian aid, evacuation, helping local communities, the need to cooperate with non-military organisations, collaboration with multinational structures.

countries' armies within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) or the „Partnership for Peace” programme, i.e. since the beginning of the Nineties.

Reinforcement of cooperation with NATO member countries also in fields associated with the formula of leadership is a direct result of shared initiatives and the need to improve the level of interoperability. „On one hand, we are aware of the fact that the impact of the traditional value systems already existing in a Polish society will not diminish overnight. On the other, we must make the management staff ready as soon as possible since they should be by definition the most progressive, innovative and pro-European. It is no longer sufficient to ensure that our professional soldiers have expertise, are fluent in foreign languages and familiar with the NATO procedures. We must prepare a relatively large military elite to effectively interact with a combination of European political, economic and intellectual elites, as was emphasised during one of the scientific conferences¹⁹. It was concluded at a similar conference¹⁹ that it is necessary to ensure that military leaders are not only equipped with the competencies of effective battlefield commanders in political-military conflicts, but are also sufficiently skilled to perform tasks associated with religious, ethnic, economic or social conflicts, not to mention new missions (e.g. environmental protection, fighting against hunger, epidemics, social pathologies, migrations, deviations of various types, etc.). Requirements related to the knowledge of international law, including humanitarian law, of psychology, sociology, culture, foreign languages and management will considerably increase.

All the aforementioned factors contribute to a cross-functional approach to leadership in the Polish armed forces. Credibility is considered to be the most important quality of a leader. Leadership is understood as a set of assets, a certain amount of experience and various skills which compliment commanding competencies, increase the efficiency of performance, help to obtain subordinates' buy-in and positively influence individuals and groups, improve communication with them, enhance teamwork and help to successfully cope with complex situations. One of the most renowned researchers of the problem²⁰ remarks very aptly that leadership in a military context can emerge in a variety of situations, e.g. circumstances of increased danger, tediousness and monotony of military service, cooperation and partnership, deficiencies and constraints.

„[Leadership] is desired and expected in all, even extremely contradictory, conditions, i.e. during training in times of peace and in fighting circumstances; in regular and irregular actions; in operational and Staff activities; in armed conflicts and also in activities not related to war; in individual or combined activities performed at tactical, operational or strategic level, depending on the objective”.

Present and future commanders should be prepared to perform under such circumstances.

19 „Teoria i praktyka przywództwa wobec wyzwań edukacyjnych” (Theory of Leadership in the face of educational challenges), published by the Ministry of Defence, Warsaw, 2000.

20 Lieutenant –Colonel Leszek Kanarski, PhD, „Edukacyjne uwarunkowania przywództwa w wojsku” (Educational prerequisites of leadership) in „Lider wojskowy u progu XXI wieku” (Military leader in XXI century), published by the Ministry of Defence, Warsaw, 2003.

Expectations towards commanders are associated, first and foremost, with the improvement of soldiers' social and living conditions, professional security and ability to work outside of the army, and to a lesser extent with the functioning of units. The results of research conducted in 2002 confirmed that 80% of the military felt they did not take part in decision-making processes and expected commanders to create circumstances enhancing the active participation of mid-level military men in decisions related to the units. Commanders were also expected to grant subordinates more freedom which would allow for self-direction, or delegation of at least part of competencies from commanders to their subordinates. Soldiers and officers emphasised the importance of receiving credible information from commanders and of appropriate communication with them. At the same time, 57% of respondents claimed that their commanders assess their performance in a fair manner.

The issue of leadership in Polish armed forces requires a fresh approach. One must consider new needs, requirements and standards, which have already been to a large extent defined in Poland's current security environment and as a result of its involvement in a variety of foreign missions, run together with NATO and EU allies. Potential commanders should receive education in a new military training and educational system which is currently being developed. Military commanders should participate in shaping the future identity of the Polish army.

3. Identity - History-Driven or Modern?

Today's practices in the process of building the Polish Army's identity and image, the latter having undergone changes due to the reorientation of internal, foreign and security policy of the Republic of Poland, consist of three aforementioned components (partially described in investigation level 1):

- new notion of patriotism;
- reference to best practices and traditions of Polish arms (in combat and ceremony), including notions of Honour, God and Homeland as values which underpin military service;
- reference to democratic practices in the state and also abroad, and in the process of construction and organisation of armed forces (both in Poland in the former period and in democratic countries, NATO and EU member states in particular).
- social and family prerequisites which are not the subject of this research

The Polish nation did not have its own regular armed forces in the years 1831 - 1918. The army built from scratch after 1918 as a result of reclaimed independence, was thrown into the turmoil of the Second World War, doomed to be defeated, and subsequently divided depending on its whereabouts in Europe and political and military affiliations. The Polish Army in the post-war period consisted of 480,000 service-persons and

constituted part of the Warsaw Pact. Eight years after the Pact's dissolution and after a number of reductions and deployments, Polish armed forces joined the ranks of NATO. The history of the Polish Army reflects to a significant extent the plight of a whole Polish nation.

It is therefore hardly surprising that in Poland the historical dimension has more impact on contemporary identity of the armed forces than in other European countries. It creates foundations for the education of compulsory military service-persons, soldiers and officers, and also for Polish youth in primary and high schools, at universities, in scout-type organisations and in a number of non-governmental organisations. State authorities stress the importance of inculcating in these target groups so called pro-defensive attitudes. „Loyalty and attachment to national heritage integrates all professional milieus within the army and simultaneously reinforces bonds with representatives of other social groups”, notes Grzegorz Pietrek²¹.

Results of sociological research conducted between the mid-Nineties and mid-2006 indicate that young people are most interested in the period of the Second World War and in the last years of Polish People's Republic, especially in the period extending from the time of Martial Law (1981) to regime transition in 1989.

According to the Military Bureau of Social Research (WBBS), which operates within the structures of the Ministry of National Defence, the identification and evaluation of historical awareness in military milieus provided information which is important in terms of civic education in the army (research from June 2006). Over 90% of respondents including both compulsory military service-persons and professional soldiers, who were asked whether knowledge of the history of one's own country is necessary to a contemporary man answered in the affirmative. Nearly the same percentage of respondents claimed that historical knowledge should be passed from one generation to another. Approximately 46% of soldiers and 86 % of staff believe that familiarity with the history of Poland strengthens a sense of national belonging. However, only approx. one fourth of soldiers and half of staff members claim that they know history of Poland.

Over one-thousand-years of history of Poland is present in military ceremonies. New legal regulations were adopted in the first half of the Nineties, introducing such changes into military ceremonies which could have a real impact on the development of awareness and collective and individual behaviours in a contemporary army. An Order of the Minister of National Defence Nr 1/ Ministry of Defence from the 2nd of January 1991 on heritage and cultivation of the tradition of Polish arms was the most important change. The initiation of procedures stipulated in the Order and associated most of the time with inheriting tradition and conferment of patron's names, was delegated to units' Staff and to military institutions; however, terms of inheritance (i.e. identity or similarity of a given type of armed forces, army and service, number or name of a shared area where a unit is either stationing or forming troops) and obligations, e.g. collecting appropriate documentation, contacts with combatants' milieus and appropriate authorities, including

21 „Wiedza Obronna” (Knowledge of Defences), Quarterly Publisher by the Association of Knowledge of Defences (Towarzystwo Wiedzy Obronnej), nr 1, Warsaw 2005.

most importantly self-governments and administrative bodies, were defined in advance. A given unit has a duty to submit to the Deputy Minister of National Defence, who is responsible for social and educational issues, a number of proposals on keeping or changing the name of a unit's patron. The military milieu „knows” what historical characters to worship. If the so called „top” venerates Józef Piłsudski, then one unit in six wants to give itself a name after the Marshal. One author, commenting upon this over-zealousness, noted that „what happened... was a typically Polish shift from one extreme to the other. Only one right course of action was accentuated, whereas the other was condemned to non-existence. Ideology-driven over-interpretation is clear, which diminishes the value of the internationally recognized fighting effort of a Polish Army Soldier, who fought at the Eastern front.” Emphasis is usually put on the fighting effort of the Polish Army formed in the West of Europe, in Great Britain in particular, where the political and military management of Polish anti-communist emigration during WWII was located. The tradition of the armed forces formed in the East of Europe is rarely mentioned.

Apart from the aforementioned Order, several other important legal regulations and decisions were adopted in the first half of the Nineties. They were as follows:

- Act on change of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, which allowed the return of the crown on the military eagle's head (29th of December 1989);
- orders of the Minister of National Defence on inheritance and cultivation of tradition of Polish arms (2nd of January 1991 and 8th of March 1991);
- decision on military holidays, making the 15th of August a Polish Army Day, thus commemorating the so called Vistula Miracle (30th of July 1992 and 19th of February 1993);
- signs used by the armed forces and, subsequently, the uniforms as an external expression of changes,
- decision of the Minister of National Defence from the 19th of June 1995 on a new Military Ceremonial.

The above initiatives aimed at resuscitating old traditions, but also at uniting officers and soldiers within a new type of army and in an absolutely sovereign state, the Republic of Poland.

3.1 „I, a Soldier of the Polish Army ...”

Politically and socially, the most important change was introduced by an Act regarding a military oath from the 3rd of October 1992. According to Polish tradition, a military oath is a very important moment, both for a young soldier and his whole family which witnesses the ceremony in the barracks, and for the local community, usually represented by self-governmental and administrative authorities, not to mention local organisations supporting the army and other uniformed forces (police, fire brigade, other

law and order forces). A military oath is understood to be a declaration of commitment to the State, country, fellow countrymen and constitutional order in the state. It is supposed to motivate soldiers to perform their duties well, to inspire their actions and to bond together young people joining the ranks of the army. The form of the oath is as follows: "I, a soldier of the Polish Army, swear to serve faithfully the Republic of Poland, defend its independence and its borders; to guard the Constitution, protect the honour of a Polish soldier, to defend military flag; not to spare my own blood and life for my Homeland. So help me God!"

It is worth emphasising that contemporary military symbols are well known to Polish people, including a younger generation of Poles, because they are recalled on the occasion of all national holidays. A number of picnics and events opened to the wide public are organised as an element of promotional campaigns by the Polish Army, including the first march-past in ten years. Polish tradition in that respect is quite beautiful, genuinely respected by Polish people, generally accepted and liked and cultivated by a variety of organisations, including youth, scout and self-governmental organisations. So called historical shows attract crowds of young and elderly people. These spectacles are an attempt to recreate historical battles, for example the Polish victory over Teutonic Knights in the battle of Grunwald on the 15th of July 1410. Military symbols constitute a very significant factor in the development of the Polish Army's identity and image, even though the official military press sometimes criticizes military ceremonies as too sophisticated and organised on an obligatory basis.

These remarks are also pertinent to church ceremonies, which – due to Polish historical background, tradition and national beliefs – is tightly linked to military ceremonies. At the same time, in the course of „restoring the army to society” (and also as a consequence of stabilizing relations between the state and the Church), the military ministry became an autonomous part of the Polish Army. Personal factors played a key role in its emergence, the authority and incredible popularity (not to use the word „cult”) of Pope John Paul II being the most significant of them. The Polish Pope visited Poland on pilgrimages, and was also interested in the Polish military milieu and military ministry. Sławoj Leszek Głódź, appointed a Field Bishop by the Pope, was a remarkable person who had a great influence both in the Episcopate and in the world of politicians of all orientations and in the milieu of Polish generals. On taking office, he announced that the military ministry should bravely serve Christ and His Teachings; it should also raise in the souls of young soldiers everything that is good, noble, pleasing to God and necessary to the Homeland. Its aim is to nourish and protect human dignity, freedom and embrace the new modern Republic of Poland”²².

Polish people find it very important that their country's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, European Union or other structures does not entail unification in these areas which directly refer to the national past and history.

22 „J. Radziszewski, „Z dziejów duszpasterstwa wojskowego” (The history of Polish military ministry”, „Wojsko i Wychowanie (Army and Education) nr.19,11,12/1990 and 1/1991.

3.2 Esprit de Corps

By employing a French term „esprit de corps”, the Polish language denotes a combination of a number of properties distinguishing the armed forces from other formations or professional groups in Poland, namely: institutional-legal solutions, system and moral norms regulating civilian-military relations, moral and ethical attitudes, military discipline and the sense of hierarchy on one hand, personal freedom guarantees on the other, national-military tradition which is impressively rich in Poland, respect for national and army symbols, the notion of „soldierly spirit” and of military ceremonial and other factors. The term refers to a greater extent to particular types of armed forces, especially to two military categories: participants in foreign missions performed contemporarily by Poland and a recently formed type of armed forces: combined operations. Both groups are perceived as exclusive, to at least the same extent as so far the Navy and Air Forces. Common law and a code of honour are very important for esprit de corps.

3.3 Evaluation

Evaluation (so called „opinion”) is the factor which plays a key role in career development and promotions in the Polish Army during military service. Individual evaluations of professional soldiers are included in so called Charters of Job Description. Such evaluations determine potential future functions and whether a given soldier qualifies for studies in the country or abroad. Evaluations of soldiers are submitted six months before the end of their terms or contracts for contracted military service. Evaluators are also evaluated; they have to be able to justify their opinions, particularly in situations where the evaluation suggests termination of military service. „Pass” evaluations stir most controversy in the military milieu since staff members consider it a positive result whereas commanders perceive it as a negative assessment which can even lead to dismissal from military service. The Minister of Defence or Chief of General Staff decides whether a soldier with a „pass” evaluation can remain in the army. Statistically, only 3% of soldiers receive a „pass” evaluation. Every other such service-person remains, however, in the army. This system is criticized predominantly for a possible lack of objective judgement. Subjective evaluations are not, however, common.

What is interesting in the light of our research of democratic soldiers - the evaluation system was criticised by the Ombudsman, whose role is critical for the progress of democracy in Poland and held in high respect (due both to the character of Ombudsman’s activity; and, a string of remarkable personalities succeeded each other in heading the office). The Ombudsman described the system as „disturbing” since it was in his opinion based solely on the Charter, did not take into consideration real achievements of soldiers and their efforts put into performance of assigned duties.

It is worth emphasising that Polish soldiers and officers do not hesitate anymore to approach the Ombudsman with individual complaints and claims (former Ombudsman prof. Andrzej Zoll stated in the military weekly „Polska Zbrojna” in issue nr15/2005 that

military men are more familiar with legal intricacies than many civilian milieus because, paradoxically, a complex military hierarchy requires of them such knowledge, not to mention disciplinary practice which requires knowledge and observation of legal provisions).

One complaint in three submitted to the office of the Ombudsman, where a separate department for military affairs is maintained, pertains to problems associated with dismissals from professional military service. It is a consequence of a process of downsizing and professional staff dismissals which have been occurring for the last dozen years. Problems result predominantly from violation of binding procedures. Let us mention here that these procedures are stipulated in approximately 120 acts and nearly 500 decrees, which are frequently amended. Secondly, soldiers and officers apply for a variety of damages, and thirdly, they file complaints related to bad or insufficient social conditions of military service (lack of flats, necessity of maintaining two households, too low temperature in soldiers' rooms, quality of food, hygiene). It has to be added here that the system of monitoring external conditions of military service is subject to investigations conducted by the Supreme Chamber of Control.

The role of the Ombudsman cannot be overestimated. Asked by the journalist of the military weekly „Polska Zbrojna”²³, whether in his opinion so called „uniformed mentality” is still taking its toll and an unwritten rule of superiors being always right is yet in force, the Ombudsman replied: „I believe that... this informal rule is slowly changing. Awareness of legal issues among both staff and compulsory military service-persons is consistently increasing. There are, as we know, specific plans for gradual, and subsequently, full professionalization of the army and the abolishment of compulsory enrolment, which in its turn will contribute to a precise definition of both obligations and rights of uniformed forces. – There has not yet been any convincing evidence of the assumption that professionalization eradicates pathologies in the army? – That is why one has to consider the fact that each army is a fairly hermetic institution with a hierarchized structure. Such circumstances contribute to violations of civic rights and freedoms. It is harder however to protect oneself against the abuse of executive authorities. Therefore, can demanding to respect civic rights in an environment which operates in order mode be perceived as a wild goose chase? Examples of armies from Western countries which have a solid democratic tradition demonstrate that civic rights can be reconciled with military subordination. One has to, however, bear in mind that issues of rights and freedoms protection have only recently been tackled in our country, and in the army. Mechanisms protecting against the violation of such rights have not yet fully developed. Changes in awareness have been insufficient, too.

The objective of educational activity in the army is the development of ethical and spiritual aspects of being a soldier and a citizen, corresponding to the responsibilities and needs of a democratic state. A soldier should therefore be aware of his duty of military service and obligation to fulfil it with due diligence, ready to defend the independence, integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Poland and to guard its Constitution. These

23 Interview with the Ombudsman Janusz Kochanowski, PhD, „Polska Zbrojna” (Armed Poland), nr 20/2006.

are the official assumptions which I have already discussed in detail. It is however difficult to verify to what extent an „exemplary soldier”, an N.C.O, meets these criteria. There have not been any studies conducted on specifically this topic. The Polish media present practically only one image of soldiers, that of an „ideal soldier”, entirely devoted to his Homeland, committed to military service, society and family, always ready to answer every call, professional, suffering from military life’s hardships. Soldiers who were proven guilty of a crime or offence, are stigmatized (Military prosecutors in Poland are very strict); however, their misbehaviour tarnishes the image of the perfect soldier only to a negligible extent.

3.4 Investigation of a General Feeling

The system of information and reporting on a general feeling in particular units and in the whole military milieu has become one of the most important – if not the most important – indicator of the psycho-physical condition of Polish soldiers²⁴. Ministry management regularly obtains such reports from the Military Bureau of Social Research and is responsible for using them to draw conclusions in terms of the activity of the armed forces. On one hand, the objective is to keep necessary discipline in the army during exercises and in the barracks, and in particular counteracting pathologies; so called „fazing” has been up till recently one of the most serious pathologies²⁵. On the other, its aim is to increase the level of morale in the units. It turned out that a structural and personnel reform of the army, gradual professionalization, change of training and compulsory enrolment systems do not necessarily eliminate pathological phenomena..

Reports of the Research Bureau can be occasionally considered to be „sugar-coated”, but it is military press (funded by the Ministry of Defence or independent) that provides many extra hints as to the general feeling in the army, not to mention a number of popular Internet fora devoted to the army and military issues. Military press, which depends directly from the Department of Education and Promotion of Defenses at the MoND, to some extent „whitewashes” the situation „inside” the units so that the good reputation of military formations is not tarnished. However, the same cannot be said about entirely independent Internet fora. Polish civilian media continue to critically assess every aspect of the armed forces.

24 Decisions of the Minister of National Defence from September 1990, May and September 1994.

25 The bullying of army freshmen (so called „rookies”) by older fellow-soldiers, or sometimes subordinates by superiors, in variety of sophisticated, mostly humiliating and disrespectful to human dignity ways, was a common practice in the past. These practices were condemned in the past but it proved impossible to eradicate such behaviour which was considered a „normal” practice in the barracks. In the course of time the scope of this pathological phenomenon began to decrease considerably; however, it has been so far impossible to completely eliminate this kind of behaviour in relations between older and younger soldiers. Cases of „fazing” also take place during peace-keeping missions. Incidents where superiors are involved generally do not happen anymore.

3.5 Protection of Interests

Protection of interests of the military community is the responsibility of so-called assemblies, delegates and representative institutions, such as Convent of Deans of the Polish Army Officer Corps.

After the year 1989, i.e. with the inauguration of the political transformation, spearheaded by the “Solidarity” movement, the organizational structures of the Communist Party within the Polish armed forces were dissolved. The same applied to various public organizations and institutions – councils and commissions responsible for both ethical and socio-economic issues regarding the activity of the cadre – whose functioning within the particular military units was mandatory. At the same time the military begun the process of restructuring and reductions, which involved also relocations of the officers, soldiers and their families. This, in turn, lead to the need for new forms of self-representation. Since 1990 new ideas for creating representative bodies, as well as their legalization, began to be propagated. These ideas invoked the tradition of the so-called officers’ meetings, dating back to the Second Republic. These informal meetings dealt with honorary and recreational matters. Other ideas included proposals of introducing the institution of intermediaries (as a common one in Poland in general), and with the rise of the awareness of the Western achievements in this domain also various forms of activity typical of allied armies.

However, the process of creating the representative body was a complex one. None of the ministers of the national defense was willing to allow for a creation of an organization that would resemble a labor union. Additionally, the nature of the relations between the superiors and the subordinates, as well certain deep-rooted customs among the military staff, both prevent reaching independent and uncompromising decisions. As a result, the representative bodies in the contemporary Polish armed forces, including the meetings and intermediaries, were initiated by the subsequent highest authorities of the ministry of national defense, although not without discussions with the officers.

Competences of representative bodies of particular corps were broadened in the beginning of 2007. As a rule, new competences are intended to create better ways for articulation of problems. However, according to the military press, the general atmosphere, resulting from the uncertainty about the future development of armed forces, instability of the personnel and common instances of lack of trust between soldiers and commanders, does not contribute to an open discussion.

So-called “meetings” are key elements of the representative bodies’ system within the Polish Armed Forces and compose forums for debating problems. So far meetings were held at levels of commanders of military districts, particular services and at the level of ministerial institutions. After the adoption of last regulations, they can be held at a level of brigade, division, corps, in the Headquarters of the Warsaw Garrison²⁶ and the Headquarters of the Military Police.

26 Its role is traditionally exceptional, as it is located closely to the seats of key governmental institutions.

Prior to these changes, only officers were allowed to participate in the meetings. Currently, non-commissioned officers and professional privates can also take part. The proposals to hold meetings at the level of particular units were accepted due to the fact that, in the course of restructuring of the Polish Armed Forces, the officers' cadre is decreasing in number, whereas the non-commissioned officers' cadre is growing.

A meeting was regarded valid once "at least 75% of the professional soldiers composing it" were present, which effectively meant 75% of the whole personnel of the unit. The required turnout was often impossible to achieve due to the fact that the personnel was occupied with other activities. Currently a meeting is valid when at least 50% of the personnel declaring interest in participation in representative bodies is present (note: this figure is not identical with the overall number of personnel of the unit). In effect, a right to form representative bodies was granted, while no longer assuming the need for full participation.

The topics of meetings include: expression of opinions on the issues of direct interest to the soldiers, i.e. conditions of service, social conditions; presenting the issues affecting the morale of the squad or unit; presenting remarks on the legal initiatives regulating the professional service; comradely relations and morality; granting aid to colleagues and their families in need; recommendations for distinctions.

It is important to stress that bulk of the proposals and interventions filed by the professional staff of the Polish military to the representative bodies at virtually all levels concern matters of social and living conditions, and not issues of restructuring or modernization of armed forces. Issues that dominate the proposals are as follows: improvement of staff's financial situation, especially with regard to personnel with lowest salaries²⁷. Majority of so-called green garrisons (named after the color of uniforms of ground forces, which until recently formed approximately 70% of the overall number of soldiers) is located in regions characterized by a high rate of unemployment, which further complicates finding an occupation for family members. Numerous soldiers, mainly non-commissioned officers, are forced to make use of housing allowances/bonuses, offered by districts. Indebtedness of professional soldiers to banks is high, according to soldiers' estimates.

Soldiers are free to be members to denominations and other religious assemblies with legal entity.

A meeting is summoned by an intermediary or intermediary's deputy. Unit's commander is obliged to summon a meeting in two instances: when an intermediary is to be elected and when a request for his dismissal is filed. Commanders are obliged to formally meet an intermediary at least three times per year's quarter to hear their opinions and proposals and inform about the means by which prior proposals are dealt with. The intermediaries may fulfill their duties within service hours.

27 Salary in the Polish Armed Forces is set at a level higher than the national average, including the most demanding occupations.

Deans' competences vis-à-vis the superiors were enhanced. Deans are currently allowed to directly (i.e. disregarding the usual channels of communication) contact the commander of a military district, a commander of a particular service or the Secretary of State in the Ministry of National Defense responsible for social matters. The Minister of National Defense may discuss matters pertaining to personnel only with the Convent of Deans of Officer's Corps. While commenting on these changes, Chairman of the Convent, Col. Anatol Tichoniuk expressed his belief that from now on the intermediaries of all corps on one hand, and commanders on the other, will be able to "really cooperate" while dealing with fundamental problems of service in the military units.

To date, no research addressing the question of functioning of representative bodies in the armed forces after introducing the above-mentioned changes had been conducted. On the other hand, according to prior research done by the Military Office of Social Research, soldiers believe that the representative bodies serve mainly as a façade, whereas the personnel expects to have representatives who would stand for their rights.

It is for this reason that main proposals formulated by the personnel concern issues pertaining to living conditions. Other proposals concern rules that would ensure observance of at least fundamental rights of soldiers – as citizens in uniforms – and carrying out of rights of assembly and rights to professional representation. There are plans to create a White Book of conditions of service – a Polish soldier's compendium holding information about conditions of service in countries whose militaries are members to the European Organization of Military Associations (EUROMIL).

A soldier is obliged to inform the Minister of the fact of resignation from an organization. The Minister decides on termination of the decision with regard to a given soldier. The Minister may withdraw or suspend for a fixed time a decision concerning membership of a soldier in an international or foreign organization in case when such a step would be necessary for protection of state secret or confidential information²⁸.

It is for these reasons that civil press/mass media point to the fact that adoption of the "Code of Honor of Polish Armed Forces' Professional Soldier", endorsed by the Convent of Deans of Officer's Corps of Polish Armed Forces, is an initiative of a propaganda nature, aiming at influencing private life. One of the chapters of the Code²⁹, entitled "Professional soldier off-duty", contains a fragment stating that a soldier "seeks to aptly balance the demands of service with concern about the well-being of his/her family".

The concept of psychological support provided to individual soldiers in need was born at the start of the transformation of the Polish Army at the beginning of the Nineties. However, the concept did not find many supporters. It was only after the mental, psychological and political evolution which had taken place in the armed forces and coincided with the process of „maturing” of new Polish democracy and armed forces- and

28 Article 107 of the „pragmatic Act”; Paragraphs 2-7 of the regulation of the Minister of National Defense from February 20th, 2004, on providing professional soldiers with a permission to adhere to an association and other foreign or international organization.

29 The Code had been adopted on the October 17th, 2006. The ultimate version of the Code has not been published yet, see the website of the Convent www.kdkowp.wp.mil.pl.

was boosted by external factors (cooperation with European structures and gaining experience)- when more people became aware of the criticality of psychological services in the army. They are currently quite common. Soldiers and their families have access to professional assistance provided by military and civilian psychologists, whenever there is a need for it (soldiers returning from foreign missions or families of soldiers killed on duty in Iraq or Afghanistan need psychological support most frequently). So-called coordinators for psychoprofilactics and consultants in psychoprofilactics provide psychological assistance³⁰ in organisational units of Polish Army. Coordination of all activities is the responsibility of one of the key experts in the Department of Education and Promotion of Defenses at MoND.

4. Soldier- Citizen Paradigm

Preparing a young person for the role of a citizen is considered as vital in two aspects: it defines the way in which a person functions both in a society and in the army, i.e. in the smallest of its structures, such as platoon, company, batalion, regiment, ship, where he/she must be ready to perform his/her duties as a member of military community. A soldier should be able to adapt his/her behaviour to the expectations of a larger group or an informal group within its structures. It is recommended that a soldier finds a group that he/she finds attractive.

The Ministry of National Defense and the Polish military declare their readiness to cooperate with and support Polish non-governmental organizations (currently approximately 350 organizations, of which 90 are cooperating on the basis of formal understandings), including the Fire Service (which has broad obligations vis-à-vis the Polish society) and the Scouting Association of the Republic of Poland, as a youth organization with the widest outreach, to support a preparing of the soldiers on one hand and the sovciety on an another hand for live together and to understand the needs of both sides. The Ministry regards this cooperation to be one of the most effective forms of promotion of defense and state security, predominantly in line with patterns taken from the period of the Second Republic. According to the representatives of the Ministry, cooperation with non-governmental, pro-defense organizations becomes especially important given the fact of steady diminution of the number of conscripts. Non-governmental organizations are regarded, at least formally, as a desired partner to the Polish Armed Forces in the process of preparing to the fulfillment of duties to the defense of the country. It is hard to assess the actual significance of cooperation between the Ministry of National Defense and the non-governmental sector. It is believed that it is especially important for local societies, often bringing together former members of armed forces and their families. In aiming to contribute to the positive image of the Polish Armed Forces among the society and to strengthen the civil society, the Ministry grants financial support to projects implemented by non-governmental organizations, such as the

30 Decision of the Minister of National Defence nr 24/MoND from the 17th of February 1997.

“Aliante” competition, intended to raise the level of knowledge about NATO in countries of Central Europe and Ukraine.³¹

31 See details of the Aliante Project at www.project-aliante.org/enter.php.

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Konwent Dziekanów Korpusu Oficerów WP, see: www.kdkowp.wp.mil.pl

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