

POLISH MILITARY DIPLOMACY CONCERNING UKRAINE IN 2022-2024: BETWEEN CENTRISM AND PERIPHERALITY OF DIRECTION

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Abstract

The article is devoted to a comprehensive study of the approaches, principles, and measures of the political and military leadership of the Republic of Poland in the field of military diplomacy, the importance of which increased in 2022-2024, when the Russian Federation carried out a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, which changed the hybrid war¹ into a modern total war. The research

¹ The authors understand the term hybrid war as a type of hostile action that combines methods of informational and psychological, economic, political and military pressure. Initially, the victim, which may be a separate state or even part of the world community, does not even realize that a hybrid war has begun against it. As in the framework of classical manipulative techniques, public consciousness is influenced by fakes, propaganda and disinformation, distortion of facts, labeling, setting different population groups against each other, incitement of hatred, etc. with the aim of creating internal social contradictions. In the economic sense, it is about creating economic problems through economic confrontation, in the political sense - about blackmail and bribery of political elites, illegal or hidden financing of radical political forces, etc. The military component consists in promoting the creation of armed proxy forces, their equipment and comprehensive support. At the same time, the aggressor party tries and can remain publicly uninvolved in the conflict situation that has arisen.

methodology is based on objectivity and historicism, within which the principles of generalization, analysis and synthesis, statistical method, as well as retrospective and systemic approaches were applied. The article for the first time comprehensively reflects the main practical approaches and decisions of Polish political, diplomatic, and military leaders against the background of geopolitical, geo-economic, and socio-cultural processes in Eastern Europe at the present stage. Having understood the Russian threat, the Polish political leadership chose the path of resistance in the diplomatic, military, and economic spheres. The diplomacy of official Warsaw operated within the framework of Polish strategic interests, the intentions of leading NATO countries in Central Europe, and Ukrainian national interests. It has been determined that as a result of the influence of the alliance, represented by Washington and Berlin, which is based on an unnatural reaction to the Russian information attack on the use of nuclear weapons and refusal to openly confront the axis of evil (Russia, North Korea, Iran and its proxy, China), Polish politicians are gradually avoiding placing the Ukrainian case in the center of security structures, leaning towards classifying it as peripheral. This change in the approaches of the Polish leadership is caused by the demands of the allies, who fear the transformation of the Russo-Ukrainian War from a local one to a regional one.

Keywords: *international relations, diplomacy, war, army, Ukraine, Poland.*

Statement of the problem. The relevance of the study currently remains and will continue to focus the attention of researchers on topic connected to the diplomacy of neighboring states for a long time. The slogan “Kyiv must be destroyed” is heard from majority of the Russian political class and has been implemented daily since the beginning of the war of Russia against Ukraine on February 20, 2014, and through a hybrid war from the proclamation of independence of Ukraine on August 24, 1991. With an existential threat to Ukraine, Europe, and the collective West, Ukrainian-Polish military cooperation will require constant growth.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. Important components of cooperation in the field of military diplomacy between Ukraine and Poland 1991-2014 were studied by S. Shestopalov (Shestopalov, 2016). Analyzing the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020), V. Palyvoda pointed out the importance of considering issues related to changes in the international world order and hybrid threats from the Russian Federation (Palyvoda, 2020). L. Chekalenko studied the motivation of the Polish elite, which focused on the search for an effective ally that could ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity (Chekalenko, 2018). M. Komarnytsky recalled an

important factor motivating Polish support for Ukraine in the first year of a full-scale invasion i.e. Polish national historical memory (Komarnytskyi, 2023). The article by V. Ilnytskyi and V. Telvak reveals the main features of the coverage of the current stage of Russian aggression against Ukraine by the staff of the Marek Karp Social Research Center, who carefully monitored all the events of the Russo-Ukrainian War (Ilnytskyi & Telvak, 2024). L. Drab notes that military diplomats play a major role in modern defense diplomacy (Drab, 2018). S. Olszyk notes that Poland is one of the countries that has decisively supported the Ukrainian army, providing a wide range of modern military technologies (Olszyk, 2024).

The aim of the study is to comprehensively examine the approaches, principles, and measures of the political and military leadership of the Republic of Poland in the field of military diplomacy, the importance of which increased in 2022-2024 when the Russian Federation carried out a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, which changed the hybrid war into a modern total war.

Results of the study:

The main motivation for the decision, by the Polish leadership, to provide military aid to Ukraine, which was subjected to Russian aggression, could have been the desire to strengthen the defense capability of Kyiv. No less significant motivation for the Polish government's decisions remains the preservation of the leading position on the eastern flank of NATO.

The political leadership of the Russian Federation, realizing the desire of the Ukrainian people to live a free life with European states, chose the path of destroying Ukraine as a state, destroying European and Euro-Atlantic unity. Official Kyiv and Warsaw, considering common threats from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, find common points of cooperation. Among many foreign policy vectors, the Ukrainian elite chooses Poland, although Polish political scientists see contacts with other states, in particular, Turkey and Romania, as appropriate (Zhuravskyi vel Graievskyi, 2021).

Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity remains the main motivation for deepening cooperation between Poland and Ukraine. Ukraine's political leadership and civil society have demonstrated a desire for the Western world since at least 2014 (Martyniuk, 2015).

Poland, like no other, understands the danger posed by Russian great-power chauvinism and the desire of modern Russian elites for imperial revenge. In their paradigm, not only the countries that were part of the former Soviet Union, but even Poland and Finland, continue to remain part of the great Russian empire.

Being on the tip of NATO's eastern flank, Poland understands that the stronger the support for Ukraine at this stage, the higher the level of security for other states - NATO members and the European Union. History shows that the aggressor stops where it is being stopped by others, one of the best examples was Battle of Warsaw that took place in 1920 (Morozova & Mikołajczyk, 2022).

The current situation resembles the period between the First and Second World Wars. Then, the global economic and social crisis and the aggressive revisionism of Japan, Italy and Germany prevented the strengthening of liberal tendencies. In other words, democracies were weakened, and dictatorial regimes, on the contrary, were aroused. Belief in democracy and a free market economy was lost, while widespread pacifism, isolationism and a strong desire to avoid mistakes in 1914 left Western leaders without the will or means to resist reactionary forces. Unfortunately, all this is a direct analogy of the situation on the world stage, which we are witnessing today (Baranovskyi, 2023, p. 63).

The authoritarian part of the world, led by superpowers such as Russia and China, is trying to change the modern international order based on rules and liberal and democratic values. Moreover, the Russian Federation has already become an aggressor in the post-Soviet space, and there is a serious danger of further expansion of aggressive actions.

The beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 proved the need to increase the presence of American troops and weapons on Polish territory. Since the spring of that year, official Warsaw has agreed to the deployment of American F-16 aircraft at Polish airfields (along with long-range JASSM missiles). Since 2015, there has been a permanent presence of NATO troops on Polish territory. One of the six forward units (in Szczecin) is stationed in Poland, the German-Danish-Polish Corps North East has been expanded, and the NATO Response Force has been strengthened with the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (up to 5 thousand servicemen), which are capable of responding to external military aggression against any member of the Alliance within 2-3 days (Martyniuk, 2015).

Since A. Duda came to power in 2015, diplomatic efforts have focused on restoring Poland's status as a regional leader. In 2016, the decisions of the NATO Summit in Warsaw helped to stabilize the security situation of the alliance countries. During the summit, the Ministers of Defense of Poland and Ukraine, A. Macierewicz and S. Poltorak, signed an Agreement on the Supply of Arms and Military Equipment (Uhoda, 2016). The Polish leaders agreed with the view that Poland and other countries of the region had become a conditional line of defense for NATO, while Ukraine was assigned the role of a territorial barrier.

The foreign policy objectives of the Republic of Poland were enshrined in the document "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021", which importantly states that "Poland as a reliable ally in a stable Euro-Atlantic dimension" (Strategia Polskiej Polityki, 2017). Official Warsaw saw the implementation of this task through the formation of its ability to deter aggressors, strengthening trust in NATO as a defense alliance, and close cooperation with Ukraine. Since 2017, the Polish authorities have been deploying efforts to form a territorial defense, insisting on the deployment of American troops on Polish territory (2017). The military leadership supported the idea of creating the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade in 2017. The support for the policy of containment towards Russia within NATO in the

2020 strategy was continued in the decision to increase defense spending to 2.5% of the state's GDP by 2024. These steps were taken because Russia "will continue its policy of undermining the world order based on international law to restore its superpower status and regain lost spheres of influence" (Palyvoda, 2020). The belief in deepening and maintaining military-technical cooperation between the armies of Poland and Ukraine is reinforced by the clause in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland for 2020 on strengthening independence, sovereignty, and preserving territorial integrity of Ukraine (Strategia Bezpieczeństwa, 2020). The Lublin Triangle, created in 2020, contributed to the establishment of Ukrainian-Polish dialogue and the strengthening of bilateral ties.

The Polish elite's mindset regarding the need to create the strongest and most numerous army in Europe to ensure that the Russian Federation "will not strike the strongest", formed the basis of the Polish Sejm Act on the Defense of the Fatherland, which envisaged an increase in defense spending and an almost threefold increase in military personnel (Ustawa, 2022).

The efforts of Polish diplomacy were focused on increasing support for official Kyiv, concluding mutually beneficial agreements on arms supplies, advocating for Ukraine's foreign policy position, and encouraging the acceleration of the transfer of necessary weapons from the arsenals of NATO member countries.

Maneuvering between scenarios of the probable loss of its own territory under the pressure of Russian aggression and turning Poland into a necessary link in covering the Suwałki Gap determined an adjustment of the position towards Ukraine. Of course, the Ukrainian side cannot raise the question of Poland taking one position or another. However, the protest action of Polish carriers, which began on November 6, 2023, and blocked the transportation of goods through the Polish-Ukrainian border checkpoints, caused major reservations, though it was clear that it is a conscious step to protect Polish farmers in the competition with Ukrainian grain producers (Hubytskyi, L., Melnyk, H., 2023, p. 172). Official Warsaw assured, through the Deputy Minister of Defense of Poland M. Ociepa, that military aid to Ukraine would not be delayed at the border (U Polshchi zaperechuiut, 2023). At the same time, there were multiple cases of humanitarian aid being blocked on the Polish-Ukrainian border. Later, the Polish side agreed to fulfill previously concluded contracts on arms supplies. After Polish farmers' carriers joined the protest, confirmed information appeared that military aid transportation across Ukraine was blocked. Neither the Ukrainian nor the Polish side ruled out the presence of hybrid Russian influence on these events. Hybrid activity aimed at Poland and the countries of the region is significant, as evidenced by, for example, propaganda activity on social networking sites spreading an anti-Ukrainian narrative (Kamionka, 2023).

The above-mentioned negative impact on internal processes in Poland emphasizes the danger of neglecting hybrid threats even against the backdrop of the beginning of a full-fledged large-scale war.

This thesis is confirmed by modern research. In particular, Boryslav Bankov believes that Russian HW (Hybrid warfare) still persists in some form, it would be detrimental to remove the concept from the West's security architecture. Thus, discussing Russian HW and its exact modalities has critical real-world implications and requires careful examination (Bankov, 2023).

HW still provides a practical conceptual framework to analyse the Kremlin's actions and, by extension, inform decisions on Western defence policy. In fact, since Russia keeps waging HW in the form of multimodal operations, which blend conventional with unconventional methods, an attempt to completely remove HW from the daily operational analysis and defence planning at the EU and NATO would have a negative effect on Western defence posture (Bankov, 2023).

The importance and relevance of the analysis of hybrid threats and countermeasures is undeniable against the background of the danger for both the European Union itself and its members.

The EU's governing bodies are generally aware of the danger that exists and define hybrid threats as factors that refer to when, state or non-state, actors seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of the EU to their own advantage by using in a coordinated way a mixture of measures (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological) while remaining below the threshold of formal warfare. (Hybrid Threats, 2024).

Indeed, with regard to international destabilization and interference in the internal affairs of independent states to undermine political systems and even undermine their integrity and sovereignty, the actions of illiberal and anti-democratic actors can combine information-psychological, economic, military (force) methods.

Examples are the hindering of democratic decision-making processes by massive disinformation campaigns, using social media to control the political narrative or to radicalize, recruit and direct proxy actors (Hybrid Threats, 2024).

The main factor that requires special attention from the EU and beyond, and which is common to all components, is the influence on the political situation and especially on representatives of the political elite, to which elements of these components are applied based on bribery, blackmail and direct or indirect intimidation. Thus, global authoritarian actors are trying to form a so-called pro-authoritarian "fifth column" among populist and radical political forces, primarily the extreme right or left spectrum.

Analyzing the ways to prevent existing threats, it should be noted that, in particular, the European Union has issued a Strategic Security and Defense Compass on countering hybrid threats.

It states the intention of the member states to establish an EU hybrid toolbox, which could comprise preventive, cooperative, stability-building, restrictive and support measures. The focus should be on identifying complex and multifaceted hybrid threats and coordinating responses to them. This, in turn, will bring added value to the EU's capacity to respond to hybrid threats (Countering Hybrid Threats, 2022).

Two aspects should be highlighted: 1) EU-NATO cooperation. Joint proposals for cooperation related to countering hybrid threats, namely strengthening resilience, situational awareness and countering disinformation; 2) Hybrid risk surveys to partners. Goal is to help partners in the neighbourhood to strengthen their resilience to hybrid threats. Support measures to mitigate the identified risks and vulnerabilities through existing projects or ad hoc support is also important (Countering Hybrid Threats, 2022).

The presence of hybrid threats should become a determinant of the creation of a new security sphere, the tasks of which are to identify, prevent and eliminate these dangers. This is confirmed, in particular, by official EU documents, which, among other things, indicate the need for military and political cooperation to counter hybrid threats. At the same time, it is necessary to understand and realize that from purely informational, economic and political threats to military ones, there is only one step.

The Polish elite is inclined to consider not only current challenges but also the position of strategic partners and domestic political circumstances. In September 2022, during negotiations between the President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyi, and Prime Minister M. Morawiecki, an agreement was reached to create a hub in Poland for the repair of military equipment and conducting exercises of the Ukrainian military under the EU program (EUMAM) (Ukraina i Polshcha domovylysia, 2022). In April 2023, V. Zelenskyi signed a protocol on defense cooperation between Poland and Ukraine during an official visit to Warsaw (Brailian, 2023).

The cooling of Polish-Ukrainian relations since autumn 2023 was a consequence of the unsuccessful Ukrainian counteroffensive, as well as the disappointing result of the NATO summit in Vilnius (11-12.07.2023) for Ukraine, which had been counting on an invitation to join the Alliance. The general decision of the heads of the alliance states was to agree on simplifying the accession process, which agreement meant the cancellation of the Membership Action Plan for Ukraine.

Polish President A. Duda exerted diplomatic pressure on the German leadership to increase support for Ukraine (Duda rozpoviv, 2023). If Poland withdraws from ensuring the process of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity, it is unlikely that Poland's leadership retains in the region. Polish diplomacy faced the need to recognize Germany's growing role in the Baltic region after official Berlin announced in December 2023 the deployment of the 45th mechanized brigade (about 5,000 soldiers) to Lithuania (in Rudninkai and Rukla) (Nimechchyna rozmistyt, 2023).

With the development of a large-scale Russo-Ukrainian War in Central and Eastern Europe, the role of Germany is growing, contradicting the ambitions of official Warsaw, which sought to represent this region in the EU and NATO. The head of the National Security Bureau, J. Severa, named a period of three years for Poland to prepare for a possible confrontation with Russia (Siewiera, 2024). Germany's readiness to fulfill allied obligations (concerning the Baltic States) convinced Polish leaders of the possibility of

appealing to German power about the need to join the defense of Polish borders and the eastern flank of NATO (Laskavo prosymo, 2024).

The radical change in the Polish approach to cooperation with Germany, which was preceded by the demand to revise the amount of German reparations from World War II, indicates the recognition of Germany's key role in a possible clash with Russia. These changes also allow for the reformatting of the security of allied commitments, which are formed both bilaterally and multilaterally. It was extremely important for Ukraine to receive the support of both Poland and all NATO states. Efforts to intensify diplomatic, economic, and military-technical support for Ukraine from bilateral tracks turned into multilateral ones and took the form of the Ramstein coalition or anti-Putin coalition. The potential of the North Atlantic Alliance seemed sufficient to overcome the Russian Federation. In 2022, the defense spending of NATO states amounted to \$1.189 trillion, of which Poland allocated \$17.8 billion (Yak za visim rokov, 2022).

Since the first meeting in the Ramstein format on April 26, 2022, Poland has actively joined the coordinated assistance to Ukraine. At the first meeting, representatives of 30 countries agreed to provide weapons worth \$5 billion, including 155-mm artillery and coastal defense assets. At 22 Ramstein meetings from April 2022 to May 2024, topical issues of organizing deliveries, and repairs of military equipment, as well as weapons, and equipment for the Ukrainian Armed Forces were considered. The coordination of benefits proved effective since it managed to concentrate the efforts of the allies, who had already managed to find and send aid to Ukraine through joint activities. The EU as a whole provided assistance worth 85 billion euros as of January 15, 2024, and the United States 69 billion euros (Total bilateral, 2024). However, as the situation in the theater of military operations shows, these efforts are insufficient to deter the Russian aggressor. For the Ukrainian army to go on the offensive, it would be necessary to concentrate even more diplomatic measures aimed at creating the necessary conditions for training and providing the personnel of the Ukrainian army with everything necessary for victory on the battlefield and maintaining the stability of the Ukrainian economy.

The scale of the military confrontation between Ukraine and Russia required, and continues to require joint efforts of the allies in the Ramstein coalition since the efforts and resources of only official Kyiv or several close allies-neighbors are not enough. It was precisely for this reason that the sectoral coalitions were created within the framework of the anti-Putin association.

The provision of the Ukrainian army's primary needs was carried out after the conclusions that were made in the headquarters directly on the high-intensity battlefield, including air defense assets, armored vehicles, artillery, aviation, and naval ships. Gradually, the allies created 10 coalitions responsible for organizing supplies, transferring combat vehicles, training crews of individual assets of the branches of the armed forces, preparing a repair base, and bringing the Ukrainian Armed Forces closer to NATO standards (Tankova, aviatsiina, 2024). Poland actively participated in both the creation and functioning of such coalitions. Polish politicians initiated the transfer of

military equipment, such as tanks, fighters, artillery and armored vehicles, to Ukraine in conditions in which other allies were pondering the consequences.

In September 2023, Polish Prime Minister M. Morawiecki announced that his country would no longer supply weapons to Ukraine but would focus on its own rearmament. The Polish leadership has set itself the task of turning its own army into one of the strongest armies in Europe (Polska wojskowa pomoc, 2023). The Polish army, which in October 2023 amounted to 186 thousand people according to the Act on the Defence of the Fatherland, will grow to 300 thousand servicemen (Armiiu Polshchi zbilshuiut, 2024). However, it is quite clear that many of these slogans were caused by situational pre-election needs.

Instead, there are other opinions on this matter. In particular, the Ukrainian scholar I. Zahrebelnyi believes that Poland's "pro-Ukrainian" policy has been influenced by "Bidenization", which is characterized by providing such assistance to Ukraine that it does not allow for achieving significant success in the war against Russia. This strategy is accompanied by the rhetoric of principled support for Ukraine (Zahrebelnyi).

These were the considerations that guided Polish politicians in matters of supporting Ukraine during the autumn 2023 parliamentary race. After the parliamentary elections in Poland on October 15, 2023, and the coming to power of the coalition led by D. Tusk, there was hope for overcoming the blockade crisis on the border with Ukraine. The newly elected Prime Minister of Poland D. Tusk promised to demand the full mobilization of the West to help Ukraine (Donald Tusk, 2023), which he confirmed during his visit to Kyiv on January 22, 2024. The visit to Warsaw by the Ukrainian delegation led by Prime Minister D. Shmyhal on March 28, 2024, just brought it a little bit closer to resolving the controversial Ukrainian-Polish foreign economic issues. The final decision of the Polish authorities on resolving the issue of the blockade of the Polish-Ukrainian border was postponed as close as possible to the time of the vote in the US Congress on the issue of assistance to Ukraine.

In the run-up to the decisive vote on the \$61 billion Ukrainian aid bill in the House of Representatives, Polish authorities have been calling on the executive and legislative branches in Washington to speed up the decision-making process. On April 17, 2024, Polish President Andrzej Duda had a private meeting in New York with US presidential candidate D. Trump, where the politicians had the opportunity to discuss current issues of global and European security. This meeting took place immediately before the vote in the House of Representatives on April 20, 2024, which turned out to be productive, allowing for a successful conversation between Polish and American politicians, where an initiative was put forward to allocate 3% of GDP for defense for all NATO members (Sobenko, 2024). The Polish side is aware of the need to provide military allied assistance, and financial support, and accelerate the transfer of military equipment to Ukraine, in particular artillery shells. On February 1, 2024, official Warsaw, among 27 EU leaders, supported the Ukraine Facility project, a fund for financial support of Ukraine in the amount of 50 billion euros. Polish leaders financially supported the Czech

initiative to supply 800 thousand artillery shells for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In early April 2024, Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski announced the creation of a NATO mission in Ukraine, which is designed to coordinate, and train the Ukrainian army, as well as plan support. Thus, the head of the Polish Foreign Ministry testified to the transition to a more effective level of support for the Ukrainian military and also did not reject the deployment of Polish troops in Ukraine. Poland joined as one of the countries in the process of providing security guarantees to Ukraine, which was finally enshrined in the Agreement on Security Cooperation of July 8, 2024 (Uhoda pro spivrobnnytstvo, 2024). In pursuance of this agreement, the Polish government has undertaken to prepare personnel for the “Ukrainian Legion”, which will include Ukrainians living in Poland and other countries.

The awareness of the growing Russian threat on the Polish borders forced the political elite to consider the demands of the Polish army to update its weapons fleet with the latest models. To provide resources for this task, the Polish government decided to increase defense spending from 2 to 3% of GDP. In 2023, 3.9% of GDP was spent on defense (Lipczyński, 2024). Subsequently, the intention to achieve defense spending of 5% of GDP was revealed.

The Polish authorities, providing Ukraine with old Soviet military equipment, expected to receive Western models, in particular, Leopard tanks (Duda rozpoviv, 2023). Germany is to become the donor of this equipment. The Warsaw government is actively involving its own manufacturer in the rearmament of the army, with which an agreement has been concluded for \$659 million for the production of 58 Rosomak armored personnel carriers with new ZSSW-30 combat modules (Kava, 2024).

The improvement of the Polish army, command and control system, air defense, and aviation has become extremely urgent due to the danger of Russian missiles hitting Polish territory or violating Polish airspace. In the context of massive Russian missile attacks on Ukraine, the Polish military decided to launch fighter jets to control its own airspace from December 2023.

An equally dangerous threat to military and civilian aircraft was the use by the Russian army in January 2024 of powerful electronic warfare systems deployed in the Kaliningrad region, which weakened or distorted the GPS signal. In such circumstances, the Polish army leadership is working to increase its aircraft fleet, especially machines resistant to electromagnetic interference. In April 2024, Polish media reported on the Polish F-35, which was in the final assembly stage (Mazur, 2024).

Control over the Baltic Sea lanes requires strengthening all types of weapons under the control of the Polish Navy and coastal defense. In December 2023, the Polish Navy received 4 AW101 helicopters designed for anti-submarine warfare from the manufacturer PZL-Swidnik (Ciślak, 2023).

The risk of escalation on the border with the Russian Federation is growing exponentially. By December 2023, the government had provided all the necessary support for the deployment of the 1st Engineer Battalion in Augustow to support the 15th Mechanized Brigade (U Polshchi stvoryly, 2023).

In March 2024, 100 American-made Abrams tanks arrived to reinforce the 1st Warsaw Armoured Brigade (Shevchuk, 2024).

In addition to rearmament, the Polish military leadership is coordinating efforts to align its own forces with those of its alliance partners to train rapid troop movements. In March 2024, the largest military exercises in recent years, Steadfast Defender and Dragon-24, took place, involving 3.5 thousand soldiers from different countries, who trained in crossing the Vistula River (V Polshchi syly NATO, 2024).

Another joint project of Poland and its Baltic allies will be the Eastern Shield fortification system, which will cost \$2.6 billion. In June 2024, the leaders of the Baltic states and Poland wrote a letter to the head of the EU, calling for the creation of a 700 km long defense infrastructure along the Russian-Belarusian border (Liutikov, 2024 b). Since May 2024, the Polish government has begun building fortifications on the border with Russia and Belarus, stating that “there are no limits on resources when it comes to the country’s security” (Liutikov, 2024 a). In addition, to deter a potential aggressor on NATO’s eastern flank, Poland plans to create an army of drones (Naibilsha v istorii, 2024).

Conclusions.

Taking into account the Euro-Atlantic choice of Ukrainian politicians, the current Polish President A. Duda, the governments of M. Morawiecki and D. Tusk are projecting the foreign policy of the state on the eastern flank of NATO on multifaceted activity, in particular, on deepening diplomatic relations with official Kyiv, activities on joint military formations, military-technical cooperation, as well as assisting in the form of weapons on the eve of the Russian invasion

The President of Poland, heads of government, and relevant ministries have accumulated their international experience to change the position of leading states of North America and Europe, whose officials have chosen an approach since the spring of 2022 that considered the exclusion of further escalation of the conflict. An important source of the approaching Ukrainian victory over the Russian aggressor was Polish diplomatic steps to provide Ukraine with heavy weapons, including armored vehicles and aircraft.

However, despite the above, the axis of fear, represented by Washington and Berlin (according to V. Ohryzko), which is based on an unnatural reaction to the Russian information attack on the use of nuclear weapons, refuses to openly confront the axis of evil (Russia, the DPRK, Iran and its proxy, China).

In the context of strategic restraint in response to missile and drone attacks by the Russian Federation in 2022-2024 against NATO countries (Poland, Romania), the absence of a common strategy of NATO and the EU towards the Russian Federation, there remains only the desire to create some surprises for the aggressor state in the form of strategic uncertainty (at the initiative of France). It is time for European countries to wake up from the state of demilitarization that has continued since the end of the Cold War, since a

direct military threat from the Russian Federation has emerged, and the United States is faced with a geopolitical situation where their military dominance in the world is being undermined.

Research Prospects:

Due to the lack of reliable information, certain pages of Polish military diplomacy remain insufficiently clarified. In particular, further research will require the consideration and implementation of the plan to “close the Ukrainian sky” from Russian missiles and UAVs employing Polish air defense and missile defense. However, due to the influence of NATO and the nuances of Polish government coalition discussions, it is currently not possible to implement these measures under international protocols and agreements.

The aspects of the problem related to the improvement of the Polish army before a probable NATO war on the eastern flank, the system of diplomatic steps aimed at ensuring the preparation of rapid response forces and means within the country, and logistics for allied forces in the event of escalation remain promising.

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