

DEFENCE24 DAY: COMPLEX MODERNIZATION OF THE POLISH MILITARY - A RESPONSE TO NEW GENERATION SET OF THREATS

The second Panel of the Defence24 Day conference was entitled as follows: “New Generation Warfare and Modernization Challenges Faced by the Polish Military”. Seven panelists took part in the discussion, representing the Polish Military, National Security Bureau, PM Office and industry. Both private and state-owned industrial entities were involved. The panelists came to a conclusion that placing an emphasis on the state of the art technology that would make it possible to speed up the decisionmaking process on the battlefield, with those decisions being far more accurate, is of key relevance, when creating an effective deterrence and defence system.

Brig. General Jarosław Kraszewski, Director of the Armed Forces Competency Department at the National Security Bureau, was the person who began the discussion. Kraszewski stressed the fact that changes related to the current shape of the battlefield, as well as the shape it would be taking in the foreseeable future have been noticed at the Bureau. The National Security Bureau is currently working on development of proper national defence strategy documents outlining its new nature. The head of the MoD announced that the Ministry would collaborate in that domain, with the presidential advisers. The General also highlighted the fact that the modernization planning cycle adopted by the Polish military has had its term prolonged from 10 to 15 years, so that it would remain in line with the NATO trends.

Kraszewski has also shown that he believes that a decisive response to threat should be a part of the doctrine.

I am an artilleryman, and delivering fires has always been close to my heart. What follows is my view: we should react to emergence of A2AD bubbles in the Kaliningrad region, and other aggressive steps taken by Russia as well, by focusing on the capabilities referred to as adequate response.

Brig. general Jarosław Kraszewski - Director of the Armed Forces Competency Department at the National Security Bureau

General Kraszewski expressed a view that Poland should interconnect numerous offensive assets within a single, homogeneous architecture. In that way a potential could be established to act against

the A2AD bubbles meanwhile the potential adversary, facing a threat of significant losses, would not be even willing to carry out a first strike.

Acquisition of the Homar system with expected procurement of further squadrons, acquisition and integration of the JASSM and JASSM-ER missiles on the F-16, announcement of acquisition of the F-35A platform and procurement of the "best in Europe" Krab sph have all been listed to exemplify the creation of such system based on homogeneous architecture. Currently, an emphasis shall be placed on a system that would integrate the sensors, effectors and the datalinks.

Professor Hubert Królikowski, Director at the Defence Analysis Bureau of the PM Office recalled the Sun Tzu principle, according to which not only is the war a matter that concerns the military as it concerns the state as a whole. Considering the above, not only is the defence expenditure important. Another important area is to make procurement choices wisely and in a manner that is efficient. Królikowski indicated Spain that has defence expenditure levels similar to Poland now. The GDP percentage remains lower, but the spending efficiency can be considered to be enhanced, for a number of reasons.

"One cannot perceive defence procurement solely from the point of view associated with off-the-shelf acquisitions. One should take the state economy into account, and make steps towards acquiring as many components as possible domestically" - professor Królikowski said. He also praised the extension of the military budget planning term to 15 years. "For instance, it could happen that lasers replace defensive missile systems over the upcoming years, we do not know that" - Królikowski said, also suggesting that this is a lesson that history has been teaching us.

Division General Wiesław Kukuła, Commander of the Territorial Defence component of the military, agreed with the fact that conventional warfare has evolved in many dimensions, also the non-technical ones. The expected conflict scenarios have evolved, this includes scenarios where a symmetrical response, in case of a stronger adversary, would not be possible. The key to winning such conflict would be placed in the ability to be involved in asymmetrical warfare. This is where the Territorial Defence Force component comes into play.

This component is to protect Poland from hits targeted at the infrastructure and the population's lifestyle. General Kukuła also suggested that there is a need to build trust between the administrator and the domestic, above all, defence industry. "These walls were being build over the years, but the situation has been getting better recently", he said.

Col. Przemysław Przybylak, Commander of the Centre for Cybernetic Operations, highlighted the importance of the cyberspace in the contemporary conflict scenarios. He also said that it is of key importance to create a proper set of human resources that would handle the cybersecurity matter in Poland. Przybylak optimistically noted that this domain is very much in the spotlight in Poland. He exemplified the above argument with the fact that two cyber-profiled classes have been formed in the High School that is associated with the Military University of Technology. Eight candidates per a single slot expressed their willingness to be a part of such class.

Przybylak added that enhancement of cybersecurity in Poland would also require changes of the legal framework, with an intention to make it possible to act before the state of war is even announced. It is also important to procure most of the equipment from the domestic entities.

Col. pil. ret. Piotr Łukaszewicz, representing the Northrop Grumman company, highlighted the need to liquidate the A2AD bubble, so that it would not have an impact on own freedom of maneuver. Łukaszewicz also pointed to the fact that S-300 and S-400 SAM systems stationed in Kaliningrad cover 25% of the Polish territory within their range, suggesting that the AARGM missiles would be optimal to

neutralize the A2AD bubble as they offer an ability to neutralize the enemy IAMD system and thus make it possible to achieve a freedom of maneuver. He added that it would be worth to procure such missiles for the F-16s, without having to wait for the “Polish’ F-35s, suggesting that AARGM should be considered to be an insurance policy for each and every airframe.

Sebastian Chwałek, Vice-President of the Management Board at the PGZ Group, agreed with the statements suggesting that acquisition of military equipment at the domestic companies has a positive impact on the level of national security, also admitting that despite the struggle endured by the state industry led by the Group, progress is being made and the state-owned companies currently offer know-how relevant for all of the domains within which the Polish military defines its requirements.

Chwałek also noted that time is of the essence, while shortening of the procurement procedures would significantly accelerate the delivery processes. “The current system assumes that many entities shall be involved at the stage of developing the requirements and implementation. Creation of the “Armament Agency” will probably be a response to that requirement. Defining realistic requirements for the industry is also quite important”, he said.

CEO of the WB Group, Piotr Wojciechowski, reminded the audience of the fact that privately owned companies, WB Group included, play a significant role in modernization of the Polish military, including the key projects managed by PGZ: Rosomak APC, Rak mortar and Krab self-propelled howitzer. Wojciechowski recalled the fact that a bulk of know-how required to create secure communications and cyber solutions is readily available or may be easily created. He stated that the military has a tendency to underestimate capacity as such.

Wojciechowski exemplified the above using the WB’s effort involved in the Tytan project, or the company’s portfolio in the domains of radio communications and cryptography. He declared that much more could be potentially done in the future, in the areas of robotization or smart munitions. Wojciechowski also recalled the experiences that the WB Group gathered when working with the Ukrainian military, over the course of the recent conflict.

Wojciechowski also issued a warning not to duplicate the existing potential which could lead the industry nowhere. “Forming good cybersecurity teams or creating a good radio requires 15 years at least [...]. The war is won by a soldier, but in fact, you win it years before it breaks out. By creating technologies, cryptographic solutions, etc.”

M. Szopa