

TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCES TO UTILIZE POLISH ARMAMENT

Polish Minister of Defence, referring to the equipment presented as the future inventory for the Territorial Defence branch of the Armed Forces, noted that the MoD wants the development of the Polish Army and development of the technological dimension of the Polish defence industry, to receive mutual support. The above means that the Ministry's leadership is not willing to acquire the equipment "all around the world", but at facilities in Radom, Tarnów and from other Polish companies. However, Macierewicz stressed that the aforesaid facilities must deliver their products in "proper quantity, with proper quality, at proper time and at a proper price".

On 9th February 2017, at the PCO S.A.'s seat in Warsaw, Antoni Macierewicz, Minister of Defence, got acquainted with the equipment which has been designed with the Territorial Defence in mind. During his visit, Macierewicz also met the managerial staff of the Polish armament industry companies, he also got invited to take part in a discussion panel covering the issue of collaboration between the Polish Ministry of Defence and Polish armament industry.

This is a meeting of manufacturers of the equipment that was indicated by General [Wiesław Kukuła - editor's note] and his staff, as the indispensable for the Territorial Defence. A discussion is going to take place between the representatives of the Army and the manufacturers, regarding the issue of when and how much of that equipment could be delivered by those companies.

Antoni Macierewicz, Polish Minister of Defence

Antoni Macierewicz, during his speech, expressed his hope that the first deliveries of the MSBS rifles, night vision goggles and other equipment for the Territorial Defence, would take place by the end of this year. *So that they feel as if they were soldiers who could effectively defend themselves from any enemy.* - as the Minister summed up.

General Wiesław Kukuła, commander of the Territorial Defence component of the Army, has noted that at the moment, the individual equipment used by the soldiers is a priority in the acquisition process. *"Because the first year of service of the territorial defence soldiers is going to be related to individual training. The goal of that period is to teach the soldier the basics of fighting and surviving on*

the battlefield", as Kukuła noted.

During the presentation, MU-3M Koliber night vision monocular, as well as SCT Rubin thermal vision firearm optic, were both being showcased. Firearms manufactured at the Radom and Tarnów facilities were also demonstrated. Back in December 2016, the Armament Inspectorate has signed an agreement with PCO S.A., concerning the procurement of optronic systems in the period between 2017 and 2019, with the value of the contract defined as more than PLN 352 million. Thermal vision firearm scopes, night vision goggles and night vision sights, as well as night vision binoculars, are all going to be acquired. The equipment is going to be received both by the Land Forces, as well as by the Territorial Defence component.

Responding to a question asked by Defence24.pl, concerning the joint operations undertaken by the Territorial Defence and the allied units, Antoni Macierewicz said that the first operation as such already took place, during the Anakonda-16 exercise organized last year. Minister also stressed the fact that WOT's (Territorial Defence Forces) contribution to another multinational exercise may take place in the autumn this year at the earliest, during the Dragon operation. *"A lot is going to depend on the results achieved by the WOT's units during the exercise and preparations, planned by General Kukuła in the spring this year"*.

The Defence Minister also made a reference to the planned acquisition of helicopters for the Polish Army. *"I was told that this would happen in March this year at the latest, which translates into another month of delay-* he said. As clarified by the Minister, the main reason for such situation stems from the documentation clauses problem.

On 18th January this year Antoni Macierewicz also informed that acquisition of the helicopters within the scope of urgent operational requirement is to include eight aircraft for the special forces and another eight for the Navy, sixteen examples in total. The first two examples were to be delivered between January and February, while remaining ones - by the end of this year. Minister also stressed the fact that at that moment the MoD was at the stage of analyzing the offers received from three companies: PZL Mielec, PZL Świdnik and Airbus Helicopters.

Back in 2016 Minister Macierewicz declared that the first two Black Hawk helicopters for the special forces were to be delivered until the end of that year. Considering the information concerning the document exchange with the United States, it is plausible that the head of the Polish Ministry of Defence was referring to the Black Hawk helicopters for the special forces.