

# **The Modernization of Poland Defense Forces as A Response towards Russian Military Presence in Kaliningrad Oblast (2014-2017)**

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## **Abstract**

*The geopolitical and security condition of Eastern Europe has undergone a drastic shift in its development. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland immediately joined the Western alliance, which led to the massive structural changes of the country. The shift has had an enormous impact on Russia where it has made various confrontations to regain its influence in the region. Russia continues to increase tensions by increasing the military capabilities of Kaliningrad Oblast, which is directly bordered by Poland. In response, the Polish government made efforts to modernize its military as part of the Defense White Book 2013, in which one of them is to improve its military capabilities in the protection of border areas. The role of EU, NATO, and the U.S. becomes very important for Poland in implementing its military modernization and in maintaining the stability of European region. Poland on its four pillars specifically calls the alliance with the U.S. and becomes a member of NATO as an important factor in the formulation of its defense policy, in which Poland could increase the capabilities of its Armed Forces.*

**Keywords:** Poland defense policy, military modernization, Kaliningrad Oblast, global players, Russia

*Kondisi keamanan geopolitik Eropa Timur telah mengalami pergeseran drastis dalam perkembangannya. Setelah runtuhnya Uni Soviet, Polandia langsung bergabung dengan aliansi Barat, yang menyebabkan perubahan struktural besar-besaran di negara tersebut. Pergeseran tersebut memiliki dampak yang sangat besar pada Rusia di mana negara tersebut telah melakukan berbagai konfrontasi untuk mendapatkan kembali pengaruhnya di wilayah ini. Rusia terus meningkatkan ketegangan dengan meningkatkan kemampuan militer di Kaliningrad Oblast, yang berbatasan langsung dengan Polandia. Menanggapi hal tersebut pemerintah Polandia melakukan upaya untuk memodernisasi militernya sebagai bagian dari Buku Putih Pertahanan 2013, yang salah satunya mencakup peningkatan kemampuan militernya dalam perlindungan daerah perbatasan. Peran UE, NATO, dan AS menjadi sangat penting bagi Polandia dalam menerapkan modernisasi militer dan dalam menjaga stabilitas kawasan Eropa. Polandia pada empat pilarnya secara khusus menyebutkan bahwa aliansi dengan AS dan menjadi anggota NATO sebagai faktor penting dalam perumusan kebijakan pertahanannya, di mana Polandia dapat meningkatkan kapabilitas Angkatan Bersenjata.*

**Kata kunci:** Kebijakan pertahanan Polandia, modernisasi militer, Kaliningrad Oblast, pemain global, Rusia

The dynamic condition of this world politics makes the issue of international defense cooperation become one of the most influential issues in the study of International Relations (Snyder 2008). Defense and security become an effort in maintaining the existence of a state in a specific region. In other words, the existence of international defense cooperation could also become an umbrella for its member states that have the same concerns or interests. Furthermore, the geopolitical condition in Eastern Europe has changed after the U.S. emerged as the winner of the Cold War. After the collapse of Soviet Union, the former Soviet Union countries are in trouble to form its own independent state, which then leads to the assistance from another superpower. This condition made U.S. provide assistance in the political, economic, and military so that most of the ex-Soviet states become pro-Western. Moreover, the geopolitics and geostrategic of Eastern European countries have shifted to a more open one, evidenced by the involvement of these states to NATO and EU membership. This circumstance has made the security and stability in the region inseparable from the existence of NATO, EU, as well as a strong backing of the U.S. behind it.

On the other hand, Russian assertiveness towards European region, as the example of Russo-Georgian War in 2008 and Russian Annexation of Crimea in 2014 has increased the threat perception of security and stability in the European region. The existence of Russian enclave, Kaliningrad Oblast has also made NATO Eastern Flank feel threatened for possible future threat in the region (Mihalka 2005). Russia seems to want to reclaim Soviet fragmented territories to strengthen its position. Looking at the historical and geopolitical conditions, the states that have direct borders with Russia should increase awareness of its territorial borders (Schmidt-Felzmann 2014). In this case, tensions often rise in Poland and the Baltic States because these countries are closely bordered with Russia and its enclave, Kaliningrad Oblast (Clemens & Crowe 1995).

Poland and Estonia have met NATO standards for military expenditures, which is 2% of the GDP. Meanwhile, Lithuania and Latvia are still in the process of reaching the target. Which differ Poland with the other three countries is that Poland has greater military capabilities and become the strongest ally of the U.S. in Eastern Europe. Poland hosted the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, jointly hosted the NATO Multinational Corps North-East Headquarters Division, and hosting the NATO Power Integration Unit (NFIU) in its territory. Poland facilitates many military exercises, for example in 2016, more than 16,000 U.S. military personnel

participated in the exercises under Operation Atlantic Resolve, the Polish-led *Anakonda 2016*, and other U.S. and NATO exercises (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2017). In regards to the concern of this article, Poland is in the midst of its military modernization and this effort is taken in order to deal with Russian threat especially in the borderland, considering that Kaliningrad Oblast is one of the biggest military bases of Russia located very close to Poland (Lamoreaux & Galbreath 2008). Furthermore, this article discusses the modernization of Poland Defense Forces as one of the main elements of its defense policy, which is also influenced by the actors involved in responding Russian military presence in Kaliningrad Oblast. The methodology used in this article are qualitative and data gathering, in which the authors try to analyze the issue based on existing data to create a critical evaluation of the issue.

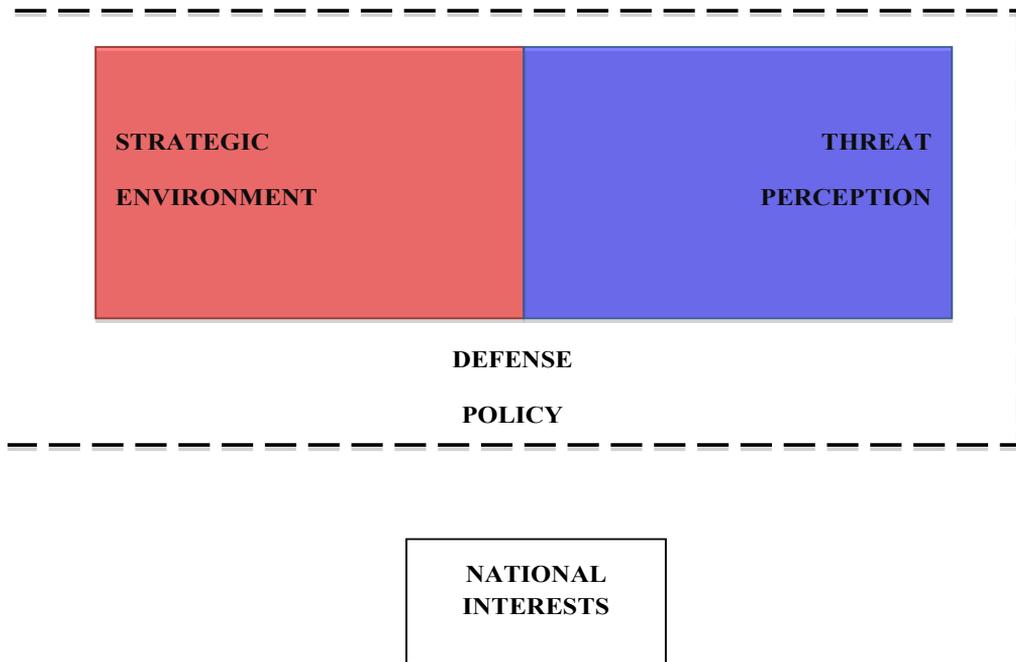
### **Poland Defense Policy Towards Kaliningrad Oblast: Between National Interests, Actors, and Its Implications**

The defense policy review becomes necessary considering the dynamics of the strategic security environment, as well as the complexity of threats and challenges that occur in the global sphere (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2007). To that end, the Polish government officially released its first Defense White Book (DWB) in 2013, addressed to all national and global state structures. The purpose of the book is to explain in more detail about Poland defense policy, which includes on how Poland perceived threats as the result of its geopolitical and strategic environment. Such perceptions thereupon adapted to the national interests and will result in a policy to response particular issues and the actors involved that may threaten the national security or otherwise helping to achieve the national goals. The 2013 DWB clearly states both internal and external threat perceptions that could threaten the security of Poland. The conflict in Georgia also highlighted as one of the real threat that is motivated by Russian aggressiveness towards European region. Following the development after the issuance of the DWB, Russia is increasingly challenging the security of the European region. Starting from the 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine, which initiates the greatest East-West impasse since the Cold War and the later in 2016 where Russia began to move the Iskander missile to Kaliningrad Oblast, as an action against the existence of NATO forces in the Baltic region. These events have further strengthened the belief in the threat of Russian future

aggression and Poland must review its official document in response to the new phenomenon (Westerlund 2017).

## **The National Security Interest of Poland**

**Figure 1. Conception That Affects the National Interest**



The national interests of Poland are listed in Article 5 of the Constitution and safeguard the independence and territorial integrity become the top priority for the country, in which this interest is listed in the first line. In addition, Article 126 section 2 of Polish Constitution also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity as the most important component through the role of the country's leader. *"The President of the Republic shall ensure observance of the Constitution, safeguard the sovereignty and security of the State as well as the inviolability and integrity of its territory."*

From the Constitution, the existence of Poland as an independent state within inviolable borders is categorized as the survival or critical level to

the national interests of Poland. Inviolable borders mean that any states could not violate the territory and sovereignty of Poland. Therefore, border issues become the top priority for Poland and the government will take any measures in order to deal with the external threats, in this regard the presence of Russian military in Kaliningrad Oblast.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the implementation of Poland military modernization, this section will firstly explain the interconnection between specific theories or concepts with the case study to understand further regarding the focus of this article. Referring to the Figure 1, the aforementioned Poland's national interests as the basis of its defense policy will be affected by the strategic environment and threat perception of the country. Thus, the theory of strategic environment and threat perception will firstly be explained to link it with Poland's national interests. As the result of these three elements, the theory of defense policy will be described afterwards. And lastly, the explanation will lead to the theory of military modernization, as an implication of Polish defense policy. Above all, every theory will also be associated with the actors involved in regards to the concern of this article.

### **Strategic Environment**

Strategic environment was defined by Harry R. Yarger (2006) as the realm in which the actors (state or non-state) interact with each other, in order to advance well-being of the states and establish mutual advantages for both parties. Strategic environment theory is relevant with geopolitical theory that considers world politics as a driving factor in the dynamics of internal and external environments (Yarger 2006). However, beside the positive one that bring benefits in supporting the national interests of a state, the dynamics of international strategic environment also brings negative implications, which directly or indirectly affect the national development of a state. This negative implication could lead to increased potential threat to the viability of a state. Thus, every state seeks a variety of international defense cooperation both in the form of organizations or alliances that brings mutual advantages for parties involved in such cooperation (Yarger 2006).

The turning point of Eastern Europe's interpretation has politically occurred after the collapse of Soviet Union. Most of the former Soviet states tend to erase their Eastern identity or influence because they think the Communist system has failed to make the country prosperous in both the political, economic, and social fields (Swoboda and Wiersma 2009).

Subsequently, those states carried out activities containing Western values such as political system, ideology, and established cooperation with Western states. Politically, some of the Eastern European countries facing difficulties in transforming their governmental system due to the inheritance of Socialist-Communist centralized government that causing several issues in making changes, especially in the field of government (Van Deveer 1994). However, Poland became one of the most successful countries with the Democratic ideology compared to the other Baltic States. The involvement into NATO and EU membership further strengthened the openness of Poland to the West. Poland also has a very close relationship with the U.S. in every aspect. This condition makes the country cannot be underestimated, as a strong country both in the political, economic, and security of Eastern Europe. It certainly influences Polish political aspects, in regards to foreign policy that actively continues to build cooperation with Western allies to achieve its national interests (Derek 2016).

*“When we joined NATO, and later the European Union, it seemed that we stood on solid ground and could forget the difficult dilemmas of a country situated between the East and the West.....”*

*Through built on shared strategic interests of member states, we should be actively seeking to shape its policy while maintaining our sense of subjectivity, strive to realize the interests of the Republic of Poland, and ensure real security and conditions of development for all citizens.” –*

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2016)

## **Threat Perception**

The discussions of security revolve around threats to security, consequences, and how to ensure the prevention and defense capabilities of a particular country or alliance. Table 1 shows an insight into the implications of the differentiation between risk and threat. It also highlights how important to consider its implications on domestic and external affairs, as well as conventional security issues and soft security approaches. In regards to the concern of this article, an emphasis is placed on the conventional threats of security and appropriate actions to address the threats.

**Table 1. Risk and Threat: Definitional Concerns and Its Policy Implications**

		emphasis on	measures employed	objective	policy responses	regulatory options
risk	safety	anticipation	pro-active	pre-empt	soft	non-intrusive
threat	security	identification	re-active	deter/defend	hard	intrusive

(Source: Amo CZ, n.d)

According to Robert O. Tilman (1984), there are five factors that influence threat perception, which are geopolitical system, structural system, historical dimension, socio-cultural dimension, and economic dimension (Tilman 1984). In line with Neoclassical Realism, the foreign policy taken by a state is not caused by the anarchic world system. Rather caused by external threats such as perceptions of systemic pressure and other states' intentions, as well as internal threats in which domestic variables such as state institutions, elites, and community actors in society affecting decision makers in foreign policy. Consequently, actions taken from a country will depend on the threat perception faced by the state (Rathbun 2008). Hence, although the national power and state's position in the international structure are determinant factors in foreign policy, domestic variables also form the foreign policy of a state (Baylis 2008).

The Ministry of National Defense (MoND) also formulated in the DWB 2013 that Poland's threat perception in terms of external military threat would relies heavily on rapid military potential close to Poland border and military attack on the territory of Poland (White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland 2013). From this, we can analyze that Russian aggressiveness towards Eastern Europe and its military presence in Kaliningrad Oblast considered as a major threat to Poland's territorial integrity. This circumstance affects Poland's behavior in seeking various means to secure its territory, one of them by renewing its defense policy in response to the changing strategic environment. Furthermore, following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Polish Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz issued an increasingly reinforcing statement that Russia's actions were a major threat to Poland:

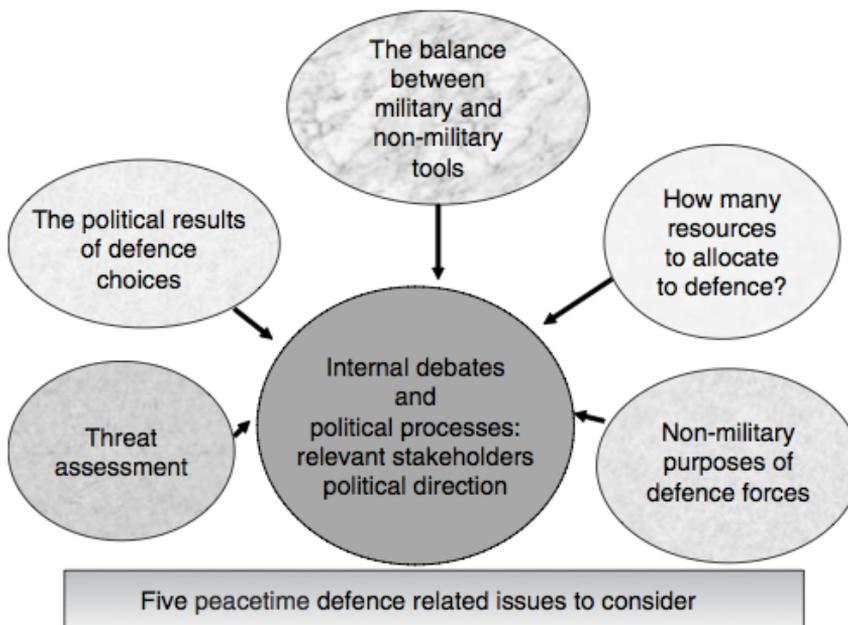
*“No country in recent history... has undermined international order to the extent Russia has, first attacking Georgia, then Ukraine, and continuously occupying the territory of an independent state, openly indicating that it does not want to accept the independence of that state and its sovereignty.*

*Russia must accept that it is one of many countries in the world with equal rights... but it does not have the right to constantly impose its views, its rules, and its army on other countries and other nations.” (Polish Defense Minister 2016).*

## **Defense Policy**

Defense policy is formulated based on two basic questions, what to defend and why we defend it. The answers to these questions will be drawn from the strategic analysis of the security environment that adapted to the internal conditions of a state. The outcome will depend on a clear understanding of the state’s national interest, which resulting a decision on force size, structure, mission, and deployment (Cleary & McConville 2006). Without a clear understanding of the state’s national interest, any actions taken by a state on the world stage can increase insecurity. Many emerging democracies find it difficult to define its national interests, this could be because the state is involved in post-conflict reconstruction and must compete with broader reintegration issues (Kissinger 2014).

**Figure 2. Peacetime Questions for Defense**



*(Source: Cleary & McConville 2006, 38)*

According to Laura Cleary, there are five peacetime defense related issues to consider as seen in Figure 2. In this regard, the implementation of Poland military modernization will depend on the government's effort in identifying threat perception as the results of the region's security environment and adapt it to the internal conditions of the state. The balance between military and non-military tools will influence the political direction of security issues in implementing the military modernization. However, in regards to the concern of this article, the military tools more likely to have a big impact on military modernization. From this processes, it will generate a defense policy that formulated in the 2013 DWB. Lastly, as stated before, the outcome will result in the form of decision on force size, structure, mission, and deployment.

### **Military Modernization**

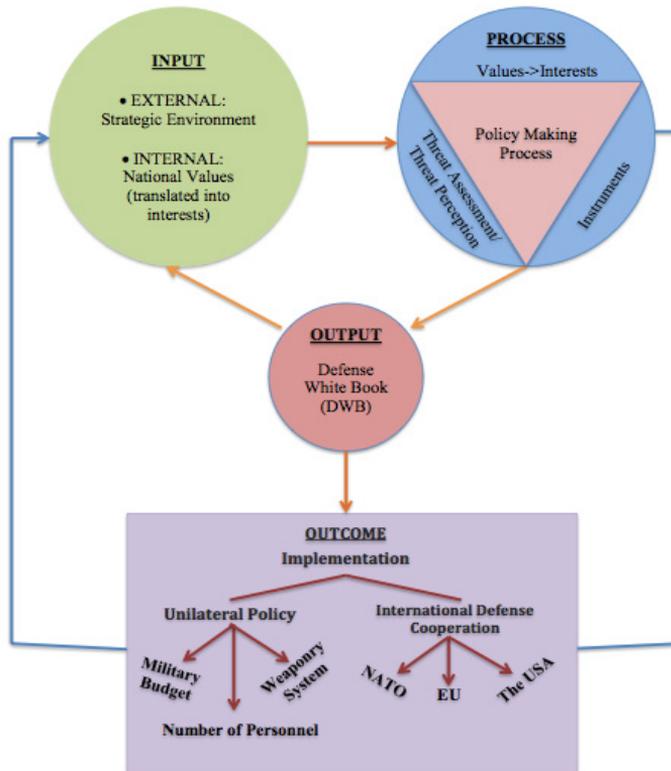
The multilateralism approach towards threats and challenges to European security in the 21st century tends to focus on issues related to the effectiveness and mechanisms of international organizations, which are NATO and EU. According to Dominik P. Jankowski, the essence of European military modernization is "a mixture of political will and reindustrialization, including the necessary investment into the defense industry" as the need to increase the defense potential of NATO and EU member states. Furthermore, He argues from the perspective of Poland, investing in national defense potential through military modernization is a form of responsibility for maintaining the security of the region in dealing with possible threat in the future. Ultimately, the existence of NATO and EU will only be effective if their member states are strong and efficient. Therefore, despite the economic crisis that was hit European region, Poland has made the modernization of its forces a top priority and become the most successful country in Eastern Europe in carrying out its military modernization (Jankowski 2014).

Polish military modernization is not something that can be realized in a short time. Managing the process of military modernization in a new strategic context is also not an easy thing, but it is very important to do it effectively. The best way to ensure the successful modernization of the Polish military is to apply an appropriate defense policy and security strategies in both internal and global context. As Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski stated in his annual address to the Polish Parliament in March 2013:

*“History teaches us that Poland should see itself to keep its security also in the military sense and that this security is very much dependent on our own defense potential. As Jan Nowak Jezioranski once wrote, ‘You cannot base your security on your own allies, even the most powerful ones, if you can not use your own power to enable these allies to come to your aid.’” (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2013).*

The implementation of Poland military modernization is the result of its strategic environment that forces the country to improve its military capabilities, in accordance with the standards applicable within the alliance. In other words, the role of NATO, EU and its close ties with the U.S. is very crucial to the implementation of Poland military modernization. However, from the official statement above, it could be analyzed that Poland also need to consider its own military potential and should not rely on the assistance of global players without improving any capabilities. On the contrary, by prioritizing its military capabilities, Poland will be able to invite assistances from these global players to implement its military modernization through military training, military operations, and joint forces.

Figure 3. Defense Systemic Approach – A Framework for Analysis



## **The Implementation of Poland Military Modernization to Respond Russian Military Presence in Kaliningrad Oblast (2014-2017)**

The involvement of Poland into EU and NATO membership exerts a great influence on the country, especially in the military field. The collective defense of the alliance forces its member states to continue to improve the military and defense capabilities of its member states. Moreover, Poland faces a big threat in the Northern part of the country, which is from Russian hyper-militarization in Kaliningrad Oblast. Thus, Poland used the cooperation as a tool to help increase its military capabilities in the face of Russian threats. It is proved by various threats such as the conflict in Georgia and the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine; the alliance is increasingly persuasive in revealing its role and presence in the Eastern Flank. Poland also has very close military relations with the U.S., which is marked by the presence of American troops in Poland.

The influence from EU, NATO, and the U.S. is immense in Poland's consideration for its defense policy. Frankly speaking, the implementation of Poland military modernization to respond Russian military presence in Kaliningrad Oblast is not merely about how the country establishes cooperation and just expecting the presence of those global players. It also includes on how Poland allocates defense budgets and improves the capabilities of its forces in accordance with the standards applicable within the alliance, increase the number of military personnel, as well as how Poland develop its weaponry systems to show its military strength. Ultimately, the assistance of global players will not be provided "free of charge" if a country does not seek to improve its own military capabilities. Thus, the unilateral policy in which Poland seeks to increase its military capability is very significant in inviting the presence and assistance of global players within the country.

### **International Defense Cooperation: EU, NATO, and the U.S**

The existence of EU and NATO is a key factor in the security of the European region. The Treaty on European Union clearly illustrates that security environment in the European region is strongly influenced by regional cooperation and integration factors between NATO and EU. The security are interconnected among EU member states as well as NATO allies who jointly mobilize tools and utilize resources efficiently to overcome the challenges and enhance the safety of their citizens. The cooperation is an integral pillar of EU's performance aimed at strengthening European

security and defense, as part of the implementation of EU Global Strategy that contributed to the mutually reinforcing Trans-Atlantic ties between them (European External Action Service 2017).

In July 2016, EU and NATO have signed a Joint Declaration in Warsaw. Referring to the border protection of its Eastern members, there are four pillars that become the concerns in this partnership. Those pillars are the areas of defense capability, defense industry, research, and exercises (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2016). These four areas greatly affect the military modernization, which is being intensively conducted by Europe, especially Eastern European countries in dealing with Russian threats. With the existence of EU-NATO strategic partnership, it will facilitate the military modernization and enhance the integration of military cooperation among its member states, one of which is realized in the form of military operations, military training, and joint forces.

These efforts indicate that the role of EU and NATO in maintaining security stability of European region is interrelated and inseparable. Several agencies have been established to deal specifically with security issues and significantly bind its members to actively participate in the implementation (European Council 2017). In regards to the implementation of Poland military modernization, Poland has actively participated in EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). This agency serves as a platform for EU member states to conduct military and crisis management operations outside the region and involves developing civilian and military capabilities of its members (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Poland 2018). The role of EU CSDP has provided many opportunities for Poland to participate in international peacekeeping missions. Through military training, Polish personnel also gain additional knowledge that will be beneficial to the development of its forces. In the long term, this effort could generate reliable and resilient personnel of EU member states (Tatsumi 2013).

In the context of NATO, collective defense is based on confronting traditional challenges as assumed by the realist paradigm, particularly to the region and finding its focus on identifiable external threats or rivalry (Devanny 2017). The principle of NATO's collective defense listed in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty:

*“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an*

*armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.” (The North Atlantic Treaty 1949)*

The realization of NATO collective defense could be seen in the exercises, operations, and assistances conducted by NATO’s superpower countries to assist other member states with lesser capacity. In the case of Russian threat towards NATO Eastern Flank, the realization of its collective defense could be seen from the establishment of Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in 2014 and the development of this program is increasingly materialized in 2017. This effort was made in response to Russian military presence in Kaliningrad Oblast, which increasingly threatened the security of its Eastern member states (Zapfe 2017). Since 2014, Poland involved in EFP, which serves as a connection for the unit and location of its headquarters. The biggest military exercise on the Eastern Flank was the Polish-led Anakonda 2016, which involved 31,000 troops. Furthermore, 15 NATO members are involved in the EFP deployment, with the U.S., Germany, Canada, and the UK as the leading states; meanwhile Poland and the Baltic States serve as the host nation, as seen in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Four Multinational Battlegroups of NATO’s EFP**



*(Source: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2017)*

The role of the U.S. is above all important, proved by the deployment of the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team of the 4th Infantry Division (3/4 ABCT) since January 2017. The brigade headquarters located in Zagan and other element bases in Skwierzyna, Swietoszow, and Boleslawiec. The purpose of this assistance is to create a deterrence posture to improve prevention, improve regional interoperability, and fulfill U.S. commitments for NATO allies in accordance with the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit. The full 3/4 ABCT deployment in the region amounts more than 4,000 troops and 2,000 vehicles, including tanks, armored personnel carriers, supply trucks, and trailers. It marked the beginning of continuous back-to-back rotations of the U.S. troops and equipment to Poland, in which the troops conducted exercises and then be replaced by the same size of units (U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Poland 2018).

### **Unilateral Policy: The Increasing Number of Military Budget, Personnel, and Development of Weaponry System**

To analyze the implementation of Poland military modernization in terms of military budget, the writer will compare the 2012 defense budget prior to the publication of DWB 2013 and the 2017 defense budget as the latest year after the issuance of the DWB 2013, as well as following the development of Poland military modernization. The MoND has planned PLN 29203.2 million on its 2012 defense budget and PLN 36854.856 million on the 2017 defense budget. In order to succeed the military modernization, the Polish government has increased allocation for its military spending each year. From the allocation itself, the MoND prioritizes to improve Polish defense industry, increase the number of personnel, and increase the operational and maintenance costs of its weaponry system. These three sectors have proved the implementation of Poland military modernization, which in this case is motivated by financial support. In addition, Poland has reached 2% of its GDP for military spending since 2015 in accordance with NATO's standard and expected to increase in the following years.

In 2015, Poland plans to increase its army by 50 percent to help ensure the integrity of the country's borders due to the conflict in Ukraine and Russian threat to the security of the state. The increase is expected to grow from 100.000 to 150.000 as the country continues to expand the capabilities of its armed forces. However, the MoND acknowledged that expanding the army by 50 percent would be a complicated procedure, where the increase will not only about the quantity or number of the personnel but also about

the quality or capability of its forces. The government also put important concern on the development of Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) to protect the country's eastern flank, which has been re-created in 2015 (Veljanovska 2015). Consequently, it takes a few periods to increase the number of military personnel. Thus, in 2017 the number of Polish military personnel (PAF) has reached 129.000.

As stated in the 2013 Polish DWB, the military modernization also includes the need to improve the ability of weaponry system in the form of air and missile defense system, aimed at ensuring more effective national security; establish an efficient surveillance system, combined with a command and target acquisition system for land forces mobility as well as the use of helicopters with combat capability and support systems, which can move rapidly throughout the Polish region, especially on the border with Russia (White Book on National Security of Republic of Poland 2013). To achieving aforementioned objectives and in regards to Russian military presence in Kaliningrad Oblast, within 2014-2017 the MoND has modernize several military equipment that ensures compatibility with NATO standards and meets the needs of the operational environment, among others: MIM-104 Patriot Surface to Air Missile (SAM), PT-16 and PT-17 Main Battle Tank (MBT), as well as W-3PL Gluszec Helicopter.

## **Conclusion**

As one of the most developed military alliances in the world, NATO has a framework on its collective defense, where the threat to a NATO member country is a threat to all its members. The form of defense cooperation in Europe is also increasingly integrated since the EU and NATO agreed on a joint declaration of its strategic partnership that includes cooperation in defense capability, defense industry, research, and exercises. These two frameworks encourage its member states to actively participate in attempts to maintain regional security and stability as a common goal, as well as to improve their military capabilities in accordance with the standards applicable to the alliance.

In regards to Russian threat to Europe, Poland and the Baltic States are among countries that more threatened by the Russian confrontation because these countries directly border with Russia. Particularly for Poland and Lithuania, which have a direct border with Kaliningrad Oblast, one of the largest Russian military bases in Europe. Russia continuously

increases military capabilities of Kaliningrad Oblast, as the only way to have direct access to the Baltic Sea as well as to monitor Europe. Moreover, the conflicts in Georgia and annexation of Crimea clearly show that Russia is really challenging the existence of NATO as the greatest military alliance in the region. As a result of this condition, NATO pays serious attention to its Eastern Flank by presenting NATO's superpower countries, such as the USA, Germany, Canada, and the UK to assist Poland and the Baltic States. The purpose of this effort is none other than to counter the influence of Russia that could endanger the European region at large.

Poland military modernization is the result of its regional strategic environment conditions, which requires the country to improve its military capability in order to deal with Russian threats through international defense cooperation and unilateral policy. From the perspective of international defense cooperation, the implementation of Poland military modernization is further enhanced by its participation in military operations and training through EU's CSDP and NATO EFP, as well as joint forces with the U.S. through 3/4 ABCT. Meanwhile, most importantly from the perspective of its internal implementation, the Polish government has improved the defense budget, the number of personnel and capabilities, as well as the development of weaponry system. In further developments, Poland will continue to improve its military capabilities, which realized in a continuous program of work, as the security environment is always changing and security becomes a priority for the country.

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