

Determinants of the implementation of the recommendations contained in “The Strategic Concept for Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland” in the light of the experiences of selected countries

Summary

The year 2022 will go down in history as one that has re-evaluated security thinking not only in the Central and Eastern European region, but also in the entire civilised world. The classic conflict of a nature similar to the realities of World War II that took place in Ukraine showed that no scenario, even one previously considered very unlikely, should be ruled out while preparing the state to defend itself against increasingly unpredictable threats. One of the consequences of this traumatic experience should be a redefinition of the approach to building a security system as a multi-domain phenomenon, which in addition to the typical military and non-military subsystems also includes: conducting international policy, the economy, strategic communication, and even education of citizens.

When *The Strategic Concept for the Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland (Strategiczna Koncepcja Bezpieczeństwa Morskiego RP – SKBM RP)* was issued in 2017 on the inspiration of the President of the Republic of Poland, under the auspices of the National Security Bureau, it seemed that such holistic thinking about the maritime security of the country, which is presented in it, as an important component of the multi-domain security system could initiate a process of seeing its importance for the harmonious development of the country. The time that has passed since then has shown that such a reevaluation has not taken place. Paradoxically, it is precisely the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine that has demonstrated the need to understand the importance of the maritime aspects of contemporary international politics, both in peacetime and in times of crisis and even war.

There is no doubt that the most important plane of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is land territory. However, the truth of the thesis presented above is supported by the fact that it is difficult not to see that the spheres of its playing out also include the airspace, cyberspace, the domain of information processing and communication, and precisely the maritime space. The seizure of Crimea in 2014, which deprived Ukraine of access to strategic ports and took over the majority of its navy, should be seen as factors that played a significant role in the operations. This enabled the Russian Black Sea Fleet to take full control of the Black Sea. Regardless of the obvious military consequences, the aggressor's blockade of Ukrainian ports has also

significantly affected the economic situation, not only of Ukraine¹, but also of all countries which imported Ukrainian goods, including, above all, foodstuffs.

In the light of the facts presented, it is perfectly clear that, in the case of countries with an access to the sea, this location is an important factor affecting the determinants of their security, irrespective of the nature of the threat that seems to prevail at any given moment.

Poland's maritime location is of strategic importance for national security and social and economic development, with all the resulting consequences. This sentence, taken from the foreword of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, preceding *The Strategic Concept for Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland*, should set the fundamental directions for thinking about maritime policy of the state in all its manifestations. However, the practice of many recent years indicates that the construction of the so called Maritime Poland will encounter numerous difficulties and obstacles.

At the same time, from the perspective of observing the situation in the world, including before the conflict in Ukraine, it seems that the role of water bodies in various aspects and areas of state policy is permanently increasing. In numerous studies describing the importance of maritime security, some basic data are cited. The ocean makes up more than 70 per cent of the globe's surface. Nearly 80 per cent of the human population lives in close proximity to water. Approximately 90% of global trade is conducted by sea and a large proportion of strategic raw materials are transported in this way. In the activities of global powers, but also of smaller states with supra-regional ambitions, maritime policy constitutes an important perspective for the realisation of national interests. The realities of the last few years have also demonstrated how many events that have an impact on the security situation in various parts of the world are taking place at sea. These include the problem of illegal migration, much of it by sea, which at one point posed a serious threat to Europe, the unresolved issue of piracy, disputes over territories and waters, China's ambition to become a major player in the waters of South-East Asia, Russia's aggressive policy in waters including provocations in the Baltic or Mediterranean.

Only seemingly, Poland's security is not conditioned by such defined risks. Tensions in the basins around Europe are an important determinant for the stable development of our country, especially in the context of an uninterrupted energy raw material supply chain. Poland's situation is directly affected primarily by the reality of the Baltic Sea, which is created by, inter

¹ Before the war, Ukraine exported around 130 million tonnes of goods by sea annually. The Russian naval blockade cut Ukraine off from world trade, while the Ukrainian economy relied 40% on exports. The countermeasures taken: attempts to divert shipments to rail traffic proved insufficient. This channel reached a potential of shipping 1 million tons per month (about 12 million tons per year), which was less than 10 percent of Ukraine's pre-war maritime exports.

alia, the militarisation of the Kaliningrad region and Moscow's expansion of its own anti-access zones, the so-called A2/AD.²

The response of a large number of countries that attach importance to maritime security in these circumstances is to develop naval forces³, of which navies play a key role. It is widely recognised that the role of modern navies goes far beyond preparing for conflicts at sea. Their purpose is defined by the three functions attributed to them - military, diplomatic and policing.

In opposition to the observed trends, the situation of the Polish Navy, without which it is impossible to imagine the realisation of national maritime interests and ensuring national maritime security, is gradually degrading. Negligence in the modernisation of this type of Armed Forces has now led to a reduction of its potential and operational capabilities. Failure to apply coordinated and comprehensive repair solutions may in the near future result in a reduction of the Navy's ability to perform the tasks assigned to it, as well as in the necessity to withdraw from previously assumed alliance commitments.

Among the many reasons for such a negative outlook on reality, which is largely due to, among other things, underinvestment in the development of the Polish Navy, one can point to the lack of an unambiguous, coherent vision of the development of this formation and of agreement as to its purpose and target model. This vision was not generated within the current cycle of strategic planning for national security in which the presence of maritime aspects is significantly limited.

The analysis of the hitherto practice indicates that for the needs of such a cycle no reliable preliminary studies have been prepared, which would substantively describe the Polish maritime environment, the threats, challenges and opportunities arising from it, nor has a uniform document been prepared at the strategic level. Such a formal document should be the basis for guidelines for the preparation of detailed solutions, which are the subject of naval development plans as part of the Polish Armed Forces, modernisation programmes or, finally, specific laws and their executive acts.

Accordingly, a group of experts launched in early 2016⁴ work on a strategic document outlining the conditions for building a Polish system of maritime safety, an integral part of which would be the reconstruction of the Polish Navy work on a strategic document outlining

² A2/AD - Anti-Access/Area Denial - anti-access capability system (battlefield isolation)

³ Naval forces - the totality of the forces and resources possessed by a state and intended to conduct a policy at sea, (as defined for the purposes of the SKBM RP).

⁴ The inaugural conference of the SKBM RP was held on 25 February 2016 at the Belweder Palace.

the conditions for building a Polish system of maritime safety, an integral part of which would be the reconstruction of the Polish Navy.

As a result of the actions taken, on 10 February 2017, The *Strategic Concept for Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland* was presented during a conference at the Naval Academy (AMW) in Gdynia. Its content reflects the multidimensionality and diversity, which is associated with the analysis of this subsystem of national security. One of the objectives of the *SKBM RP* study was to show the full spectrum of opportunities and benefits of Poland's coastal location and to identify the threats and risks that result from this location. *SKBM RP* should be seen as an official document, but not of a normative nature. Therefore, there are no formal solutions that would allow implementation of its provisions.

The *Concept* indicates a number of recommendations that refer to the creation of a coherent system of maritime safety of the state, the basic step of which would be the reconstruction of the potential of maritime forces, including - first of all - the Polish Navy. Bearing in mind the situation presented above, this thesis analyses the conditions that would determine the possibility of implementing the presented recommendations. The analysis includes premises conducive to their implementation, as well as obstacles and threats hindering or preventing their implementation at present.

It should be assumed that the indications adopted in *SKBM RP* were treated in the thesis as a reference point for changes that seem necessary in the state in order to activate its actions in the maritime domain. Thus, the discussed document constitutes a pretext for undertaking considerations of a more general and universal character.

The starting point for the research, apart from the available literature, was also the analysis of official state documents, especially those of a strategic nature (especially the subsequent *National Security Strategy*), sources of law relating to the area in question, especially laws, as well as conceptual studies. The research was also based on analogous documents adopted in selected third countries or developed for the needs of international organisations.

The dissertation, resulting from the research process, provided an opportunity to make an innovative link between theoretical issues discussed earlier in the literature on the subject and their practical implementation (or lack thereof) in selected maritime countries, including Poland. The thesis does this by showing the correlation between the understanding of the importance of maritime security, which is reflected in the development of strategic documents in this field at the level of the state, and the actual potential, capabilities and maritime activity of not only its armed forces, but also other entities and institutions. The conducted research allowed also to define the patterns of connections between the level of maritime awareness of

the society (as well as its emanation, which should be regarded as the authorities of the country) and the activity of the state in the maritime domain.

An important contribution of the thesis to the body of knowledge can also be considered to be the definition of the links that exist between the various aspects of maritime safety of the state, including defence, economy, energy, ecology, research and education, which are interdependent and form an inseparable system of connected vessels.

The main area of research in this thesis is that part of the state security system which relates to maritime affairs. Within this area, **the main subject of research** was the conditions determining the implementation of recommendations included in *The Strategic Concept for Maritime Safety of the Republic of Poland* and the premises influencing the implementation of recommendations constituting the essence of similar strategic documents in the field of maritime safety of the state (or international organisations) of selected third countries (with a coastal location) or international entities. The implementation of the discussed recommendations testifies to the understanding of the importance of maritime safety for the broadly understood existence of the state and, consequently, the pursuit by this state of an active maritime policy.

The main objective of the research was to identify the key conditions and constraints determining the implementation of the recommendations contained in *The Strategic Concept for Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland* and to outline a concept for the implementation of this document in the light of similar mechanisms existing in other countries.

The main research problem considered in the thesis was the answer to the question, how the correctness arising from the experience of the implementation of strategic documents of other countries can be used to implement the recommendations included in *The Strategic Concept of Maritime Safety of the Republic of Poland* in Poland. Consequently, what actions should be taken to ensure a proper level of maritime safety of Poland.

The main working hypothesis assumed in the dissertation is that the identification of regularities arising from the experience of other countries in the implementation of strategic documents will allow to identify optimal mechanisms for the implementation of *The Strategic Concept of Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland*, which is the first Polish strategic document in the area of national maritime security. This will create conditions for undertaking comprehensive actions aimed at ensuring an acceptable level of this subsystem of safety for Poland and active participation in the implementation of allied tasks in maritime areas.

The research process conducted is reflected in the following parts of the dissertation: introduction, four chapters, which allowed to illustrate the subsequent stages of reasoning

leading to the identification of cause-effect connections between the examined phenomena, and the conclusion. The dissertation was also enriched with appendices, which include an interview questionnaire, a list of secondary schools planned to carry out a survey of maritime education and sample scenarios of lessons concerning national maritime safety.

The introduction justifies the choice of topic, defines basic notions, subject, aim and research problem as well as basic research methods and techniques. At the same time, the structure of the dissertation and the research schedule were defined.

The first chapter was of definitional and diagnostic character. In the introduction to the chapter, key terms characteristic for the discussion were defined, including above all the maritime safety of the state and the key, from the research point of view, division into issues covered by the terms maritime safety and national maritime safety.

The first subchapter focuses on presenting the environment, i.e. the conditions of the maritime security system of the state, both those of an external and independent character, relating to geography and geopolitics, and those of an internal character, depending on the decisions and actions taken by the decision-makers. The latter category was divided into military, economic, order (police) and social factors. The conducted analysis allowed to show the present state of the national maritime safety system, including the diagnosis of the potential of forces and means available for this system, which are at the disposal of the Polish Maritime Forces.

The next subchapter was devoted to tracing the legal order currently in force in Poland, including first of all the cycle of strategic and military planning, as well as to presenting the level of presenting the issues in the discussed documents in the scope of national maritime security.

The last part of the chapter set the conducted research in a historical context, referring to the history of the navy in our country from the first initiatives in this field through the period of the Second Republic of Poland and the Polish People's Republic.

The second chapter of the dissertation presents in its entirety an analysis of threats, the occurrence of which may have an impact on the possible implementation of the recommendations contained in *The Strategic Concept of Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland*. Following the division adopted earlier, these threats were divided into those relating to the legal, political, military and social areas. The considerations concerning the legal character of the SKBM of the Republic of Poland and its location in the strategic planning cycle, which have a determining influence on the impossibility of implementing its assumptions, should be regarded as crucial in this part of the thesis. It also seems important to analyse the level of the

so-called maritime awareness of the society, which does not support the pursuit of an active maritime policy by the state. The basic research was conducted in the form of expert interviews, addressed to specialists in state security (national security) or strictly state maritime security.

The third chapter enabled the verification of the next detailed part of the working hypothesis, according to which the possession by a country or an international entity of an official strategic document in the field of maritime safety of the state (international organisation) significantly facilitates the conduct of effective maritime policy and promotes the realisation of maritime interests of the given entity. The selection of examples of countries assumed, on the one hand, their diversity - from the Baltic States to Australia, but also the possibility of making at least a limited comparison with the situation of Poland. Hence, for example, the omission of discussion of strategic documents of world powers.

The last part of the third chapter focused on the assumptions of the maritime strategic documents developed by international organisations and the mechanisms that condition their implementation. As in the remaining chapters, the applied techniques and thought processes focused especially on comparative mechanisms, giving the possibility to show analogies and parallels or to define areas that differentiate Poland's situation in relation to selected countries or international entities.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation presents the conceptual part, which presents a solution to the last three specific problems defined at the beginning of the dissertation. It identifies desirable changes in the strategic planning cycle, allowing for the inclusion in its course and scope of elements relating to the maritime safety of the state. At the same time, mechanisms were proposed which would make it possible to obtain social support for the suggested solutions, including the use of procedures in the field of strategic communication. Significant conclusions of the chapter referred to the development of the target model of the Polish Navy, adequate to national needs and conditions.

The final part of the chapter pointed to actions at the level of politics, the armed forces themselves and mechanisms of a social nature, which would allow greater use of the coastal location of the country for the benefit of its security and development.

The conclusion of the dissertation summed up the research process conducted, indicated the extent to which the working hypothesis was verified, presented the problems and research difficulties encountered, outlined alternative solutions to the formulated research problems and presented suggestions as to the practical application of the dissertation's achievements and proposals for the development of scientific research initiated on the occasion of this dissertation.

The research carried out over a period of about three years made it possible to comprehensively and multifacetedly address the complex phenomenon of national maritime security and Poland's implementation of its national maritime interests. The diagnosis, analyses and comparisons made it possible to draw conclusions, which indicate that the country has not reached an appropriate level of advancement of its maritime policy that would allow for appropriate use of its coastal location. Indicated in Spatial limitations limited the research to the area of Poland, the territories of countries and international organisations whose maritime strategies were discussed, as well as partly to the basins where maritime interests considered crucial for our country are realised.

The research carried out over a period of about three years made it possible to comprehensively and multifacetedly address the complex phenomenon of national maritime security and Poland's implementation of its national maritime interests. The diagnosis, analyses and comparisons made it possible to draw conclusions, which indicate that the country has not reached an appropriate level of advancement of its maritime policy that would allow for appropriate use of its coastal location. Recommendations included in *The Strategic Concept of Maritime Safety of the Republic of Poland*, aimed at setting directions for necessary changes, collided with various difficulties and limitations, which to a large extent prevented their implementation.

In the light of the evidence presented, it appears that a fundamental mistake in the attempts to build a Maritime Poland is the lack of a strategic vision for the development of this subsystem of security, formulated into a single coherent strategic document correlated with the whole cycle of national planning.