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**COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMATION
AND MEDIA DEPARTMENTS OF THE POLISH ARMY
AND THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE IN 2014 – 2022**

Abstract. *The purpose of the article is to do a comparative analysis of the objectives, organizational and staff structure, individual aspects of information and media departments activities and public relations units of the Polish Army and the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism and scientificity, the author's objectivity, as well as the use of general scientific methods and special historical methods, primarily historical-comparative, historical-systemic, historical-typological methods. The scientific novelty consists in the following: for the first time the activity and organizational staff structure of the information and media departments of the Polish Army in 2014 – 2022 have been analyzed and a comparative analysis with the Armed Forces of Ukraine has been carried out. The Conclusion. Poland is a strategic partner of Ukraine, a member of NATO and the European Union, but until 1991, Poland was one of the countries participating in the Warsaw Pact on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. This fact gives grounds for asserting that the training system and*

forms and methods of operation of the military mass media of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (during the first years of independence) and the Polish Army had many common features. In the article there has been determined that the information departments of the Polish Army and the Armed Forces of Ukraine have a lot in common, in fact, as well as the army structure itself. The hybrid war started by the Russian Federation prompted not only Ukraine, but also Poland to strengthen the information front. The affinity of the two systems of informing the population to support the army was tested in the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade. It is important that after 2014, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, when forming a new communication system, generally focused on Poland, the country that is mentally close, which allows active communication with its own population. In its turn, Poland also uses the experience of Ukraine gained in the war actively and tries to make the necessary changes quickly.

Key words: Press services, public relations, media, the Polish Army, the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

ПОРІВНЯЛЬНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ІНФОРМАЦІЙНО-МЕДІЙНИХ СТРУКТУР ВІЙСЬКА ПОЛЬСЬКОГО ТА ЗБРОЙНИХ СИЛ УКРАЇНИ У 2014 – 2022 рр.

Анотація. Метою статті є порівняльний аналіз завдань, організаційно-штатної структури, окремих аспектів діяльності інформаційно-медійних структур та підрозділів зі зв'язків із громадськістю Війська Польського та Збройних Сил України. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму та науковості, авторської об'єктивності а також на використанні загальнонаукових методів і спеціально-історичних методів, насамперед історико-порівняльного, історико-системного, історико-типологічного. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше досліджено діяльність та організаційно-штатну структуру інформаційно-медійних структур Війська Польського у 2014 – 2022 рр. та проведено порівняльний аналіз зі Збройними Силами України. **Висновки.** Польща – стратегічний партнер України, країна-член НАТО та Європейського Союзу, але до 1991 р. вона була однією із країн-учасниць Варшавського договору. Це дає підстави стверджувати, що система підготовки та форми і методи діяльності військових засобів масової інформації ЗС України (у перші роки Незалежності) та Війська Польського мали багато спільних рис. Інформаційні структури Війська Польського і Збройних Сил України мають багато спільного, власне, як і сама армійська структура. Гібридна війна, яку розпочала Російська Федерація спонукала до посилення інформаційного фронту не лише Україну, а й Польщу. Спорідненість двох систем інформування населення задля підтримки армії пройшла апробацію у спільній Литовсько-польсько-українській бригаді. Важливо, що після 2014 р. Збройні Сили України при формуванні нової системи комунікації загалом орієнтувалася саме на Польщу, країну, яка близька ментально, що дає підставу активно комунікувати з власним населенням. Зі свого боку, Польща також активно використовує досвід України, здобутий у війні, і намагається оперативно вносити необхідні зміни.

Ключові слова. Прес-служби, зв'язки з громадськістю, ЗМІ, медіа, Військо Польське, Збройні Сили України.

The Problem Statement. Against the background of the full-scale war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine at the end of February of 2022, the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda signed a new law –“On the Defense of Fatherland”, which provides for an increase in the number of the Polish Army to 300 thousand people, of whom 50 thousand people – in the territorial defense forces. At the same time, it was also announced the army modernization and a significant increase in defense spending, which, according to the plan, would grow every year (Duda, 2022). The measures listed above provide for the formation of a positive informational background regarding popularization of military service and support of patriotic sentiments among population.

Poland is a strategic partner of Ukraine, a member of NATO and the European Union, but until July 1, 1991, Poland was one of the countries participating in the Warsaw Pact on

Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (1955). This fact gives grounds for asserting that the training system and forms and methods of operation of the military mass media of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (during the first years of independence) and the Polish Army had many common features. After joining the North Atlantic Alliance (1999), the activities of the information and media structures of the Polish Army are regulated by NATO standards, which provide for the existence of an effective system of informing a democratic society about the state of the armed forces.

Currently, the process of transition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards continues, despite the fact that the country is at war. Information and media structures of the Ukrainian army are being modernized according to modern requirements. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive study of the system of informing the population about the activities of the Polish Army during the period of aggravation of the military and political situation in the world and the expediency and effectiveness of applying acquired experience in matters of public relations and information in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in particular, during a full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against our state.

The Analysis of Research Papers and Publications. It should be noted that the issues of information and media departments of the Armed Forces of Ukraine have not yet become the subject of research by domestic researchers of the national army. The peculiarities of mass media functioning of the Polish Army in the context of countering the informational aggression of the Russian Federation have not been analyzed by scholars either.

At the same time, certain issues of ensuring the information security of Ukraine are considered in the scientific research of O. Gapeyeva (Gapeyeva, 2017, pp. 31–39). The information reasons and information support of the hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine are analyzed in the study of N. Karpchuk and B. Yuskiv (Karpchuk & Yuskiv, 2022, pp. 71–85). A comparative analysis of the information and media activity of organizational structures of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Polish Army is conducted for the first time.

The purpose of the article is to compare the objectives, organizational and staff structure, individual aspects of the activities of information and media departments and public relations units of the Polish Army and the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The Basic Material Statement. The hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation for eight years, occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine, barbaric destruction of cities and villages, murders and terror of the local population prompted the leaders of many European countries to reconsider their attitude to national security problems radically, and, accordingly, increase the financing of defense sector, combat and armies capabilities. Russia, by any means, tries to undermine the position of NATO and the European Union member states regarding aid to Ukraine, discredits its higher military and political leadership, increases a negative informational influence by creating a picture of victory and economic growth, and uses outright economic and informational blackmail.

It should be understood that in 2000, after the election of the Russian President Volodymyr Putin, the largest Russian media organizations are either directly controlled by the state or owned by Putin's supporters. Many major Russian media act as mouthpieces for the Russian government (Roman, 2017). These official media are actively involved in hybrid wars.

In this context, the information and media structures, the public relations service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine play an important role in mobilizing the Ukrainian society to protect Motherland, bringing up patriotism in the Ukrainian soldiers, and informing the population about the course of events on the front line timely.

The object of the research is the experience of information and media departments of the Polish Army. It was the Republic of Poland that accepted one of the biggest challenges of the migration crisis in 2021, which was provoked by Russia, and in 2022 the Republic of Poland gave shelter to millions of refugees from Ukraine and at the same time it helps in solving humanitarian and military issues actively.

If we consider the migration crisis artificially created by the Russians in 2021 – 2022 in order to exacerbate the socio-economic situation in Europe, then “... this is part of a hybrid war, and this operation, which was developed and implemented by the Kremlin, was aimed at destroying the borders of the eastern flank of NATO”, – says the director of the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies, Doctor of political sciences, Professor of KNU, an international conflict expert Hryhoriy Perepelytsia (Perepylytsya, 2021).

Hybrid threats posed by the Russian Federation have a malicious intention to manipulate political decision-making processes of the target nation by influencing behaviour and attitudes of key audiences such as media organizations, general public, and political leaders (Karpchuk & Yuskiv, 2022)

Therefore, the Polish Army must be in a constant combat readiness and timely detect and respond to elements of the hybrid war, which the Russian Federation continues. To this should be added the existence of the Suwalki corridor (isthmus), which has geopolitical significance and simultaneously connects the territory of the Baltic countries with Poland and other NATO countries, and also separates the territory from the Russian Kaliningrad region and Belarus (Berezhnyy, 2022)

First of all, in order to understand organizational and staff structure of the information and media units of the Polish Army, let's find out its general structure.

In the article “Army of Poland: the Number and Military Expenses Increase Significantly...” Serhiy Polishchuk, the author provides the following information:

Table 1

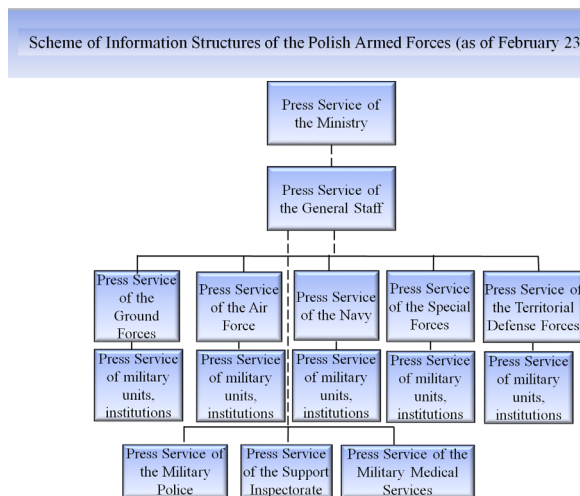
Composition and Number of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland (Polishchuk, 2020)

Composition and Strength of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland				
Ground Forces	Air Force	NAVI	Special Forces	Territorial Defense Forces
68 000	25 000	8 000	3 000	20 000
TOTAL = 118 000				

As we can see in Table 1, as of June 2020, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland consisted of the Ground Forces, the Air Force, the Navy, the Special Forces and the Territorial Defense Forces. The total number of troops was 118,000 and more than 75,000 in reserve. According to the GlobalFirepower resource, Poland ranks the 24th place in the ranking of the world's armies (Ranking of the armies of the world, 2022). Since on March 18, 2022, the President of Poland Andrzej Duda signed the law on increasing the number of troops, which

was discussed above, we can foresee changes in the structure of information and media structures. That is why, in our study we analyze their activities until March of 2022.

According to the above organizational structure of the Polish Army and the decision of the Minister of National Defense No. 47 of March 26, 2019 “On Principles of Information Policy Implementation and Functioning of Communications Service in the Ministry of National Defense”, the schematic structure of the information structures of the Polish Army looks as follows:



Scheme 1. Scheme of Information Structures of the Polish Army

At the same time, it should be taken into account that immediately after the collapse of the socialist camp, the Republic of Poland resumed its democratic path. The main ideology of the state is its openness to society. Therefore, the main goal of the information policy of the Ministry of National Defense is to meet the needs of society to obtain reliable information for the support of society and recognition of the goals and activities carried out by the Ministry (Rishennya № 47 ministra natsional'noyi oborony, 2019)

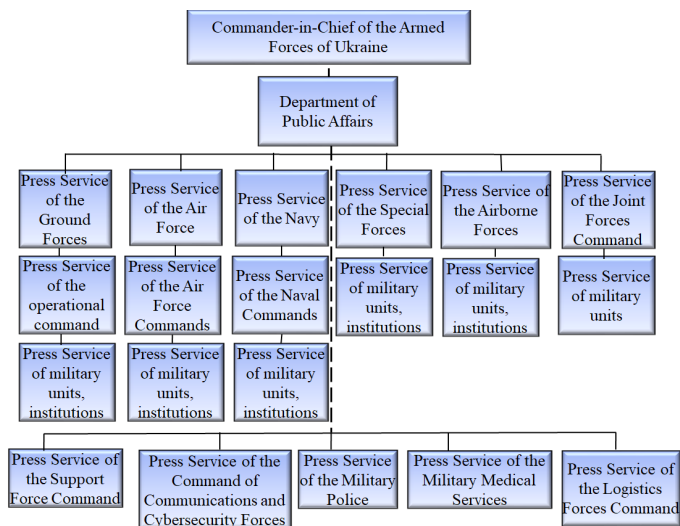
In general, the Polish Army formed an effective system that organically combines measures to inform both the population and entire personnel of the army. Its elements function both in individual units and in the Ministry.

For effective implementation of the information policy of the state, public relations service of the Ministry of National Defense was created. It is the representatives of the service who determine the main objectives and methods of informing the population about certain events.

For example, the public relations department:

- the public relations service of the Ministry of National Defense;
- the public relations service at the General Staff of the Polish Army;
- the public relations service in organizational units of the Armed Forces;
- the public relations service of Polish military contingents / Polish military units and branches or units performing duties outside the country.

Comparing the above mentioned structure of the public relations service of the Polish Army with a similar structure in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, we see their almost complete identity. An interesting fact is the almost simultaneous creation of these systems (Senyk, 2021).



(Senyk, 2021)

As it can be seen, the difference consists in the number of organizational department of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Polish Army only. There is no doubt that this factor is very positive for further international military cooperation between the two military departments of Ukraine and Poland.

There should be noted a certain affinity between the information and media systems of the Polish Army, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Armed Forces of Lithuania. It is in the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade named after the Great Hetman Kostiantyn Ostrozhsy that there is a press service, and officers of the three countries carry out the duty of informing the public about the brigade's activities jointly.

However, in the Polish Army, public relations units are not provided for in all military units and institutions: in those units where there are no full-time public relations positions, it is possible to create a freelance public relations service to perform duties in the field of information policy. Their activities are coordinated by the full-time press secretary of a higher organizational unit.

There is also a similar practice in Ukraine concerning this issue. According to the authors, a certain decentralization is a positive fact – a commander of a military unit or institution makes a decision concerning performance of freelance duties by his written order. Accordingly, a commander controls and determines the duty of informing population about activities of a unit. The mentioned practice showed its effectiveness and efficiency during the hostilities with the Russian invaders.

It should be noted that the public relations service of the Polish Army tries to maintain high standards in informing its society. Therefore, there are officially approved requirements for candidates for the positions of press officers. Therefore, they must meet the following requirements:

- 1) to have inclination in interpersonal communication;
- 2) ability to express oneself easily and up to the point in oral and written form in the Polish language;

3) experience or knowledge in the field of public relations or journalism and the ability to communicate on the Internet;

4) knowledge of the English language;

5) education in the field of public relations and contacts with mass media” (Rishennya № 47 ministra natsional'noyi oborony, 2019).

Candidates for brigadier-level public relations positions are referred for an interview conducted by a commission appointed by the Ministry's public relations chief in consultation with an appropriate commander. Based on the results of an interview, a conclusion on a candidate is prepared along with a recommendation in the part about his appointment to the position.

The positions and staffing of public relations units, branches or units carrying out duties outside the country are related to the nature of its tasks and needs and are agreed with the head of the public relations service of the Ministry where at least one full-time position is approved or freelance press secretary. In the future, these officials are considered responsible for covering activity of a unit, cooperation with representatives of mass media.

Military units and institutions have their own websites and social media pages. Officials of the press service of a unit are responsible for filling them in and bear full responsibility for their content. According to his duties, the head of the public relations service of the Ministry of National Defense supervises all websites and pages in social networks of structural units and has the right to interfere in their content (Rishennya № 47 ministra natsional'noyi oborony, 2019)

For the Russian Federation, with the spread of the public Internet, social media – online discourse become an important space for creation and distribution of fake messages, turning ordinary citizens into propaganda machines capable of spreading misinformation, paranoia and hatred. Thus, after the Arab Spring, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict can be considered as an important moment in how the Internet is used during conflicts (Mejias & Vokuev, 2017).

Therefore, an important part of the press services work is monitoring information related to activities of military units and timely response to it. It is interesting that according to orders, heads of organizational units of the Ministry operating abroad, as well as defense attachés in diplomatic missions of the Republic of Poland, must inform the head of public relations service of the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Poland about media coverage of information, which concerns the Polish Army immediately.

It should be emphasized that a different unit performs a similar function in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. For example, in 2018 – 2020, information space monitoring and countermeasure groups functioned in army brigades of operational commands and regional military commissariats. Their main objective was to identify negative and fake informational messages and counteract negative informational influence on personnel and population in the area of responsibility, conducting communication campaigns to attract maximum support of population in the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. These units were subordinated to information warfare departments in operational commands and the information warfare department of the Ground Forces Command. In 2020, the work of these divisions was reformatted. Instead, centres were established that perform their functions.

It should be noted that the information unit of the Polish army is represented not only by press services. They also include military mass media. For example, regarding the military press, the official one is “Polska Zbrojna”, which operates on the basis of the Military Publishing Institute (Viyskovo-vydavnychiy instytut, 2022), and also publishes more specialized materials such as Armed Forces Review (Polska Zbroja, 2022).

At the end of 2018, in Ukraine, the editorial offices of the military mass media were reduced in order to comply with the requirements of the Law of Ukraine “On Reforming State and Communal Printed Media”. However, the leadership of the Armed Forces managed to preserve personnel potential of military journalists and create the Information Agency “ArmiyaInfo”, which operates as an information site (ArmyInform, 2020)

Also, on Polish television there is a programme “Nasza Armia”, which is part of state (public) television, therefore it is actually an element of the press service of the Ministry of National Defense (Nasha Armia, 2021)

In the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the structural unit “Central Television and Radio Studio of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine” fully functions and operates, which produces various television programmes, has its own radio station “ArmiyaFM” and distributes video stories (video content) for civilian mass media (ArmyInform, 2020)

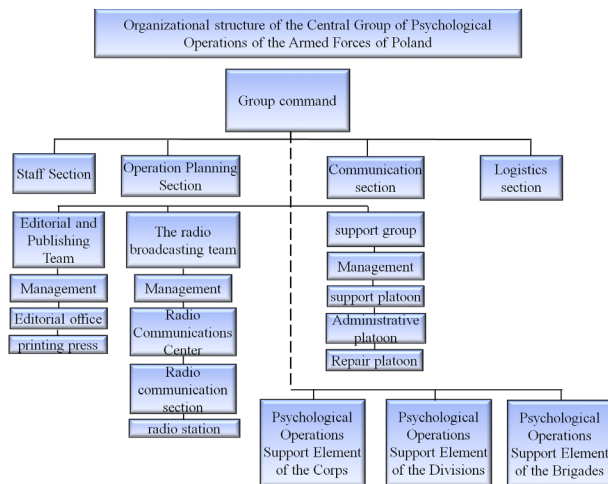
An interesting tool is used to highlight the activities of the Polish Army – a digital photo-video album. The objective of this official unit called “Zoom” is to cover the activities of the army, its advertising, using at the same time unique photo and video content from various trainings exercises, missions and everyday activities (Zoom, 2021)

There is no analogue of such unit in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

An important component of the information department of the Polish Army are information and psychological operations. An interesting feature of this military body is that it reports directly to the Ministry of National Defense.

In other NATO member countries, units of information and psychological operations are part of the Special Operations Forces. In Poland, this unit is represented by the Central Group of Psychological Operations – Central Psychological Operations Centre, located in Bydgoszcz. This Centre includes management, an editorial and publishing team, a radio broadcasting team and a support group, psychological operations support units as part of corps, divisions and brigades (Mariner, 2021).

Schematically, it is illustrated below:



Scheme 3. Organizational Structure of the Central Group of Psychological Operations of the Polish Army

There are also such Centers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but they are structurally subordinated to the Special Operations Forces. The functions and objectives are the same as those of the Polish Army.

The Conclusion. A comparative analysis of the information and media structures of the Polish Army and the Armed Forces of Ukraine gives grounds for asserting that they have many common objectives and similar organizational and staff structures. The effectiveness of the public information system for the support of the armed forces was tested on the example of the press service of the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade.

When forming the newest system of communication with the population in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the experience of the Polish Army was taken into account. Instead, Poland also uses the experience of Ukraine actively, gained in the Russian-Ukrainian war, and promptly makes adjustments to the activities of its own information and media structures effectively.

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