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THIRD WORLD WAR IN THE PLANS OF THE POLISH EMIGRATION IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1945–1956

The end of the war in May 1945, the culmination of the Poles' hopes and expectations of an independent sovereign democratic country, disappointed millions of them. The fact that despite the extremely heavy death toll, the ideals for which the war had been waged were not realised called in question the sense of all past and future activities. In spite of the difficult or even tragic situation, a part of Polish society and of the political élites in Poland and in exile was firmly against the system imposed upon their country¹. They accepted neither the communist regime nor its ideological values. They overruled *a priori* any compromise with the architects of the new reality, rejecting co-operation and denying its sense. It was the advocates of this stance who believed that an armed conflict between the Western Allies and the USSR might change the *status quo*. These irreconcilables, as they are often called in literature, were recruited mainly from the circles ideologically linked to the Underground State and the Polish Government in London; they believed that Poland's tragedy was a result of the international configuration and that only a new international configuration could change the situation. Not believing in peace and co-operation between the Allies, they assumed that sooner or later a military confrontation (a third world war) would break out between the Great Powers. The vision of an armed conflict was also nourished by other persons ill-disposed towards the communist regime in Poland. One cannot but agree with K. Kersten's statement that "Even the greatest dreamer could not expect that the Poles themselves would manage to gain

¹ See K. Kersten, *Polacy wobec rzeczywistości 1945–1947. Tezy pod rozwagę* (*The Poles' Attitude to the Reality 1945–1947. Points for Consideration*), "Res Publica" № 2, 1990.

genuine independence; the only hope was a conflict between the former allies"². This statement partly explains the logical base of this attitude. It explains why it found supporters among the Polish authorities in exile and among various groups of Polish society.

The concept of a third world war has not yet been exhaustively discussed in scholarly literature. Dozens of brief information items on expectations of an armed conflict between the World War II allies can be found in Polish historiography, in essays concerning Polish questions, in diaries and articles. A few studies have dealt with this subject in a fragmentary way, focusing attention on the publicistic or propaganda aspects of the activity of the political opposition, the armed underground and emigration. But they have only stated that such a vision did exist.

The only shy attempt to signal this research problem was made by Zygmunt Woźniczka in the article *The Third World War in the Concept of the Polish Emigration and the Polish Underground in 1945–1947*³. The author's narration concerning the emigration is based mainly on documents presenting the general views and opinion of politicians, frequently expressed in the form of laconic statements. Another two publications have dealt with this question, but apart from attractive titles, they contain no substantive information⁴. It is worth mentioning that expectations of a third world war found their reflection in literature, as is exemplified by Anatol Krakowiecki's play⁵.

This is all that has been published on this subject. In this situation the archival materials in the Polish Institute and the General Sikorski Museum in London (IPMS) were the fundamental source of my studies. I thoroughly examined the Set of the Supreme Military Authorities and some personal documents, among them those of Ambassador Jan Ciechanowski, Tadeusz

² *Ibidem*, p. 53.

³ Z. Woźniczka, *III wojna światowa w koncepcjach emigracji i polskiego podziemia w latach 1945–47 (Third World War in the Concepts of the Polish Emigration and the Polish Underground in 1945–47)*, "Wiadomości Historyczne" № 3, 1992.

⁴ M. Utnik, *Obrona utopijnych planów. Pokój czy III wojna światowa. Pomieszanie pojęć w mowie Polaków (Defence of Utopian Plans. Peace or a Third World War. Confusion of Ideas in the Poles' Language)*, "Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny" (henceforward referred to as "WPH") № 1, 1986, p. 144; Z. Czarniecki, *Polska Wojna w trzeciej światowej (The Polish War in a Third World War)*, Londyn 1950.

⁵ A. Krakowiecki, *Dom pachnie staniem (The House Smells of Hay)*, Londyn 1948.

Bór-Komorowski and Michał Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski. I also selectively analysed the Set of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to obtain a full picture of the subject, it is necessary to examine the documents of the Chancellery of the President of the Polish Republic, the Polish Government-in-Exile, various ministries and the materials gathered in the Archives of Studies on Underground Poland in London. It is to be hoped that General Władysław Anders's collection will be set in order and opened to researchers before long for it is a basic source of information.

Polish officers and politicians tried to make the Allies interested in the prospect of a third world war. It is therefore necessary to research the documents of the Foreign Office (Northern Department and documents of the intelligence service) in the Public Record Office in London, as well as the materials of the USA State Department, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Eastern Europe Section), the archives of the North Atlantic Pact and Polish archives. As regards Polish archives, special attention should be paid to the Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Central Military Archives and also source materials in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I do not claim to have exhausted the subject indicated by the title. My aim is rather to attract attention to the essence of the problem and to some questions connected with it. In trying to depict the existing state of research and define its needs, I necessarily had to focus attention on the information gathered in my research. If the subject is to be presented comprehensively, many questions have to be answered. The following are the most important ones: When exactly did the idea of linking the Polish question with the possibility of an armed conflict arise? Did it originate among the military or politicians, and how did it develop? What factors gave rise to the idea and did the concept spring from emotion or from a rational perception of reality? What was the attitude of the Polish authorities in exile, political parties, politicians and the military to the expectations of a third world war? What preparations were made for a possible armed conflict, what roles were assigned and to whom? And finally, a no less important question: how was this idea transferred to Poland and what role did the emigration play in this? Many more questions could, of course, be asked; replies to some of them will probably give birth to new questions and outline new areas of research.

I will start my article with July 1945, when the Western Powers withdrew recognition from the Polish Government-in-Exile. But for genetic reasons, my analysis of some problems will go back to an earlier period. The story will go up to 1956. Two essential arguments favour the choice of this date. First, the détente which seemed to appear in international relations, and secondly, the events which took place in Poland. Moreover, selective research has shown that belief in the outbreak of a third world war, though it still existed, was later based mainly on emotional factors, and the activities undertaken in this connection were of a strictly instrumental character.

A presentation of the emigration's concept of a third world war must begin with its genesis. Zygmunt Woźniczka says in the article quoted above that the idea of a third world war was mentioned for the first time during the disputes over the Sikorski-Maysky agreement signed on July 30, 1941⁶. In order to back his assertion that the idea originated so early, the author quotes Adam Doboszyński's article of 1943 and cites statements made by politicians in the second half of 1944. He then describes what the idea consisted in 1945. Woźniczka's arguments are not very convincing and his assertion that a third world war was anticipated already in 1941 or 1943 is greatly exaggerated. There are no rational reasons for such sweeping conclusions. All the more so as no international decisions concerning Poland had been taken by that time and the politicians' enigmatic statements and emotional reactions as well as the bad Polish-Soviet relations do not warrant such conclusions.

I think that the idea was born in 1944. This is testified to by the development of the situation in the international arena and in the Polish territories, and is also confirmed by information in archival documents, which reflect the anxiety of the Polish community abroad. The *Information Report* prepared by the Defensive Intelligence Department in September 1944 speaks of general despondency and in many cases of a complete disorientation and disbelief that the result of the war would be favourable for the Polish nation⁷. In addition to this general information, the report

⁶ Z. Woźniczka, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁷ *Instytut Polski i Muzeum gen. Władysława Sikorskiego (Polish Institute and Gen. Władysław Sikorski Museum (henceforward referred to as IPMS), call number A. XII. 1/49 e-f, Information Report N° 49 for September 1944.*

contains more unequivocal formulations: "The soldier understands that politics is no concern of his; he wants to know, and he thinks that he should and must know, what kind of Poland he is fighting for, for he is expected to pay the highest price, the price of blood ... are we fighting for Poland, for the Allies' interest or for great Russia?"⁸

In view of the international situation and the emigration's internal situation⁹, the state authorities began timidly to anticipate possible scenarios¹⁰, but as Eugeniusz Duraczyński has written, in the second half of 1944 the dispute was over methods, "whether to take facts and the real balance of power into account and try to make use of even the smallest chance for the Poles' good or reject compromises which jeopardise the interest of the Polish Republic, and oppose force by moral arguments"¹¹. As the situation developed, this dilemma led to the consolidation of two attitudes. One was represented by Miłkołajczyk, who favoured compromise, the other by the Arciszewski government and the military. It was the supporters of the latter option who began to claim that a third world war would make it possible to get out of the situation.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ In 1944 and 1945 extreme leftwing Polish organisations, e.g. the Polish Progressive Union and the Polish Association, launched intensive activities in Great Britain and other countries. For more details see *IPMS*, call number A. XII. 1/50-A, Information Notes. A destructive activity was also conducted by other organisations; e.g. in February 1943 a Polish Section was set up in the Communist Party of Palestine, and in March 1944 the Central Board of Polish Patriots was established in the Middle East with its seat in Tel-Aviv, call number A. XII. 1/101, Letter of the Commander-in-Chief's Office to the President of the Polish Republic of 10.3.1944.

¹⁰ *IPMS*, call number A. XII. 3/101, the Polish President's decree amending the decree on the organisation of the Supreme Military Authorities of 29.9.1944; also call number A. XII. 3/100, Report of the Commission charged with the carrying out of the Ministry of National Defence's current tasks of 30.3.1945. See also the third variant of 16.4.1945. One of the adopted scenarios anticipated that the Ministry of National Defence would not be able to administer the Armed Forces after the conclusion of the war. This is why endeavours were made at that time to settle the Ministry's position in the future structures and legalise, from the Polish point of view, the existence and activity of the Polish Armed Forces, should the peace decisions be unfavourable for Poland. The army was to be an "armed argument" for a successful settlement of the Polish question.

¹¹ E. Duraczyński, *Rząd polski na uchodźstwie 1939–1945. Organizacja. Personalalia. Polityka (The Polish Government-in-Exile 1939–1945. Its Organisation. Personal Data. Politics)*, Warszawa 1993, p. 412.

Political and military events favoured this option. As the international balance of power aggravated Poland's situation (the Yalta agreements), the group of supporters of a third world war increased. They believed that only a war would give Poland the longed-for freedom and independence. They regarded this solution as rational, but neither in the second half of 1944 nor in 1945 did they undertake any analytical or programmatic activity, apart from enigmatic statements and declarations. Nevertheless, words, in particular those said by authoritative persons, evoked echoes. One of such persons was General Władysław Anders, the acting commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces in exile. On March 18, 1945, in a speech to the soldiers of the Second Corps, he said: "... And although we may yet have a hard time, I deeply believe that we shall have the Poland we are fighting for and that nobody will be able to take her away from us. Long live such Poland ... We will return to our country with arms in hand under Polish banners"¹². Anders spoke in a similar tone at a briefing of officers of the General Staff. Let us quote a few significant sentences: "There will be no peace in the world without the Poland which we have deep in our hearts. The current war is a world war. Every world war has always been, and will be, full of surprises. Whether we want it or not, surprises will occur... We are fighting, let me repeat, because the fight for Poland is not yet over, and as long as we have the possibility of fighting as a Polish Army, as the Armed Forces of the Polish Nation, for the ideals for which tens of thousands of our best comrades have given their lives, we will undoubtedly have the will and fortitude to continue the struggle"¹³. Although the word "struggle" had no qualifying adjective or time connotation, its interpretation could vary. Similar formulations and suggestions began to appear in the emigré and foreign press¹⁴, imparting sense to these views and fanning up emotions.

¹² *Polska będzie taka o jaką walczyliśmy (We Shall Have the Poland We Are Fighting for)*, "Orzeł Biały" № 12 of 25.3.1945, p. 1.

¹³ *IPMS*, call number A. XII. 1/27, speech by Gen. W. Anders, acting commander-in-chief, at a briefing of officers of the General Staff.

¹⁴ For more details see the weekly "Orzeł Biały". For instance, it is said in the article *Polska będzie taka o jaką walczyliśmy (We Shall Have the Poland We Are Fighting for)* № 12, 25.3.1945: "... The Polish soldier knows only one way of returning to his homeland: with arms in hand in order to drive the occupiers out of his country and restore freedom to the nation".

Those who refused to view the future through the prism of a new armed conflict presented their opinions in an unequivocal way. This was done, for instance, by Colonel Leon Mitkiewicz, the General Staff's liaison officer with the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff. In the conclusion to the report which he sent from Washington to General Kopański on March 8, 1945, he said: "1. Calculations for an early change in the balance of power and for an early armed conflict between the West and Soviet Russia are deceptive. As in 1918, or rather in 1815, the new balance of power and political system will not be durable, but will be in force for a long time"¹⁵.

Information of a similar kind can be found in a document signed by Lieut. Colonel Leon Bortnowski, an officer of the Information–Intelligence Department of the Commander-in-Chief¹⁶. The document, dated April 23, 1945, contains replies to five questions asked by an attaché of Polish armed forces. Very interesting is the first question: Are the Anglo–Saxons preparing themselves seriously for a war against the Soviets or are they avoiding conflicts with the Russians? After a brief but substantive analysis of the main sources of the war vision and of its political and military aspects, a concrete reply was given. It is stated in the document: "We do not see any Anglo–Saxon preparations for a war against the Soviets; on the contrary, all possible endeavours are being made to avoid conflicts with the Russians which could now or later lead to a break of the coalition... What is implied in the question, in our view, is the possibility of the Anglo–Saxons launching an early preventive war against the USSR; we categorically reply to the question in the negative. While cautiously not rejecting this hypothesis, we think it is most unlikely... While categorically rejecting any initiative on the part of the Anglo–Saxons, we cannot say anything equally categorical about the possibility of the USSR launching an aggressive action against the Anglo–Saxons, if only because the decisions in Russia are in fact taken by one man"¹⁷.

¹⁵ L. Mitkiewicz, *W najwyższym sztabie zachodnich aliantów 1943–1945 (In the Western Allies' Highest Staff 1943–1945)*, Londyn 1971, pp. 260–261.

¹⁶ IPMS, call number A. XII. 24/57, Draft reply of the Information–Intelligence Department to the questions asked by a Polish military attaché.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

At the beginning of 1945, the outcome of the war was not yet politically and militarily settled, but in May, after the capitulation of the Third Reich, only the political aspect remained. The conclusion of hostilities, the withdrawal of recognition from the Polish Government-in-Exile and next the Potsdam Conference shaped the post-war reality. The situation could develop only in two directions: it could take a peaceful direction, that is, lead to the Great Powers' co-operation within the United Nations, or it could lead to an armed conflict between the former allies. Whereas the first variant was of a static character and did not imply political changes, the second could only lead to the defeat of one of the parties and consequently, to a change in the *status quo*.

Millions of Poles, the Polish political and military élites, found it difficult to accept the facts created in 1945, all the more so as Poland was the only member of the anti-Nazi coalition to experience the irony of fate; she was a victorious state but also a defeated one in the political sense of the word. The loss of the Second Republic's eastern territories, the loss of their homeland by millions of Poles, the limitation of the state's sovereignty and the imposition of the communist system were the bitter fruits of a problematic victory. This gave rise to the idea of a struggle for a free, sovereign and democratic Poland. The objectives of this struggle were presented the most fully in Poland by the National Unity Council in the *Appeal to the Polish Nation* and the annexed *Testament of Fighting Poland*. These last two programmatic documents of Underground Poland specified the aims and tasks of Poland's independence-directed policy. Politicians and the military tried to implement them in various ways and with the use of various methods¹⁸. Their activities were of a dichotomous character. There was an open and a conspiratorial political opposition as well as an armed underground. The existence of the latter confirms that some executors of the testament supported the idea of an armed struggle. There was no lack of advocates of a third world war among various organisations and also among a part of Polish society¹⁹.

¹⁸ K. Kersten, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ See: K. Kersten, *Między wyzwoleniem a zniewoleniem. Polska 1944–1956 (Between Liberation and Subjugation. Poland 1944–1956)*, Londyn 1993; R. Terlecki, *Dyktatura zdrady. Polska w 1947 roku (The Dictatorship of Treason. Poland in 1947)*, Kraków 1991; S. Kluz, *W potrzasku dziejowym. WiN na szlaku AK. Rozważania i dokumentacja (Trapped by History. WiN (Freedom and Independence) Following the Home Army's Track. Reflections and Documentation)*, Londyn

The emigration's attitude to the post-war reality was similar. The difference was that it was London that was the seat of the Polish state's constitutional authorities. Their attitude was the result not only of current politics but, first and foremost, of legalism and the continuity of the state, that is, the role set them by the constitution. This was unequivocally expressed by the President of the Polish Republic, Władysław Raczkiewicz, in his *Proclamation to the Polish Nation* issued on June 29, 1945²⁰ and by Ambassador Edward Raczyński in a protest note to His Majesty's Government of July 6, 1945²¹. An analogous attitude, though sharper in tone, was presented by the Polish ambassador in Washington, Jan Ciechanowski. In his statement of July 7, Ciechanowski asked the following questions: "How to explain it to the indomitable fighters for freedom and democracy that after the united nations' victory, the principles in defence of which they had fought will not apply to them? How can it be explained to the Polish Nation that its country can be shifted eastwards or westwards like a house on wheels, depending on the imperialist needs of one of its powerful neighbours and in defiance of the principles for which this nation fought with such great devotion?"²²

The question arises whether the supreme state authorities had a concrete uniform programme and a plan of how to implement it immediately after the conclusion of the war. In the light of the documents I have selectively analysed, it seems that they did not have them. Watchwords, proposals and a general programme of a struggle for independence were born on the spur of the moment, in anticipation of a further development of the international situation. To all intents and purposes the programme and the long-term plan can be described by a quotation from Jan Rostrowski's poem: "... And the PLAN has one

1978; F. Ryszkowa, *Sprawa polska i sprawy Polaków. Szkice z lat 1944–46 (The Polish Question and the Matters of Poles. Essays from the Years 1944–46)*, Warszawa 1966; A. Friszke, *Opozycja polityczna w PRL w latach 1945–1980 (The Political Opposition in the Polish People's Republic in 1945–1980)*, Warszawa 1994; A. Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski 1939–1989 (Half a Century of Poland's History 1939–1989)*, Warszawa 1995.

²⁰ *Proclamation to the Polish Nation*, "Orzeł Biały" № 27 of 8.7.1945, p. 1.

²¹ *Dokumenty. Nota ambasadora Raczyńskiego do rządu J.Kr. Mości (Ambassador Raczyński's Note to His Majesty's Government)*, "Orzeł Biały" № 29 of 22.7.1945, p. 5.

²² *Dokumenty. Oświadczenie ambasadora Ciechanowskiego (Documents. Ambassador Ciechanowski's Statement)*, "Orzeł Biały" № 29 of 22.7.1945, p. 5.

word: FREEDOM"²³. Although I did not examine all sources, the documents which I analysed imply that there were many concepts. Attempts were also made to create a uniform programme for the whole emigration, but they ended in failure²⁴. This was due to the fact that the emigration was split politically, had different ideas about the future and consequently, various programmes were drawn up.

The attitude to the post-war reality and to the current tasks was expressed in the Polish President's periodic Proclamations, the Polish Government's Appeals to the Polish Nation and in occasional statements made by politicians²⁵. As regards their political substance, they referred to current programmes based on the guidelines contained in the resolutions of the National Unity Council of June 15, 1944 and the Polish Government's appeal of 1945²⁶. The most important aim laid down in these documents was the struggle for a free independent democratic and just Poland. This was not only the aim, it was a sacred duty of Poles to realise the unwritten testament of those who had given their lives for Poland²⁷. It was admitted that the struggle for independence would be hard and long but the authorities were convinced that it would not be fought in vain, for the downtrodden values would come out victorious. The Poles abroad and their organisations assumed an attitude similar to that of the war-time emigration and the government in exile²⁸.

²³ J. Rostworowski, *Plan (The Plan)*, "Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza" № 154 of 2.7.1945, p. 3.

²⁴ IPMS, call number A. XII. 3/91, *Założenia do Planu MOB "E" (Assumptions of the MOB "E" Plan)*.

²⁵ See: *The Polish President's Christmas Statement*, "Orzeł Biały" № 51 of 23.12.1945; *ibidem*, *Prime Minister Arciszewski's Christmas Wishes*. Also: *The Polish Government's Proclamation to the Polish Nation*, "Orzeł Biały" № 30 of 28.7.1946; also: *Polish Issues. Declaration of the Polish Government*, "Orzeł Biały" № 8 of 25.2.1947; also, *Appeal of the Polish Government*, "Orzeł Biały" № 47 of 20.11.1948, p. 1; also, *Proclamation of the Polish President*, "Orzeł Biały" № 45 of 6.11.1948, p. 1.

²⁶ *Change of Government of the Polish Republic*, "Orzeł Biały" № 28 of 12.7.1947, p. 1.

²⁷ See: *Proclamation of the Polish Government*, "Orzeł Biały" № 47 of 20.11.1948, p. 1.

²⁸ In a cable to the U.S. President, Americans of Polish descent announced they would launch a determined campaign against the provisional Warsaw government for it was composed of communist agents, see "Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza" № 160 of 9.7.1945. See also *The Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Congress of American Poles*, "Orzeł Biały" № 10 of 11.3.1947; *ibidem*, *Appeal of the Supreme Council of the Congress of American Poles to the Polish Nation*.

They all regarded the fight for Poland's freedom and independence as the paramount task. The word "fight" appeared in nearly all statements, manifestos and programmes from the end of the war to 1989. It was used by representatives of the Polish authorities in exile, the military, activists of political parties and social organisations. How was this fight to be waged to ensure the achievement of the principal aim? What was this fight to be like? It is difficult to answer these questions. All political parties standing for independence had first and foremost a political struggle in view²⁹. They opted for an organised political activity in the international arena and in Poland. There were many concepts of this activity and many organisations were set up to carry it on³⁰. Did the authors of these plans think that a political struggle would be effective and that their programme for Poland's independence would be realised? Let us remember that the painful war experiences did not fill Poles with optimism and rather disabused them of political possibilities. Nevertheless, they believed in the struggle and in its sense and hoped for a successful result. But the struggle did not have only a political dimension. Some of the advocates took another form of struggle, an armed struggle, into consideration. It was above all the military who stressed this point of view. In a cable to General Bohusz-Szyszko of May 9, 1945, General Władysław Anders, thanking the general for his wishes, wrote: "I believe that God will allow us to win the second phase of the war for Poland's freedom and integrity"³¹. He expressed his faith more precisely in Order N^o 5 issued when he transferred the duties of commander-in-chief to General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski: "I am leaving today. Should the battle-fields see Polish soldiers again, I will be with you, in your ranks"³².

²⁹ For more details see: *Mobilizacja uchodźstwa do walki politycznej 1945–1990 (Mobilisation of the Emigration to Political Struggle 1945–1990)*, collective work ed. Leonidas Kłiszewicz, Londyn 1995.

³⁰ See: IPMS, call number A. XII. 62/2. *Guidelines for the Armed Forces*, part III (January 1946), also collection (henceforward referred to as col.) 113/4. Letter of the General Staff, Department for the Armed Forces, to the Commander in chief of 11.3.1946, ref. no. 93/tjn/O.S.Zbr.46; also call number A. XII. 3/91, *Principles of the MOB "E" plan (February 1946)*; *ibidem*, *Points concerning the MOB "E" Plan*; also col. 329/32, *Letter (unsigned) to W. Anders, General Inspector of the Armed Forces, of 15.1.1947*.

³¹ IPMS, call number A. XII. 1/74, commander-in-chief's cable to Gen. Bohusz-Szyszko of 9.5.1945, ref. no. 272/tjn/GNW/45.

In addition to psychological reasons, the faith in the war scenario and consequently in the possibility of realising the idea of independence, was inspired by many other factors. Among the most important were the tense political situation, statements by Polish and Western politicians and military men, press propaganda, gossip and rumours about war preparations by the West and the very fact of the existence of the Polish Armed Forces and later of the Polish Training and Resettlement Corps. These factors provided the inspiration and basis for speculations concocted in diplomats' rooms, in talks and in the press.

A special role in shaping the emigration's attitude was played by press propaganda; it supplied readers with articles which heated up the atmosphere of uncertainty and expectations of an armed conflict. It was "Orzeł Biały" which excelled in this activity; it presented not only its own articles but also speculations on the possibility of war from the Western press. Although the war propaganda in 1945 was nothing compared with what followed, several articles with significant titles did appear³³. Articles similar in tone were also published in the foreign press. It is therefore not surprising that the war scenario seemed to be realistic and won over an increasing number of advocates.

The sources examined by me show that senior military commanders were the chief promoters of the idea of a third world war. For them, as for the whole emigration, the key argument for such a scenario — in addition to the growing tension in the political situation — was the existence of the Polish Armed Forces and later of the Polish Training and Resettlement Corps. It is worth recalling that in June 1945 the Polish Armed Forces in the West had 211,000 soldiers (excluding women and juveniles)³⁴, and that 10,300 persons were waiting in France to join the army. About 100,000 soldiers of the September 1939 campaign and of

³² *Z ostatniej chwili. Rozkaz gen. Andersa Nr 5 (Last Minute News. Gen. Anders's Order No 5)*, "Orzeł Biały" No 22 of 3.6.1945, p. 11.

³³ See Janosta, *Spór o możliwość pokoju (Dispute over the Possibility of Peace)*, "Orzeł Biały" No 34 of 26.8.1945, p. 2; also *Przygotować się albo zginąć. Raport gen. George'a C. Marshalla (To be Prepared or Perish. Gen. George C. Marshall's Report)*, "Orzeł Biały" No 43 of 28.10.1945, p. 9.

³⁴ IPMS, call number A. XII. 1/74. *The Ministry of National Defence's Report of August 14, 1945 for the years 1942–1945*. Nearly identical data have been presented by T. Towpik-Szejnowska in *Rozwiązanie PSZ na Zachodzie 1945–1949 (The Dissolution of the Polish Armed Forces in the West 1945–1949)*, "WPH" No 2–3 of 1983, p. 263.

the Home Army were in the American and British zones of occupation. As time went on, the number of soldiers naturally decreased; nevertheless, the existence of the Polish Armed Forces could have various interpretations. The question arises why the British kept a Polish army under their command for a whole year.

The existence of the Polish Armed Forces inspired people with hope and faith in a successful solution of the Polish question. The result was that the moods and attitude began to differ. This development was described the most fully by the head of the Ministry of Defence, General Marian Kukiel, at a conference of generals on June 5, 1946. He said: "The situation of the 2nd Corps is difficult. There was a dual policy towards the army; we have prepared ourselves for peace while General Anders has been confidently asserting that there will be a war and he has been preparing his corps for war to such an extent that no thought has been given to civilian training"³⁵. These words, like other statements, imply that in 1945 the Polish state and military authorities in exile had no concrete programme and adopted a wait-and-see attitude³⁶. They believed that the Polish question was part of the post-war world and that its solution depended on the international situation. It was therefore the soldiers' duty to remain abroad as long as this was demanded by the situation. The existence of the Polish Armed Forces in the West was regarded as a form of protest against the system imposed on Poland.

A more precise picture of the role and plans with regard to the Polish Armed Forces was not presented until January 1946³⁷. The attitude of the Polish Government-in-Exile was then presented in the *Guidelines for the Armed Forces*. Despite many generalities, the document also contained unequivocal statements. According to its authors, the aim of the armed forces was to regain independence and sovereignty. The following fragment of the text explains how this plan was to be realised: "The methods of the struggle are dictated by the situation, and the achievement of the final aim will make it possible for the Armed Forces to return to Poland ... If it turns out that it is not possible to achieve

³⁵ *Ibidem*, call number A. XII. 89/152. *Report on the generals' conference held on June 5, 1946*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, call number A. XII. 62/2. *Letter of the Chief of Staff of December 14, 1945*, ref. no. 880/tjn/O.S.Zbr./45 (*Guidelines for the Armed Forces*).

³⁷ *Ibidem*, call number A. XII. 62/2. *Guidelines for the Armed Forces*, part III.

this aim soon, in 1946/47, the emigration and the Polish Armed Forces must count with a longer stay abroad. This stay may be shortened by the outbreak of an international conflict but this is something nobody can now foresee"³⁸. The document and its content met with only a restricted criticism from General Anders, who said: "The Government of the Polish Republic claims the right to guide the Poles' lives and lead the struggle for independence abroad and in Poland, but in my opinion, it is not exercising this leadership"³⁹. Anders presented his own programme for a structural organisation of the emigration.

The military were alarmed that the government had no long-term plans for the emigration in general, including the Polish Armed Forces. In February 1946, they reacted by presenting *The Principles of the MOB "E" Plan*⁴⁰. The document was worked out by the General Staff, probably by the Armed Forces Department headed by Colonel Leon Bittner. The plan was based on suggestions put forward at a meeting of the Committee for the Defence of the State (9.2.1946) and was an attempt to present a comprehensive view of the emigration's problems. The emigration's *status quo* was the starting point for a concept the aim of which was to organise the emigration and preserve "the core of the Polish Armed Forces" in the worst possible situation, that is, if the Polish Army in the West was fully demobilised.

The ideological assumptions of the plan provided for an alternative model if the unstable balance of forces in the international arena broke down suddenly after some time or changed in an evolutionary way. Both variants provided for an active role of the emigration, that is, for the development of those fields of Polish national life which were restricted or ceased to exist in Poland. The emigration's main aim boiled down to helping Poland in all possible ways to survive the period of captivity.

In addition to a possible evolutionary change of the existing situation, the *MOB "E" Plan* foresaw the possibility of aggression on the part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. According to the authors of the plan, aggression could be launched in three directions: the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, the Far

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, col. 113/4, *Letter of the General Staff*, Department for the Armed Forces, to the Commander-in-chief of 11.3.1946, ref. no. 93/tjn/O.S.Zbr./46.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, call number A. XII. 3/91, *Principles of the MOB "E" Plan*.

East, and Western Europe. According to the variant adopted after a thorough analysis, the region of the Persian Gulf was the most likely trouble spot. The possibility of an armed conflict with the USSR without the participation of the United States was ruled out. According to the accepted variant, Great Britain would form a bloc of allied states if a third world war broke out. This seemed to offer a chance for the realisation of Polish ideas and for the participation of the emigration in the armed conflict. The plan stipulated that the emigration's active military and political participation in the conflict, especially the participation of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, would be possible only if the Soviet Union became fully engaged in the region of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean as well in the Far East⁴¹. The military assumed that it would be most profitable for Poland if this happened in 2–10 years' time. Foreseeing that the army might be demobilised, the military wanted to preserve "the core of the Polish Armed Forces", i.e. the General Staff, the Centre for Higher War Studies and the organisation of army units. Should war break out, these structures were to quickly remobilise the Polish Armed Forces. The plan also presented a detailed programme for the organisation of the emigration.

The whole concept shows that the military believed in an armed conflict and forecast various dates of its outbreak. That is why they regarded it as a priority to organise the emigration and preserve a secret makeshift army. Since my research was not complete, I cannot present the attitude of the Polish authorities in exile to all questions raised in the *MOB* "E" Plan. It is known, however, that the military part of the plan was being implemented, as later decisions confirm.

After the diplomatic disapproval of the Polish Republic's military authorities, control over the Polish Armed Forces was, with British consent, taken over by the Polish General Staff headed by General Stanisław Kopański. Officially, the General Staff took over the powers of the Ministry of National Defence and of the Commander-in-chief, and both *de facto* and *de iure* was subordinated to the British authorities. But informally, it was still subordinated to the Government-in-Exile and its military organs. The core of the Polish Armed Forces was preserved after the

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

dissolution of the Polish Armed Forces⁴² and the liquidation of the Polish Training and Resettlement Corps⁴³. The General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of National Defence, the General Staff with all its departments, the Army Command, the Sappers' Command and the Communication Command⁴⁴ continued to exist in 1947–1956, though with a reduced personnel. The functions of the two last-named organs were performed by Secretariats of Sectional Circles. The dissolved detachments were replaced by 74 Sectional Circles which numbered some 16,000 soldiers⁴⁵. The majority of these circles did not conduct any military activity, confining themselves to comradesly contacts. The only exceptions were the Higher Military Studies Circle and the "Pogoń" Brigade Circle which preserved the character of military units⁴⁶.

In keeping with the provisions of the *MOB "E"* Plan, this "conspiratorial" structure of the Polish Armed Forces in exile had a concrete aim in view, namely, to remobilise the army in case of an armed conflict. The Armed Forces were regarded as an indispensable and extremely important argument for the Polish cause. It is worth adding that the *MOB "E"* Plan was probably the first "official" document to express the military's mobilisation of the armed forces. It cannot be excluded that information on the content of the document, the plan itself and the third-world-war conjectures made behind closed doors leaked by various ways to the emigré milieu and influenced the emigrés' attitude. The emigrés' stance was strengthened by the individual convictions and statements of military commanders. This is confirmed not only by Polish but also by British documents. For instance, Robert Hankey, a senior official at the Foreign Office, wrote in a

⁴² Soldiers began to join the Polish Training and Resettlement Corps in August 1946 but it is the 10th of July 1947 that has been accepted as a symbolic date of the dissolution of the Polish Armed Forces in the West. It was then that the PSZ banners and decorations were deposited in the Gen. W. Sikorski Historical Institute, see: J. P. Morawicz, *Demobilizacja Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie* (*Demobilisation of the Polish Armed Forces in the West*), in: *Mobilizacja uchodźstwa do walki politycznej*.

⁴³ The last soldiers left the PTRC in 1952.

⁴⁴ *IPMS*, col. 32966, *The Activity of the Ministry of National Defence up to December 30, 1955*.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ T. Piesakowski, *Brygadowe Koło Młodych "Pogoń"* ("Pogoń" Youth Brigade Circle), in: *Mobilizacja uchodźstwa do walki politycznej*, pp. 108–154.

note of July 30, 1946 that General Anders and some senior Polish officers hoped to preserve the Polish Armed Forces and that they dreamed that these forces might fight at the side of the Western Powers against Russia in the conflict they were anticipating, and that they would then march victoriously to a Poland freed of Russian influence. Hankey added that His Majesty's Government regarded the Polish Training and Resettlement Corps as something temporary and transitional before the Poles settled in civilian life in Great Britain or abroad⁴⁷. General Anders was not the only one to believe in the possibility of a third world war. He advocated a conflict, believing that only after a victory over Russia would Poland regain full freedom and independence. What was specific about his attitude was that he did not conceal his belief and openly manifested his stance, which other Poles avoided doing. Being a respected commander, he enjoyed authority among thousands of soldiers. This is why he was described as the "first" advocate of war⁴⁸ or even a war-monger⁴⁹ in many opinions and publications. There is no doubt that this opinion was consolidated by the communist propaganda of People's Poland which turned Anders into a "subject of the day".

The attitude of other Polish commanders to a third world war is reflected in the report on a conference held by generals on June 5, 1946⁵⁰. Although the conference was devoted to the situation of the Armed Forces, many speakers raised other problems. For instance, General Kukiel discussed the international situation and said that a war would probably break out in two years' time. He went on to say: "Should this not happen within that time and should the Soviets refuse to give in without a fight to the pressure of the Western Powers, this would mean a consolidation of the present state of affairs for a long time. Since the Training and

⁴⁷ W. Leitgeber, *Polski Korpus Przynosobienia i Rozmieszczenia w świetle dokumentów brytyjskich (The Polish Training and Resettlement Corps in the Light of British Documents)*, in: *Mobilizacja uchodźstwa do walki politycznej*, p. 60.

⁴⁸ E. Berberyusz, *Anders spieszony (The Dismounted Anders)*, Londyn 1992. A completely different picture of Gen. Anders has been presented by Adam Pra-gier, *Czas terażniejszy (The Present Time)*, Londyn 1975, p. 90.

⁴⁹ See: *Atak komisarza Molotowa na 2 Korpus w Italii (Comissar Molotov's Attack on the 2nd Corps in Italy)*, "Orzeł Biały" № 7 of 17.2.1946; also *Koszmar p. Gomułki (Mr. Gomułka's Nightmare)*, "Orzeł Biały" № 2 of 14.1.1947; also *Anders, Anders*, "Orzeł Biały" № 49 of 6.12.1947.

⁵⁰ *IPMS*, call number A. XII. 89/152, *Report on the generals' conference held on 5.6.1946*.

Resettlement Corps has retained the organisational duties of the Armed Forces under the screen of demobilisation, this gives us the possibility of survival until the outbreak of a possible conflict when most of the Corps may still exist... The Polish Armed Forces keep existing in this normal form. There will be no demobilisation decree on our part. The oath is still binding. The soldiers who leave the Corps will have leave of absence"⁵¹. General Marian Żegota-Januszajtis was more categorical. He said in his statement: "We are now moving towards dispersion. There must be a war within two years and we must now say manfully that if it does not break out, we shall not go back to Poland. This is why we must have a centre which will preserve Polish culture. If we agree to the Armed Forces being snatched away from us, we shall perish. The Polish component is no longer part of British policy; even if Russia is defeated, Poland will not be rebuilt by the British, for Britain does not need Poland"⁵².

The year 1946 introduced a new element into the emigrés' life, namely, the decision to demobilise the Polish Armed Forces in the West. This was a psychological blow to those who "were waiting for a third world war". As long as the army existed, they were hopeful that Poland would regain independence and that in case of a conflict they would participate directly in achieving this. After a brief shock they began to work out a concept of recreating the armed forces, for they did not believe in political solutions. For instance, Lieut. Colonel Zygmunt Czarnecki sent General Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz a plan for the establishment of a 10,000 strong Foreign Legion within the British Army⁵³. Other concepts were also put forward⁵⁴, but particularly notable is the document entitled *The Attitude of the Polish Armed Forces to the Possibility of a War*, worked out by the Minister of National Defence, General M. Kukiel⁵⁵. The plan, dated July 30, 1947, consists of the following substantive parts: A. Prospects of a third world war. B. Poland's potential role. C. The role of the Polish

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² For more details on the attitude of Januszajtis and the generals linked with him see: M. Żegota-Januszajtis, *Życie moje tak burzliwe ... Wspomnienia i dokumenty (My Stormy Life ... Reminiscences and Documents)*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 202-287.

⁵³ IPMS, col. 329/31, Z. Czarnecki's letter to M. Tokarzewski of 19.2.1947.

⁵⁴ See M. Żegota-Januszajtis, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-262.

⁵⁵ IPMS, call number A. XII. 3/91.

armed forces abroad. D. Remobilisation and recreation of the armed forces. Taking the development of the international situation as the starting point, the author of the document stated that the Soviet Union's steadily increasing aggressiveness might lead to the outbreak of war; he did not exclude the possibility of this happening in 1947. To explain the choice of this date, he referred to the information spread in the United States, where the outbreak was expected to take place in September. Although according to his scenario the Soviet Union would be the aggressor, Kukiel did not exclude the possibility of a preventive war started by the United States.

The second part of the plan dealt with Poland's role in case of an armed conflict. General Kukiel assigned a passive role to Poland because of her geopolitical situation and World War II experiences. According to him, hostilities against Russia in Poland would mean a civil war. In his view, Poland could start playing an active role only after the entry of American or British forces. He foresaw difficulties, for the "disintegration of the Warsaw regime and the security organs" and the defection of Żymierski's troops would lead to chaos⁵⁶. In order to prevent this, he proposed that these matters be discussed with the Allies.

The document ends with seven conclusions which reflect his analysis and the measures proposed by him. Two conclusions are worth quoting. "1. The situation is getting ripe for soundings about our future role in war and the reconstruction of our Armed Forces. 2. In war, our Armed Forces must represent Poland as real fighting forces; we must also train personnel for the army, the security organs and administration to be able to control the situation when the country is liberated. This is in the interest of not only Poland but also of the West"⁵⁷. It was also recommended in the conclusions that the principles of possible military agreements should be established and that a plan for the mobilisation and organisation of the Armed Forces should be worked out. These last-named tasks were to be fulfilled, in accordance with their competence, by the General Inspector and the General Staff on the basis of earlier settlements of the Committee for the Defence of the State.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁵⁷ *Ibidem.*

The conclusions reflected the content of the document. For instance, General Kukiel calculated that remobilisation would embrace 55,000 soldiers and 15,000 officers. According to his plan, the reconstructed armed forces would have a double task: to represent Poland among the nations fighting for freedom and to form an army in the liberated Republic⁵⁸. At the present stage of research it is difficult to say what attitude the Polish civilian authorities in exile took to this and other documents, all the more so as the plan, devoted as it was to the Polish Armed Forces, did not take the civilian authorities into consideration. It is not even known whether they knew of these far-advanced military preparations. One thing is certain, the Polish Government-in-Exile had a similar view of the future. It is said in the guidelines of the government's policy of August 20, 1947 that "in view of the growing conflict between the Great Powers, the Government declares that the Polish Nation, exhausted as it is by the last war, should spare energy. Nevertheless, in a conflict between the world of Christian civilisation, the world of the freedom of nations and man's dignity, Poland's place is on the side of the West, but it is above all the Poles abroad who should play an active role"⁵⁹. It was frequently asserted at the Government's meetings that before long "Russia will be forced to engage in an open conflict" and that "the main directive of Polish policy is not to repeat the insurrectional policy"⁶⁰.

The Poles who linked their hopes with the outbreak of a third world war increased their activity in 1947 and 1948. As international tension increased and the communists' policy in Poland met with growing condemnation, the hope grew that a conflict would break out, if not in a short time then, in any case, in foreseeable future. These expectations were widespread among the emigrés as is testified to by a poll conducted by the weekly "Wilno i Lwów"⁶¹ in November 1947, in which Stanisław Mackiewicz investigated the Poles' attitude to the possibility of a world war. 96 per cent of the respondents expected a conflict between

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ Quoted after K. Kersten, *Polacy wobec rzeczywistości 1944-1947*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁶¹ R. Habielski, *Niezłomni. Nieprzejednani. Emigracyjne "Wiadomości" i ich krąg 1949-1981 (The Unbroken. The Irreconcilable. The Emigré "Wiadomości" and Its Circle 1940-1981)*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 80 and 81.

the United States and the Soviet Union, 45 per cent holding the view that it would break out in 1–2 years. Asked whether Poles should take part in the war and on whose side, 59 per cent opted for the United States, 0 per cent for the USSR and 41 per cent thought that neutrality would be the best solution⁶². Although, as Rafał Habiełski pointed out, Mackiewicz did not give the number of respondents, the poll reflected the calculations of the emigrés. Let us add that the weekly “Wilno i Lwów” was addressed mainly to the inhabitants of Poland’s former eastern territories, who constituted the majority of the weekly’s readers (these were mainly soldiers of the Second Corps). The question therefore arises to what they were to return. Their homelands were within the USSR. The respondents and other inhabitants of the eastern territories could not seriously believe that the Soviet Union would peacefully return the eastern territories to Poland. This is why, as Giedroyc said, nobody planned a long-term activity at that time⁶³.

Giedroyc’s remark was correct as far as the mass of the soldiers was concerned. But he was wrong as regards the activity of the military authorities, which were making serious preparations for a possible armed conflict. In October 1947, propably in keeping with the head of the Ministry of Defence’s suggestion contained in the document *The attitude of the Polish Armed Forces to the possibility of war* of July 30, 1947, the General Staff presented *The Basic Principles for Planning the Reconstruction of the Polish Armed Forces*⁶⁴. Another document, entitled *Annexes to the Planning of the Polish Armed Forces’ Participation in a Future Armed Conflict*⁶⁵, comes from the same time. The latter document is particularly worthy of mention. The politico-strategic analysis contained there says: “2. There are the following possibilities of an armed conflict in the present situation: a) a war brought about by a military move of Soviet forces outside the present «dividing line», that is, a war launched by the Soviet Union, b) a preventive war started by the United States”⁶⁶. These variants and their consequences are then discussed in detail in the document. It was presumed in one of the strategic alternatives that the main

⁶² *Ibidem.*

⁶³ *Ibidem.*, p. 81.

⁶⁴ IPMS, call number A. XII. 3/91.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁶ *Ibidem.*

war operations might bypass Poland. It follows from the document that the possibility of a conflict aroused hopes as well as misgivings, in particular about Poland's western frontier. This is reflected in the following passage: "Our entry into war on the Anglo-Saxon side would place us in an extremely difficult political and strategic situation since our western and eastern frontiers have not yet been established. This is why the principal strategic demand is that our western frontier, in particular, be established and guaranteed by the Anglo-Saxons before the conflict breaks out"⁶⁷.

From 1947 on, the war expectations were accompanied by intensified work to reconstruct the Polish Armed Forces (PSZ). The most important documents of this time are: *Report on the Organisation of the PSZ (Instructions)* worked out by the Staff Union⁶⁸ on July 12, 1948 and *Remarks on the Report concerning the Organisation of the PSZ of July 12, 1948* worked out by General K u k i e l on August 4, 1948⁶⁹. The former was presented at a conference attended by the General Inspector of the Armed Forces, the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of National Defence, who all agreed that from the military and organisational points of view the Armed Forces would not be a replica of those of 1945. They would be their continuation not only in the legal aspect but also in the aspect of an uninterrupted existence of military units. This is why the document spoke of the recreation of the PSZ⁷⁰.

The adoption of this option meant the beginning of preparations for remobilisation. The idea itself as well as the activity aimed at implementing it were endorsed by the Polish civilian authorities. On May 4, 1948, the Polish Government stated: "Should the conflict between the Soviets and the Western world take the form of an armed struggle, Poland's participation would require an earlier preparation in the form of international agreements between the Government of the Polish Republic and the governments of the Western states. Only such a base of Poland's participation in war will guarantee that Polish blood is not wasted"⁷¹. The attitude of the military authorities was similar.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁸ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁷⁰ *Ibidem. Remarks on the report.*

wasted”⁷¹. The attitude of the military authorities was similar. For instance, at a congress of the Circles of Soldiers of the Third Division of Carpathian Riflemen, held on September 26, 1948, the General Inspector of the Armed Forces, General Władysław Anders, said: “If a new tragic world conflict breaks out, this must be the hour of the resuscitation of the question of a free, whole and independent Poland ... Our country, which is being increasingly terrorised by the occupier, should not launch any armed activities. This would be a suicide of the Nation’s best sons. We who are living in the free world have other duties. Only the legal state authorities are entitled to take decisions concerning Polish soldiers. It is only they who have the right to declare when the Polish *raison d’état* requires that the banners of the Polish Armed Forces in the West be unfurled. We will then enter the military road not in foreign service but in order to fight for freedom and preserve the integrity and security of our Motherland”⁷².

These expectations and the measures adopted to carry them into effect bring one basic question to mind: what elements were responsible for their creation and for the ossification of attitudes? It would be a half-truth to say that the main factor was the increasing international tension. International relations had in fact been tense since 1945; the tension fluctuated all the time and led to various speculations on the possibility of war, depending on the involvement of the sides. The growth of the danger induced politicians, and in particular the military, to increase their activity. It is the activities of the military, which were not always kept secret and were sometimes commented on by themselves or by politicians, that created the atmosphere of an impending conflict. The rest was done by the mass media which presented various assessments and speculations. The result was that more and more people expected an armed conflict to break out. The rumours and gossips pervading the community were not groundless. As early as 1945, the Americans, on the basis of Eisenhower’s directives, worked out the first plan for an armed intervention against the Soviet Union, named “Totality”⁷³. The

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, col. 329/25. Prime Minister Gen. R. Odzierzyński on the Polish Armed Forces in the West. Communiqué of the Polish Telegraph Agency of July 26, 1952.

⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁷³ M. Sas-Skowroński, *Dropshot*, “Przegląd Powszechny” № 3–4, Londyn 1984, p. 22.

plan was found preposterous because of its deficiencies and the lack of an adequate number of troops in the United States to guarantee a minimum of success. But the work went on. Many plans based on various assumptions were drafted, but none was of any practical value. It was only in 1948 that in connection with the blockade of Berlin the Pentagon drew up a plan called "Broiler" which was to be implemented if an armed conflict broke out⁷⁴. Having managed to get hold of a part of the plan, the Russians used it successfully for propaganda purposes. They accused the United States of war aspirations, and used Berlin as a pretext. Nevertheless, the planning was not given up. In 1949, on the authorisation and with the approval of President Harry S. Truman, the National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, under the chairmanship of General Omar Bradley, worked out a plan of an offensive war against the Soviet Union, called "Dropshot"⁷⁵. The plan considered the possibility of two wars, a cold war and an armed conflict. The aim of both was to reduce Russia's power and influence to the minimum not only in the states seized in 1939 and later, but everywhere. The principal measure to be applied in a preventive war, which seemed inevitable in the cold war conditions, was an atomic attack on strategic targets in the Soviet Union. The State Department did not assert that the outbreak of war was inevitable, but it did not exclude the possibility of such a conflict. Louis Johnson, the US Secretary of Defence, was one of the advocates of this detailed well worked out plan⁷⁶.

At the present stage of research it is difficult to say whether the command-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces knew about the American war preparations. Signals of the work may have reached them in various forms and they inspired the embittered and disappointed Polish emigration with hope for a successful solution of the Polish question. This is confirmed by the concepts of the emigré military. Generals and staffs do exist to prepare plans for defensive and offensive wars in time of peace, but the period we are speaking of was rather a period of "armed peace".

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁷⁵ M. Sas-Skowroński, *Dropshot*, "Przegląd Powszechny" Nos. 5 and 6, Londyn 1984, p. 22.

⁷⁶ *I d e m*, *ibidem*, № 6, Londyn 1984, p. 20.

This is why information on war plans carried more weight than in time of peace *sensu stricto*.

War preparations, in particular attempts to reconstruct the Armed Forces, were conducted until 1956 with varying intensity. They were based on the belief that an armed conflict might break out at some undefined time. This attitude was an offshoot of the processes described above and of various kinds of encouragement by Polish military and political élites in exile. As an example let us quote the proposal made by General Anders to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. During his visit to the United States in October 1950, he proposed the establishment of a 100,000–strong Free Polish Contingent in Western Europe⁷⁷. A memorial with a similar proposal, endorsed by the emigré military chiefs of seven other East–Central European countries, was presented by General Anders to NATO command in 1951⁷⁸. These ventures were approved by the Prime Minister of the Polish Government–in–Exile, General Roman Odzierzyński, but they were criticised by the Political Council of the Polish authorities in exile.

The proposals submitted by Poles were not only a result of their own initiatives but also a reaction to encouragements sent through formal and informal channels by politicians and military men of the Western countries. They activated Polish diplomats and the military, awakening hope and faith in a successful solution of the Polish question. Such a role was undoubtedly played by the bills submitted in the US Congress by Senators Lodge and Johnson. Particularly important was the bill submitted by Senator Johnson, who proposed that an American or Atlantic legion composed of emigrants from Central European countries be set up. The measures taken by the Americans probably activated the diplomacy of Poland and the Western countries. Ambassador K. Papée, Ambassador Kajetan Morawski and Minister Józef Potocki held talks in Madrid from January 25 to 27, 1951⁷⁹. The aim of their meeting was to establish whether

⁷⁷ IPMS, call number A. 11E/1157. Information quoted after “Daily Graphic” of 7.10.1950.

⁷⁸ Conditions for the reconstruction of the Polish Armed Forces undisputable. Attack on the memorial to NATO during debates of the Political Council, “Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza” of 20.11.1952. Materials on discussions concerning the formation of an army composed of emigrés from various Central European countries are in the Sikorski Institute. See: call number 11E/1250.

⁷⁹ IPMS, call number A. 11E/1164, *Summary of the talks held in Madrid from*

war was likely to break out, to coordinate Polish foreign policy, transfer activities to the United States and work out a plan for a post-war organisation of Europe. The meeting seems to have been an attempt to adjust Polish policy to the development of the international situation. The French were the first to react to the initiative of the American senators. They — first Major C. and later Laporte, head of the Eastern Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — presented their plan to Major M. Czarnecki on February 7, 1951⁸⁰. This event inaugurated a cycle of Ambassador K. Morawski's meetings with personalities of the French political scene⁸¹. In a letter to Major M. Czarnecki, General Anders aptly characterised the motives of the French moves: "The French initiative is an attempt to make use of our resources locally. It was probably motivated not only by fear of Senator Johnson's proposal but also by the information that, in view of the significance of the military organs of the Atlantic Pact in France, the French military authorities might no longer be free to use Polish resources in that country for their own purposes"⁸². Further on in the letter General Anders gave the following advice: "We must be very cautious about foreign initiatives so that in our endeavours to raise the Polish question we should not allow our trump card, our human resources in the West, to be snatched away from us. ... In case of war or during a clear pre-war tension, we want our armed forces to be created on the basis of a political and military agreement with organs of the Atlantic Pact".

Interest in a Polish army in the West was also expressed by the British. It culminated in 1952. It was then that Tufton Beamish M.P.⁸³, Guy Lloyd M.P.⁸⁴ and J. R. H. Hutchinson⁸⁵, Under Secretary of State for War, expressed their interest in the

January 25 to 27, 1951 by Ambassador K. Papée, Ambassador K. Morawski and Minister J. Potocki.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, call number A. 11E/1250, *Gen. Anders's letter to M. Sokolowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, of February 23, 1951*. I have not been able to establish who "Major C." was.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, see *Ambassador Morawski's letter to Gen. Anders of March 2, 1951*, ref. L 343/51.

⁸² *Ibidem*, call number A. 11E/1250, *Gen. Anders's letter L. 313/51 to M. Sokolowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, of February 22, 1951* (enclosed is Anders's letter to M. Czarnecki of February 20, 1951).

⁸³ *Ibidem*, *T. Beamish's letter to J. Librach of February 5, 1952*.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, *J. Librach's letter L. 179/52 to Gen. Anders*.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, KGA XXIII, *Note drawn up by Jan Librach on February 18, 1952*.

question. During unofficial meetings with Minister Librach and General Anders they accepted the possibility of a Polish army being set up within NATO. It was stressed that the question would have to be settled through the British Ministry of War. The British, especially Hutchinson, were especially interested in the possibility of Poles joining the British army⁸⁶. It is worth adding that the personal to establish Polish military units in the West was presented in the House of Commons⁸⁷.

The development of the international situation in 1949–1952 led to the intensification of work and increased hopes for a solution of the Polish question. The attitude of the Polish state authorities in exile spurred on the above-mentioned diplomatic contacts between Polish politicians (especially the politician authorised by General Anders) and the Western countries. Although this attitude did not change as far as substantive questions were concerned, the Polish Government laid down new guidelines concerning the recreation of the Polish Armed Forces at meetings of the Cabinet Council, presided over by the President⁸⁸. They defined the political conditions for their formation and possible use in an armed conflict. Great importance was attached to the existence of armed forces. According to the government in exile, they would be a trump card in negotiations; they would guarantee the Polish nation that its interest was considered after the West's victory and would also help to disintegrate Rokossowski's army.

A similar attitude to the question of Polish Armed Forces was adopted by the National Council of the Polish Republic. On May 19, 1951 it unanimously adopted a resolution stating: "While declaring our readiness to unite the Polish Armed Forces with the forces of the Western Powers in case of an armed conflict with Russia, we demand that the Allies should declare Poland's freedom as one of the war aims and that they should restore the conditions in which the constitutional authorities of the Polish Republic might, in accordance with their right, form Polish Armed Forces and have them at their disposal"⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ *To raise the Polish Banner in the West. Thornton-Kemsley M.P. calls in the House of Commons for the formation of Polish units, "Dziennik Polski" of August 2, 1952.*

⁸⁸ *IPMS, col. 329/64, Guidelines of April 15, 1951 concerning Polish Armed Forces in Exile.*

As regards expectations of a third world war and the role of the Polish Armed Forces, the main principles of the emigré authorities' policy remained unchanged until 1956. They were not affected by the split in the Polish Government-in-Exile in July and August 1954⁹⁰. When General Anders refused obedience to the president on August 4, General Michał Tadeusz Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz was on August 12 appointed General Inspector of the Armed Forces and Minister of National Defence. Some soldiers took the side of General Anders but the new General Inspector (despite his limited possibilities) preserved the previous policy line. This is confirmed by a study worked out by Colonel Witold Wiśłocki, head of the General Staff's Department of Studies and Planning⁹¹, who said in his analysis that Poland could regain independence either in a peaceful way or through a war and defeat of Russia.

(Translated by Jantna Dorosz)

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, call number A. 11E/1250, *Statement by Prime Minister R. Odzierżyński on...*

⁹⁰ For more details see: P. Ziętara, *Misja ostatniej szansy. Próba zjednoczenia polskiej emigracji politycznej przez gen. Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego w latach 1952-1956 (The Last Chance Mission. Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski's Endeavours to Unite the Polish Political Emigration in 1952-1956)*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 126 ff.

⁹¹ IPMS, col. 392/62, *O niepodległość i bezpieczeństwo Rzeczypospolitej (For the Independence and Security of the Republic)*, paper of July 7, 1956.