

## The Baltic Sea, a Sea of (No) Peace. Expansion of Defense on “Cito”

26 January 2025/



By Marek Grzybowski

**Is the Baltic Sea on the course for a “hot war”? Is Poland, together with other NATO countries, able to ensure the security of the coast, communication routes, ports and infrastructure, and installations of strategic importance? It has been known for about 50 years that a nuclear power plant will be built on the Polish coast. It has been known for about a quarter of a century that offshore wind energy installations will be built in the waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone. Everyone knows that there are power connections, communication cables, and pipelines on the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Are they safe? Certainly not.**

So the most important question arises: why have politicians and decision-makers not prepared the law and the forces of protection and defense that would ensure real and comprehensive security of wind farms and the infrastructure associated with them?



Is the Baltic Sea a lake almost belonging to the Alliance, as many people thought?, including Gonzalo Vázquez from the Universidad de Nevada in the article: [‘Welcome to NATO, Finland.’ Strategic implications for Baltic maritime security](#)

### **The Baltic is the Sea of Peace**

For a long time, conferences, meetings and regional gatherings stubbornly repeated that “the Baltic is the Sea of Peace”. This extremely catchy slogan blended in perfectly over the presidential tables. The

creators of the slogan knew exactly that it was different, and after World War I the Baltic was a place of clash of economic and military interests.

After World War II, the Baltic took on a new meaning in European politics and during the Cold War it became a water body of divergent economic activities, armaments and preparations for active war. The USSR, together with other Warsaw Pact countries, dominated the Baltic Sea and planned integrated operations. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Federation began to dominate the Baltic Sea, supporting it with aviation, missile forces, special forces and a reconnaissance system.



Source: [Submarine Cable Map](#)

After Russia's attack on Ukraine and Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO, the situation on the world's strategic map changed radically and gave the book "Morska Szachownica. Geopolityczne istotne akwenów morza" written by professor Piotr Mickiewicz a new meaning. The book "Sea Baltics in Russia's security policy" should also be viewed in a new context, in which, based on in-depth research, potential threats were identified by a team of professors from the Polish Naval Academy: Tomasz Szubrycht, Krzysztof Rokiciński and Piotr Mickiewicz.

A new perspective on geostrategic security factors is cast by disruptions in global supply chains after Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea region, the development of fleets involved in smuggling strategic raw materials, and GPS signal disruptions. The situation in the Baltic Sea is influenced by the expansion of BRICS to include new countries and the increase in the potential (not only economic) of this organization and its transformation into BRICS+.



Source: [Submarine Cable Map](#)

## Baltic geopolitics

Prof. Piotr Mickiewicz, a political scientist from the University of Gdańsk, writes in "Nautologia (161/2024): "The transformations of the political situation that occurred after the Russian aggression against Ukraine largely affect the region referred to by Prof. Jerzy Zalewski as "Baltic Europe". These transformations are the result of the reaction of European countries and regional organizations (EU and NATO) to the course of the so-called "Special Operation" of the Russian Federation. The imposed sanctions indirectly created a new role for the Baltic Sea basin and the Baltic Sea basin itself in Russian politics. The symbol of this change was the change in the status of this body of water specified in the Maritime Doctrine of July 31, 2022".

In 2022, the Baltic Sea region received the status of an "important" body of water for the interests of the Russian Federation. "At the same time, however, it was used to create new forms of threats and attempts to destabilize the political situation in the region," writes Prof. Mickiewicz in the article entitled "Energy security or maritime security? The dilemma of assessing potential threats to Poland's security in the Baltic Sea area in the third decade of the 21st century."



Source: Stephen M. Saideman

In the Baltic Sea and its region, there have long been installations of strategic importance, important for the economic security of the country. It is no secret that in the event of war, both "cold" and "hot", they will be the subject of attack. It should therefore be logical to take comprehensive and uninterrupted action to protect and defend large and small ports located on the Polish coast, energy resources and fauna and flora, and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Poland, which has an area of approximately 22.5 thousand square kilometers in the Baltic Sea.

Today we are convinced that it is important not only to dominate the seas but also to control ports and coastlines. They are easy to penetrate borders. The question is whether and to what extent they are easy to penetrate by smugglers, intelligence and special forces?



Source: Dr. Alexander Lott

The maritime activity of modern states takes on several dimensions. In times of peace, environmental protection and policies supporting sustainable resource exploitation, ensuring the safety of navigation and life at sea dominate. In times of tension, attacks on transmission pipelines and energy and communication connections are to be expected. Interference with satellite system signals and cyberattacks will be common. During military clashes, all installations of strategic importance, large and small ports will be at risk.

During one of the seminars, Prof. Piotr Mickiewicz began the presentation of research results on geopolitics with a strong accent: “control of the sea allows for obtaining a dominant influence on the shape of the situation in the world and is a factor co-determining the economic power of the state”. There is a reference here to Alfred T. Mahan’s theory, which, along with the development of modern technologies, was verified and developed by his successors.

– The modern maritime strategy of states should be perceived as an element of the state strategy and should be treated as a resultant of the specificity of the state’s economic, political and social activity and its international activity – believes Prof. Mickiewicz.



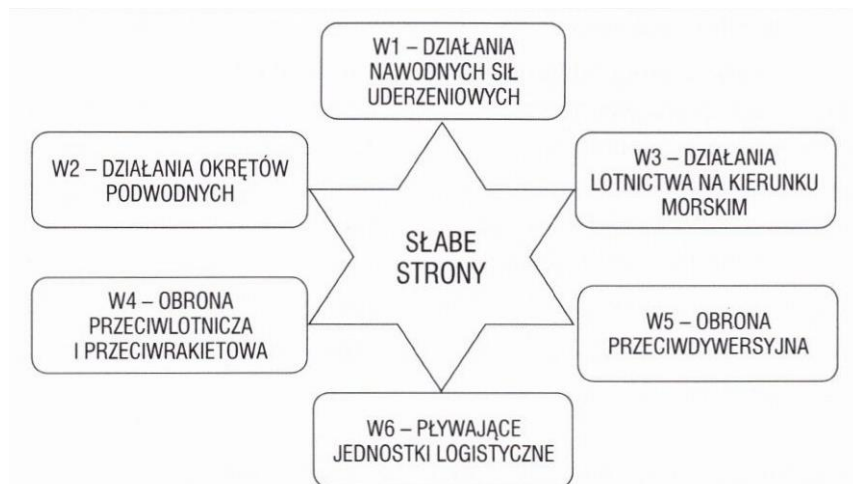
Source: Urząd Morski w Gdyni

## Maritime prevention

An important area of activity of the maritime state is prevention – counteracting crime at sea, combating piracy, maritime terrorism and illegal exploitation of the sea. It is necessary to build maritime power and resistance to the actions of other maritime players and to provide humanitarian aid related to military potential.

Today, a hot war is taking place in Poland’s neighbourhood. Russia’s attack on Ukraine, despite its local nature, has a global dimension. It was preceded and continues with attempts to penetrate the Polish land border with Belarus. The border services had to be supported by the police and land forces. Outdated tankers of the shadow fleet are moving across the Baltic Sea, which pose a threat to Baltic shipping.

Are we ready to seal the maritime border and coast when building our maritime defence? Are we facing threats such as those in the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the English Channel? Is the security of the coast, communication routes, large and small ports and installations in the Polish economic zone and on the coast ensured by our naval forces?



Dr. Bohdan Pac in his book "Management Engineering of Modernization Programs in the Naval Forces" draws attention to many weaknesses in the organization of our naval defense, and among them he distinguishes the operations of surface strike forces and submarines (and in fact one) and naval aviation. Pac also listed anti-aircraft and anti-missile defense and anti-sabotage defense among the weaknesses. According to the author, a weak element of naval defense is also the equipment with floating logistics units. Among the advantages (strengths) of our naval forces, Dr. Pac lists the operations of mine warfare forces and rocket artillery. He positively assesses the conduct of reconnaissance and EW and the possibilities of HNS (Host Nation Support) operations. The strengths also include good military and civilian port and aviation infrastructure. Although it should be added here that in 2023 the portal Defence24.pl reported that "the Armaments Agency decided to cancel the procedure for the delivery of twelve radiolocation jamming stations. As Defence24.pl has learned, the procedure for the purchase of the KAKTUS-MO system intended for the Polish industry was also cancelled earlier."

In connection with this, the question arises whether programs spread over many years to build combat ships and land and air equipment will ensure the elimination of gaps in our maritime defense? We already know today that "marginalization of a given component leads to its technical degradation in the long term, and consequently negatively affects the level of available personnel in terms of intellectual and substantive knowledge. The end result is the uselessness of this component both in systematic actions and in all types of operations," notes Dr. Pac.

It can also be assumed that additional NATO ships will not provide our installations with anti-ship, anti-aircraft and anti-drone defense. And even less will they protect against violations of critical infrastructure by merchant, fishing or other vessels.





## Rapid modernization of strategy and fleet needed

The process of modernization of our naval fleet has already begun but is too poor to strengthen the strengths of maritime defense and eliminate the weaknesses. – Complete maritime defense requires undertaking 7 basic programs and two supplementary programs – lists Pac and emphasizes that “If we want to ensure the country’s maritime defense and perform tasks within NATO forces, we should have the following ships: multi-purpose, mine warfare, reconnaissance, underwater and logistic support”. But that’s not all.

Comprehensive maritime defense requires increasing the striking power of the Naval Missile Unit by acquiring reconnaissance and guidance means enabling striking within the nominal range. It is necessary to expand the system of basing naval forces, due to the proximity of the Tri-City ports to the Kaliningrad Oblast. A system of maritime anti-terrorist protection (including underwater) must be built – lists Pac.

A system for securing critical maritime infrastructure is also necessary. It includes collecting information about the situation in ports and roadsteads based on such technical means as: sonars, thermal and television cameras, sensors detecting movement and sounds. Unmanned floating units and drones can be used for supervised operations.

– The system should be focused on protecting not only ports but the entire coast and territorial waters – emphasizes Dr. Pac. In the context of attempts and real penetration of unarmed groups of people across the border with Belarus, this statement takes on a new meaning and dimension. The anti-terrorist defense system should be linked to this arrangement.

The restoration of the Leningrad Military District as a response to Finland and Sweden’s entry into NATO shows that Russia is considering the possibility of a war breaking out in the northern part of Europe and the Baltic Sea region at the beginning of the next decade – according to a report by the Finnish National Defense Academy.



The Department of War Art of the Finnish National Defense University states directly that “Russian forces may attempt to carry out “surprise attacks on a limited scale” on smaller NATO countries, in a strip from northern Norway, through Finland to the Baltic countries, in order to “paralyze NATO’s decision-making process”.

The Finns indicate specific countries and forces of the Russian Federation that will be used for aggression: “For these operations, Russia may use its air force, navy, infantry and landing units in the strength of several divisions. One of the scenarios may also be an attempt to seize part of Finland,

Estonia, Latvia and Sweden, in order to secure the strategically important Murmansk region in the Arctic region for Russia” – reports PAP.

Such actions were predicted several years ago by Szubrycht, Rokiciński and Mickiewicz, professors and officers from the Naval Academy, who broadly described the issue in the chapter “The Baltic Region as a Zone of Cracks in the Theory and Practice of Hybrid Conflict” in the book “The Baltic Sea in the Security Policy of Russia”. They clearly state that “the Russians do not accept the term “hybrid warfare”. They end the subchapter with the statement: “adequately for each conflict waged by the Russian Federation, a doctrine will be created determined by (...) factors in various configurations, which will aim to achieve an element of surprise...”

There is therefore an urgent need to verify, and in fact already today, to build developed and real forces for the protection and defense of the Polish Exclusive Economic Zone at sea, in the air and under water.