

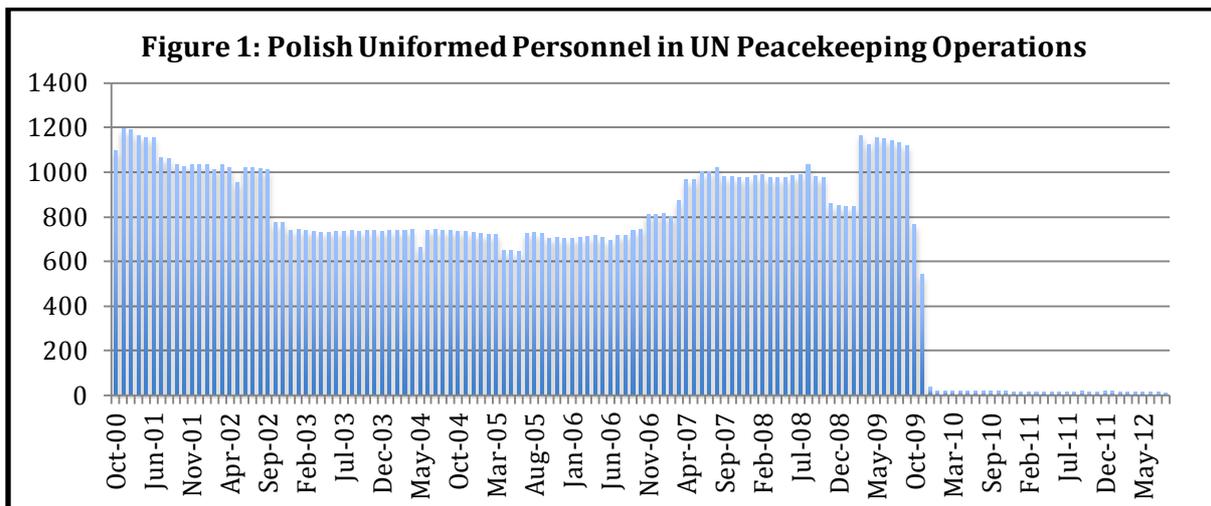
Contributor Profile: Poland

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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
100,000	Attack: 30	2010: \$8.43bn (1.8% of GDP)	12 (31 August 2012)	UNAMA 1 expert MONUSCO 1 expert	ISAF (Afghanistan): 2,580
World Ranking (size): 48	Multi-role: 89	2011: \$9.43bn (1.82% of GDP)	Ranking: 97	UNMIL 5 experts UNOCI 2 experts UNMISS 2 experts	EUFOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina): 47
Army 46,900	Transport: 103	2012: \$10.43bn (1.98% of GDP)	(19th largest contributor from EU states, 19th from NATO)	MINURSO 1 expert	NTM-I (Iraq): 17
Navy 8,100	Anti-submarine: 12				KFOR (Serbia): 295
Air Force 17,200	Search/Rescue: 9				
Special Forces 3,000					
Joint 24,800					
Paramilitary 21,400					
Defense Spending / Active troop: ² US\$104,000 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000)					

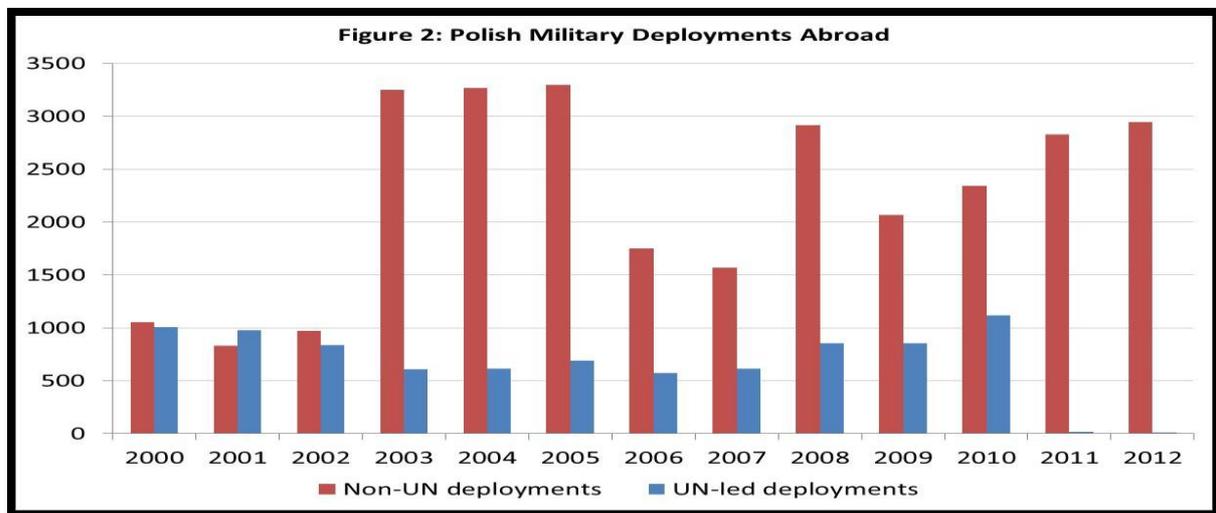
Part 1: Recent Trends

Poland has a long tradition of participation in international crisis management missions. Since the early 1950s, nearly 84,000 Polish military personnel have participated in 71 military operations abroad, the majority of which were UN-led missions which focused mainly on traditional peacekeeping tasks such as the separation of conflicting parties after the termination of hostilities.



By 1989, Poland had participated only in UN-led activities, and Polish contingents performed mainly logistical tasks. But the collapse of communism in 1989 had a major effect on Polish military involvement abroad. In 1996, although not yet a NATO member, Poland sent a military contingent to NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was later reformed into Stabilization Force (SFOR). Membership of NATO (in 1999) and the European Union (in 2004), the fear of terrorism, and the plexus of contemporary

political and strategic factors changed the nature of Polish military involvement abroad. Polish participation in UN-led operations significantly decreased as it participated in more NATO-led and EU-led missions and those of ad hoc international coalitions. An expression of this tendency was the withdrawal in late 2009 and 2010 of three military contingents participating in UN operations: UNDOF on the Golan Heights (334 soldiers and military personnel), UNIFIL in Lebanon (445) and MINURCAT in Chad and Central African Republic (310). In 2009, [SHIRBRIG](#) was closed down. The Polish withdrawal was not due to a lack of success in UN peacekeeping missions. The decision was explained instead by the need to rationalize Polish participation in international operations during the global financial crisis and emphasizing the priority of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan. The withdrawal was also part of the plan to restructure Polish Military Forces and an expression of the view that Poland has already fulfilled its obligations to participate in UN peacekeeping missions ([answer of the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defense to parliamentary question No 12328 on the preparation of military missions from 17 November 2009](#)).



Poland's major new military challenge came in 2003 when it joined Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. Command of the Central-South Zone as part of the International Stabilization Force in Iraq (up to the withdrawal of the Polish military contingent in 2008) is still seen as Poland's most important role in international missions. In 2002 Poland took part in Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, and then the ISAF. ISAF remains Poland's priority. Poland also contributes to the allied naval Operation *Active Endeavour* in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Baltic Air Policing mission guarding the airspace over the three Baltic states.

[The Strategy of National Security](#) (2007) and its executive document [Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland](#) highlight the need for Poland to possess operational capacities that permit significant participation in NATO and EU crisis response operations as well as support for similar UN operations. NATO and EU membership and the strategic partnership with the United States are the main reference points for Poland's foreign and defense policy.

[The Strategy for the participation of the Polish armed forces in international operations](#) document adopted on 13 January 2009 by the Council of Ministers outlines the strategic aims and objectives of the Polish Armed Forces in operations abroad. Operations conducted by NATO and the EU have explicit priority, although participation in operations under the

auspices of other international organizations such as UN and OSCE are mentioned. According to the Strategy, the optimal level of commitment of Polish Armed Forces in international operations ranges between 3,200 and 3,800 soldiers and military personnel. Participation can be in missions led by international organizations or ad hoc coalitions of the willing. Poland does not consider UN Security Council authorization necessary to participate in operations abroad, although a UN mandate is welcome.

Another important development is [The Vision of the Polish Armed Forces 2030](#), which outlines the future development of the Polish Army in the next two decades. It envisages Poland becoming a more reliable partner and member of the EU and NATO, which are considered crucial to Polish national interests.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

The stationing of the Polish Armed Forces on the territory of other states is regulated by the provisions of relevant international agreements (e.g. agreements between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty regarding the status of their armed forces), and the provisions of the [Law of 17 December 1998](#) on the principles of the “use” or “stay” of the Armed Forces outside the state frontiers.

Article 2 of the aforementioned Law specifies that “the use” of armed forces outside the country means the participation of Polish troops in: military conflicts or to strengthen the Polish forces and its allies, peacekeeping missions, and action to prevent acts of terrorism and their consequences. By “stay,” the law refers to training and military exercises, rescue, search or humanitarian tasks.

Decisions on the use of troops abroad, and on shortening or extending their deployment, are made by the President after a motion of the Council of Ministers (in the case of armed conflict, to support allies, or in peacekeeping missions). In the case of actions to prevent acts of terrorism or their consequences, decisions are made by the President at the request of the Prime Minister. The special position of the President in this decision-making process derives from the provisions of [Articles 126 and 134 Polish Constitution](#), by which the President stands guard over the sovereignty and security of the state and the inviolability and integrity of its territory as the Supreme Commander. However, in matters of operations outside the country the President and the Government are interdependent. Notably, decisions on the use of troops abroad do not require parliamentary approval. The only requirement is that the Speakers of both Chambers (lower–*Sejm* and upper–*Senat*) should immediately be informed of the President’s decision. That decision should specify the size of the contingency, the duration of its use, and the territory of its operation. The main advantage of this decision-making process is the ability to quickly deploy troops. For example, the Polish Military Contingent in the EUFOR mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina deployed in about ten days. The major disadvantage is the lack of the consent, or opinion, of the parliament. A parliamentary procedure would ensure broader political support for military participation in missions abroad, affecting the stability of the commitment regardless of changes in the domestic political environment.

[The Act of 25 May 2001 on the restructuring, technical modernization and financing of the Armed Forces](#) is the basic legal act regulating the development priorities of the military, the sources of defense preparation financing, and the size of national defense expenditures. Pursuant to this Act, Poland allocates at least 1.95% of the previous year’s GDP for defense. Participation in international operations is financed from the budget of the Ministry of

Defense. In cases not covered by the Ministry of Defense budget, funds are provided by the Council of Ministers. In 2013, spending on foreign missions will fall by 1.5% compared to 2012, due to a reduction in the contingent in Afghanistan. [The draft budget for 2013](#) allocates for this purpose approximately PLN560m, which is about US\$1.9m (US\$1 = approx. PLN3).

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

The main rationale for Poland's participation in military operations abroad is the belief that the post-Cold War world order has been evolving in the direction of a multi-polar order, increasingly more interdependent and integrated. National security policy should therefore recognize the blurring of the border between the internal and external dimensions of security. In its official documents ([Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012-2016](#)), Poland supports UN operations to maintain international peace and security and declares support for the continued participation of the Polish Armed Forces in UN peacekeeping operations. However, at the same time Poland expresses a clear preference for engaging in international crisis response operations through NATO and the EU.

Political and Security Rationales: Membership in NATO, the EU and the strategic partnership with the United States dominate Polish foreign and defense policy. NATO's collective security pact is central to Polish policy and is thought to require effective involvement in international operations. There is a political consensus that Poland has a responsibility to help maintain international security, especially after 11 September 2001.

Economic Rationales: There are no significant economic rationales for contributing to UN peacekeeping operations. In missions led by NATO or the EU, which account for the majority of Polish troops abroad, military personnel are not reimbursed.

Institutional Rationales: From the point of view of the military, participation in international peacekeeping operations is seen as an opportunity to enhance operational experiences and military skills. In particular, the military professional staff has changed its approach after the communist era. During the Cold War, participation in peacekeeping forces brought material benefits and service in peacekeeping missions was profitable and prestigious (much higher pay and the opportunity to go abroad). Today, involvement in international missions is treated as part of the training that is necessary for promotion. Polish police also participate in UN peacekeeping operations (since participation in the mission of UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia in 1992). Since then, a total of 1,170 police officers, including 18 women were involved in the following missions: UNPROFOR, UNGCI, UNTAES, UNIPTF, UNMOT, UNMIS, UNMIK, UNOMIG. Currently, three Polish policemen are serving in UNMIL.

Normative Rationales: Despite a significant reduction in its contribution to UN missions, Poland has not renounced completely its support for or participation in such missions. This is due to the recognition that the UN retains a central role in the international security architecture and Poland maintains a commitment to traditional multilateral diplomacy in the field of international security.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Poland's priority attention is given to NATO, the EU and U.S.-led operations. According to the country's strategic objectives, this trend will not change in the foreseeable future.

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: As noted above, NATO and the EU have been the preferred vehicles for crisis management since the withdrawal of its major UN contingents in 2009.

Financial costs: Financial and operational constraints are two major limitations to Poland's military contributions abroad. Poland can deploy up to 3,800 troops at any given time. However, in the case of UN-led operations, financial costs are not the primary consideration because the UN is able to partially compensate the Polish government.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: This is not relevant factor.

Difficult domestic politics: Participation in military missions abroad is subject to a written question and debate in Parliament. However, UN-led peacekeeping operations have never been the subject of major debate. Domestic political tensions grow when casualties are taken, particularly in the cases of Iraq (26 soldiers killed) and Afghanistan (so far, 38 killed).

Exceptionalism and absence of pressure to contribute: This is relevant in the sense that the UN is seen as only one of several potential mechanisms to work through and there is greater pressure to contribute to NATO and/or EU missions than UN-led missions. Both NATO and the EU are thought to have stronger institutional mechanisms for decision-making, which translates into better performance. More important, however, is belief that these organizations have a direct impact on Polish security in a way that the UN does not.

Legal obstacles: There are no legal obstacles to Polish contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Rhetorical support for UN peacekeeping activities remains evident in Polish political/security debates. But the current priority given to NATO and the EU is not expected to weaken. In practice, this means that there will be no redefinition of assumptions about Poland's security policy and no return to a situation where UN-led operations are awarded priority. NATO will continue to be the chief multilateral instrument of Poland's security policy, politically and militarily. The main challenge remains the orientation of discussions within NATO and the EU concerning crisis management operations, especially in Afghanistan and the Balkans. Withdrawal from Afghanistan (expected at the end of 2014, according to [record of the meeting of the parliamentary committee on national defense from 25 January 2012](#)) would release troops for participation in other missions but this is unlikely to translate into a larger Polish presence within UN operations because of political priority for participation in NATO and EU missions.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There are no significant domestic opponents to Polish participation in UN peacekeeping missions. But nor are there any strong institutional supporters or high-profile figures well-disposed to UN peacekeeping. Political and public debate is concentrated on issues concerning Poland's participation in ad hoc coalitions. There is also little tradition of studying peacekeeping issues in research centers or universities. Research is conducted at the military colleges but focuses on the military and operational dimensions and is primarily for consumption by the armed forces (for future missions). A broader scientific study was conducted at the [National Defence Academy](#). It is worth noting, however, that active

associations of veterans of foreign missions are developing, especially [peacekeeping missions under the aegis of the UN](#).

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Participation in missions abroad has clearly increased the capabilities of Poland's military, including its ability to deploy to foreign theaters, conduct traffic control in separation zones, monitor the safety of civilians, ensure peace and the rule of law in a supervised area, provide support to other contingents in their areas of responsibility, arrest war criminals, degrade terrorist groups, and support humanitarian activities. The main caveat has been the financial costs of such operations. An important problem associated with participation in missions abroad, especially for soldiers injured while on duty, was the issue of care for the injured, their rehabilitation and possible protection in the event of losing the ability to continue military service. [Now it is regulated by the relevant provisions](#).

With regard to women's participation in Polish military missions, in 2010, 111 women were sent to peace and stabilization missions abroad. The largest group of women was deployed to the Polish Military Contingent in Afghanistan (97), then Kosovo (9) and then Bosnia and Herzegovina (5). In recent years, a trend has been observed to broaden the scope of the positions taken up by the female participants of the missions. However, no women are currently in Poland's uniformed contribution to UN peacekeeping operations.

Part 8: Further Reading

Maciej Marszałek and Janusz Zuziak (eds.), *Wojsko Polskie w międzynarodowych misjach i operacjach pokojowych* (Wydawnictwo Akademii Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 2010).

Paweł Pietrzak, [Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in International Operations—Legal Grounds, Strategic Considerations, and Practical Implementation](#) [in] *Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin*, National Security Bureau (Poland) National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Warsaw 2012.

[Wojsko Polskie w służbie pokoju](#), "Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy," ROK XII (LXIII) NR 5 (238) WARSZAWA 2011.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2012).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Using figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012*.