DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine since independence. The author discusses the initial stage of the formation of the armed forces in that country, their structure and armaments at the time, moving on to the modern situation, and describing the Ukrainian armed forces involvement in the current armed conflict. In the author’s conclusion, these widely recognized problems become the basis for answering questions concerning the current status and combat capabilities of the armed forces of Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine armed forces, Land Forces of Ukraine, Air Defence Forces of Ukraine, Ukrainian Air Force, Ukrainian Navy, the National Guard of Ukraine.

Introduction

The foundation of the raison d'état of each state - irrespective of its form and character - are the guarantees ensuring its existence and conditions of development. The implementation of these conditions requires proper organisation of the state as a system ensuring its security, for example, independence and territorial integrity as well as internal stability.

The organisational structure of this system is composed of a series of mutually interpenetrating elements which constitute one whole. It consists mostly of the political, economic and defence subsystems. Their task is to ensure proper functioning and development of the state - in accordance with its raison d'être, including also countering any threats to its security, both armed and non-armed. From the beginning of the 1990s, for example, the gaining of independence by Ukraine, we have observed the development of the military system of this state and the consequent reform of the army.

The Ukrainian armed forces need to be considered as an element in a broader security arrangement, as they are to a significant extent influenced by the geopolitical location of the state, historical experience, as well as the state of national consciousness of the society. The foundations of the defence policy were contained in the first Ukrainian Military Doctrine adopted on 19th October 1993. In accordance with the doctrine, the basic

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1 The formal revival of statehood should be dated 16th July 1990, when the political leadership of Ukraine announced the Declaration of Sovereignty. Eighteen months later - on 2nd December 1991, the leaders of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine signed an agreement in the Białowieża Forest on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States and announced that the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

2 According to a dictionary definition, a reform is a change in a system, which does not mean a radical and qualitative transformation of a system (...) the introduction of changes and improvements. Cf.: Słownik Języka Polskiego, v.3, p. 33.
aim of the policy was the protection of sovereignty and maintaining territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. Announcing the character of their military doctrine of defence, Ukraine made the assumption of not being a potential opponent of any state. It treated its security as an ability to defend its national interests in the event of potential or real threat of war. Ukraine's strategic task was to protect state sovereignty and political independence, territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders. In the doctrine, Ukraine declared the status of the outside-block and neutral state, which was also expressed in the "Declaration of State Sovereignty". In 1994, Ukraine signed the "Framework Document", declaring in this way its willingness to participate in the Partnership for Peace and presented its "individual partnership programme". It meant that Ukraine officially accepted the criteria defined by NATO for the partner countries (transparency of defence planning and defence budget, democratic control over the armed forces, participation in peace missions) and the rules of military (training and exercises) as well as political cooperation (consultations in case of a threat to the security of the country).

At the beginning of 1992, there were in Ukraine: about 1.3 thousand nuclear warheads on 176 SS-19 and SS-24 strategic missiles, about 600 missiles on strategic bombers and 2.5 thousand pieces of tactical nuclear weapons, which Russia secretly carried away the same year.

At the beginning of 1993, the Americans, Russians and Ukrainians began the difficult negotiations on nuclear weapons, the security of Ukraine and Ukrainian-Russian relations. The most difficult to solve were the problems of the financial compensation and security guarantees for Ukraine, because the United States and Russia were reluctant to provide extended warranties. In July 1993, the Verkhovna Rada passed a resolution that nuclear weapons located on the territory of Ukraine constituted its property, and in November 1993, the parliament conditionally ratified the START-I Treaty. Its ratification was to enter into force provided that Ukraine received guarantees that no state would direct against it conventional and nuclear weapons and would not jeopardize its territorial integrity. The negotiations resulted in the signing by the presidents of the trilateral US-Russian-Ukrainian agreement, supplemented with an Annex. In accordance with this agreement, Ukraine was, *inter alia*, supposed to hand over to Russia all (176) intercontinental ballistic missiles SS-19 and SS-24 and more than 1.5 thousand nuclear

3 The military doctrine is a part of the national security concept and constitutes the whole of the fundamental assumptions and rules approved by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine related to the organization and ensuring of the security of citizens and the state by means of political, diplomatic, economic and military measures. By the Decrees of 8 June 2012, the President of Ukraine approved the new versions of the National Security Strategy of Ukraine (NSSU, an amendment to the document of 2007) and the Military Doctrine of Ukraine (an amendment to the document of 2009). Earlier, in April 2012 the White Paper of the Armed Forces of 2011 was approved. The common feature of these documents is a repeated emphasis on the outside-block status of Ukraine with the simultaneous focus on the role of a strategic partnership with the Russian Federation, the European Union and NATO. Continuing the process of European integration was also stressed as a strategic policy objective of Ukraine. Cf.: more: Nowa Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Ukrainy, E. Mazur-Cieślak, P. Świeżak, www.bbn.gov.pl/download/1/1476/str207-220dokumenty.pdf /15.06.2015/

4 The declaration of state sovereignty of Ukraine of 16th July 1990 adopted by the Verkhovna Rada, stated the inherent right to self-determination of the Ukrainian people and building of an independent Ukrainian state. Ukraine when concluding international agreements should be guided by the principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs.

5 At this point it is worth mentioning the cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian soldiers in the International Polish-Ukrainian Battalion (POLUKRBAT) formed in the mid-1990s, which was the precursor of Polish and Ukrainian cooperation. Cf.: R. Szynowski, Polukrat (Polsko-Ukrański Batalion) [in:] Polska i Ukraina w kształtowaniu bezpieczeństwa europejskiego, scientific editing J. Buczyński, H. Bińkowski, Przemyśl, 2007, pp. 145-150.
warheads. Warheads were to be destroyed and recovered uranium was to be converted into fuel for nuclear power plants. The Americans demanded the uranium enrichment process to be performed under the supervision of independent inspectors. Some of the reprocessed uranium was to return to Ukraine as fuel for nuclear power plants, for which Russia would be paid by the Americans\(^6\). In June 1996, the President announced in parliament that Ukraine had become a non-nuclear country.

Already in the early stages of the formation of the state, the Ukrainian parliament established strong controls over the armed forces: the president as the commander in chief, the Defence Council composed of senior representatives of the government and the military, the Defense Minister with the relevant ministry and the General Staff. The decision to create the national Armed Forces of Ukraine was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 22nd October 1991. There was also established the State Committee for Defence and Security of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defence. In 1995, the Military General Inspectorate was created to assist the president of Ukraine. It began operating at the end of August 1995. Its activity was based on the control over the so-called power ministries, including the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Ministry of the Interior (MI), Border Protection Force (BPF) and Civil Defense (CD) units. The control was primarily related to compliance with the legislation of Ukraine, materials and financial management, and performing of mobilization tasks by civilian institutions and units of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior. The activity of the Military General Inspectorate provided the president with direct control and influence on the decisions taken in those ministries, which strengthened his position in the system of power in Ukraine. In July 1995, the president appointed the Main Inspectorate of the Ministry of Defence (MIMoD), the aim of which was to control the restructuring process of the armed forces, their combat readiness, operational-tactical training and moral-psychological state.

**Yesterday and today the armed forces of Ukraine**

One of the most important elements of the military system of Ukraine\(^7\) has always been the armed forces. The basic task of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Ukrainian AFs) is the defense of independence, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. The armed forces of Ukraine have included: land, air and naval forces and other military formations necessary to ensure state defense capability under the applicable legislation.

In the 1990s, it was assumed that the Armed Forces of Ukraine would consist of two basic components: operational troops (land forces, air defense and naval forces) and the national defense forces (National Guard, Border Protection Force, Civil Defence, Security Service and Internal Troops). It was expected that the operational forces would be formed within four years, and the process started after the referendum of 1st December 1991. In various statements, the leaders of the state and government declared that the

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\(^6\) It is worth mentioning that under the arrangements related to dismantling of nuclear weapons, Ukraine received from the USA 175 million dollars (the value of compensation and the costs of dismantling were valued by Ukrainian experts at 2.8 billion dollars), 330 million dollars of economic aid, and nuclear fuel. The Russian side offered, as compensation for Ukraine, *inter alia*, the following: the cancellation of a part of debt for the import of Russian oil and gas. Ukraine received security guarantees from Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, when it became a non-nuclear state. However, they did not go beyond the standard warranties offered by the UN Security Council resulting from the provisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

\(^7\) The Ukrainian military subsystem includes in its structure: a support system (covering the right to defense, military education, mobilization, logistics) and combat system (covering the art of war, operational preparation of the country, the armed forces).
armed forces would count from between 150 to 420 thousand soldiers. The formation of the armed forces started in early 1992, and consisted of four stages:

- at the first stage (from 1992 to 1993), control mechanisms of the armed forces were created, including the development of the most essential legislative documents;
- at the second stage (from 1993 to 1994) detailed operational-strategic plans for the use of the AFs were developed;
- at the third stage (1995) a new system of mobilization deployment of forces and preparation of reserves was developed;
- the fourth phase (from 1996 to 2000) was intended for the completion of structural changes and the achievement of the target numerical strength of troops.

A little earlier, the creation of the National Guard began, which was originally expected to count about 100 thousand people. The Border Protection Force was the earliest to start functioning in Ukraine.

Ukraine had its own, as a matter of fact, very original idea for the formation of the armed forces, namely by appropriating equipment and armaments of the former Soviet Army. Despite numerous objections on the part of the authorities of the Soviet Union which did not allow in various ways for the arbitrary and uncontrolled acquisition by Ukraine of units of the former Soviet Army, which could only delay the process or cause only a small change of the number and proportion of the components of the future Armed Forces of Ukraine, the acquisition of units and sub-units as well as military equipment became a reality. The resources of military equipment and weapons seized from the former Soviet Army provided an opportunity for Ukraine to have not only a 450-thousand-strong, but even a million - strong army. There were about 6 thousand tanks (mostly T-72 and T-64), nearly 8 thousand AFVs, more than 6.5 thousand different over 100 mm calibre artillery systems and approx. 3 thousand airplanes and helicopters of various types. The only deterrent against creating such a large army could be - as in all post-Soviet republics - considerations of an economic nature. In fact, both Russia and Ukraine faced the problem of how to reduce their armies, but did not have any trouble with arming them.

According to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe CFE-1 supplemented by the provisions of the agreement of Tashkent, which divided the limits set in the Agreement CFE-1 for the former Soviet Union between individual countries formed after the breakup, and the arrangements referring to the number of soldiers, adopted in July 1992 in Helsinki - CFE-1a (Act Closing Negotiations on Manpower of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe), Ukraine obtained, in five basic categories, the following quantities of offensive systems of conventional armaments: tanks - 4080, AFVs- 5050, artillery of over 100 mm calibre - 4040, combat aircraft - 1090, attack helicopters - 330, headcount - 450 000 soldiers.8

As of 31st December 1994, Ukrainian AFs had more than 470 thousand soldiers, including about 300 thousand in the land forces, 150 thousand in the air defence forces and 20 thousand sailors in the naval forces (including approx. 18 thousand in coastal units). At the end of 1995, the government of Ukraine announced that it planned to reduce the headcount of its army from about 470 thousand to the level of 350 thousand in three years,

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8 According to the treaty arrangements, within 40 months from the signing of the agreement, Ukraine was committed to destroy vast quantities of surplus weapons in four basic categories (tanks, AFVs, combat aircraft and artillery of over 100 mm calibre). As for combat helicopters, Ukraine has fewer than the treaty provides for. Cf.: A. Podkowski, R. Szywnowski, Siły Zbrojne Ukrainy w Systemie Bezpieczeństwa Państwa, [in:] scientific editing W. Wroblewski, Działania militarnie w Polsce południowo-wschodniej. Akademia Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 2000, pp. 491-525.
in order to achieve the level of 250 thousand soldiers in the year 2000. At the end of 2000, the Armed Forces of Ukraine consisted of 310 thousand soldiers and 90 thousand civilian employees. In 2012, the Armed Forces of Ukraine numbered about 139 thousand soldiers. They were equipped with 730 tanks (T-84, T-80, T-64), armoured personnel carriers and IFVs - up to 2000 pieces (BMP-1,2 BTR-60,-70 and -80, MT-LB), 716 artillery pieces above 100 mm, more than 80 combat helicopters and 160 combat aircraft. The Navy had 22 battleships. At the end of 2013, the Armed Forces of Ukraine consisted of approx. 125 thousand professional soldiers and conscripts, and 42 thousand civilian employees.

In early 2014, the Armed Forces of Ukraine consisted of 106 thousand soldiers (according to other sources approx. 119 thousand soldiers and 40 thousand civilian employees). Mobilization potential was estimated at 1 million reservists with a clear downward trend. In the latter case, it is clear that these statistics have nothing to do with reality and real mobilization capability. According to some observers, after deducting other necessary types of service and personal losses in the Crimea, in the summer of 2014, Ukraine could, in theory, send to fight 38-39 thousand, and in practice 32-35 thousand soldiers. In view of the conflict with Russia, by December 2014, the size of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was increased to 232 thousand people with a plan to be further increased to 250 thousand in 2015. Since March 2014, mobilization of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has been in progress. In this process, about 230 thousand pieces of small arms and 18 thousand (including 7 thousand armoured) vehicles were given out from the mobilization stocks. In the second half of January, the next stage of mobilization has started in which 61 thousand reservists will be conscripted. There are also plans concerning the implementation of stages V and VI. All three waves of mobilization have involved in 2015 over 100 thousand soldiers. In addition, in 2015 also approx. 40-50 thousand conscripts will be recruited to do their military service. Various estimates indicate that Ukraine after mobilization has between 220 to 235 thousand soldiers within the armed forces - there are plans to increase the armed forces up to 250 thousand. They are supported by the forces supervised by the Ministry of the Interior (without militia, with the exception of combat and special sub-units) and various types of volunteer formations that arise every week and are of different character. The total size of these two groups ranges from 70 to a maximum of 90 thousand people. In addition, support is also offered by the border guard counting

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9 Subsequent ministers of defense presented their plans to reduce the army and increase its combat power: the plan of minister Morozov of 1992 assumed the reduction in the size of the army. All armies were changed into corps, all infantry divisions into mechanized divisions, three divisions were disbanded, and several units were changed into training centres. The plan of minister Radecki of 1994 provided for the formation, from all the units, of three corps composed of three divisions (a total of 7 mechanized and 2 armoured divisions), three artillery divisions, one engineering division, one chemical defence division, one rocket division. This reform provided for the reduction in the number of officers and warrant officers by 30%, but it collapsed due to their resistance. The plan of minister Shmarov of 1998 assumed the creation of seven corps (5 mechanized, 1 armoured, 7 motorized brigades, 3 armoured brigades). Although each Minister of Defence proposed his own plan, in total, quite a lot was achieved - 3,500 structures of varying levels were liquidated, the army was reduced to 410,000 soldiers, the number of munitions was decreased - combat aircraft to 600 units, helicopters - to 250 pieces, tanks - to 2,400 pieces, armoured personnel carriers and IFVs - to 2,000 pieces.

10 In the period 2012 - 2017, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry planned to reduce the size of the army to approx. 55 thousand professional soldiers and 15 thousand civilian employees by total professionalization of the armed forces. This meant a major reduction in the number of units of the army, air force and navy. The decrease in the number of troops had to be offset by an increase in military spending from 0.97% of GDP in 2010 to 1.4% in 2015, and in the future reach more than 1.5%.

11 Quoted after: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Si%C5%82y_Zbrojne_Ukrainy/15.05.2015/.

approx. 55-60 thousand uniformed soldiers. In total, it is estimated that in January 2015, Ukraine may have from 345 to 385 thousand people supported by approx. 75-80 thousand civilian employees within the armed forces and volunteer formations and the Ministry of the Interior (without militia forces). The mobilization of additional reserves is continuing. New military, territorial and volunteer units are being formed. Losses are also replenished on a regular basis. The Armed Forces of Ukraine have three types of armed forces: army, air force, navy.

Land Forces. Taking into consideration the non-nuclear status of the state, in determining the organisational composition and the relationships between types of armed forces, types of troops and special forces, priority was given to the land forces as a core component of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The basis for the creation of the land forces were the Soviet Army units stationed in the republic subordinated at the time to three military districts - Carpathian, Kiev and Odessa districts. The structure of the land forces was similar to that of the land forces of Russia. The land forces of Ukraine passed from the army-division-regimental structure to corps-division-brigade structure. There were plans to ultimately (after the year 2000) change completely to the corps-brigade structure. Such an organizational-unit structure corresponded to modern demands and did not complicate the ability to command. In this structure, the primary attack force were mechanized and armoured brigades composed of 4-5 battalions, armed and equipped with modern means of reconnaissance and electronic warfare (EW). As part of the restructuring of the armed forces, a series of organizational changes were conducted, involving mainly the transformation of the armoured and general service armies into army corps - 6th Armoured Army into 6th Army Corps, 1st Army into 1st Army Corps, 13th Army into 13th Army Corps, 38th Army into 38th Army Corps. Combat composition of the most newly created corps did not change, with the exception of 13th Army Corps from the composition of which 30th Armoured Division was separated as well as 119th training centre with the organizational structure of a division. In addition, three Army Corps (AC) were formed: 2nd AC in Donetsk, 8th AC (based on the 8th Armoured Army) in Zhytomyr and 32nd AC in Simferopol as well as 1st Air Assault Division - composed of two brigades: airborne and air assault - based on part of the forces and means of the 98th Airborne Division divided between Ukraine and Russia; 127th Mechanized Brigade, which was included in 32nd AC; 8 Sapper Brigade; 1500th Training Centre of Engineering Troops (Kamieniec Podolski); 95th Training Centre of Airborne Troops (Zhytomyr), 224th Training Centre of Airborne Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Chyrov) and 865th Training Centre (Shepetivka).

At the time of the formation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the land forces were organized into two military districts: Precarpathian Military District and Odessa Military District (PMD and OMD). In November 1993, the names of the districts were changed. The PMD was transformed into the Operational Command "West" (based in Lviv), while

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14 However, currently in the state of war, we may focus on formations that actively support the military effort of the armed forces: territorial defence units subordinated to the Department of Territorial Defence; various other support institutions operating within the armed forces (intelligence, military counterintelligence, special forces, military police), the National Guard, designated police forces, special law enforcement forces and other militia sub-units; the Border Guard; volunteer formations including Right Sector units, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the Ukrainian National Army, self-defence of different regions, guerrilla mass levy, battalions of volunteers and a number of other formations, as well as groups of mercenaries. As many authors note, the development of various types of military, militia and paramilitary formations is so large that it is extremely difficult to identify the size and type of forces at the disposal of Ukraine these days.
the OMD - into the Operational Command "South" (based in Odessa). In February 1994, by the decision of the Minister of Defense, the Operational Command "West" was renamed as the Western Field of Operations (WFO), and the Operational Command "South" as the Southern Field of Operations (SFO).

The strength of the SFO troops amounted to over 96 thousand soldiers. Combat units were completed in 60-75% of headcount, and the support and logistic units in approximately 20-30%. Arms and equipment of the SFO comprised of: 1,700 tanks, including about 1,400 T-64; 2,200 AFVs, including 1,100 infantry fighting vehicles (BWP-1 and BWP-2); about 1,700 different artillery systems of over 100 mm calibre. The SFO consisted of three army corps (1st, 6th and 32th AC) and 28th MD (as a reserve of the SFO commander); 150th training centre (TC - the equivalent of MD); 1st Air Assault Division (composed of 25th AB and 45 AAB), 40th AAB; 10th special purpose brigade; 55th Artillery Division (AD); 159th TBMB; 184th Heaviest Artillery Brigade (HAB); two Anti-Aircraft Missiles Brigades; a Tactical Unit, units and sub-units of the signals, engineering and logistical support troops (bases and depots of weapons and military equipment, repair facilities, etc.).

The Western Field of Operations (WFO) consisted of three AC (8th, 13th and 38th); 8th Special Purpose Brigade, 224th TC of the Airborne Forces; 26th ArtD; 199th TBMB; 188th HAB; anti-aircraft missiles regiment (aamr); a Tactical Unit, units and sub-units of the signals, engineering and logistical support troops (bases and depots of weapons and military equipment, repair facilities, etc.). The numerical strength of the WFO troops amounted to about 88 thousand soldiers. Combat units were completed in 60-75% of headcount, and the support and logistic units in approximately 20-30%. Arms and equipment of the WFO comprised of, among others: approximately 2,060 tanks, including 1,100 T-72s; 2,500 AFVs, including 1,300 IFVs (BWP-1 and BWP-2); about 1,500 different artillery systems of over 100 mm calibre

The restructuring process of the land forces was slow and, as in other types of armed forces, bore many signs of inconsistency. This was borne out by, among other things, the abandoning, at the end of 1994 of the concept of creating the so-called fields of operations and the return to the structure based on districts, and in early 1995 reintroduction of the names: Carpathian Military District - for the Western Field of Operations and Odessa Military District - for the Southern Field of Operations. Also aviation units of the land forces were re-integrated into the land forces, which strengthened primarily the PMD troops which disposed of about 70% of the total number of attack helicopters Mi-24.

Between 1995 and 1999, the land forces contained seven ACs. Overall, their structures comprised of four ArmDs (including two training ones - 119th and 169th TC), eight MDs, five mechanized brigades (MB), four TBMBs, five ArtBs, three anti-aircraft missile brigades and Army Aviation brigades. In addition to the structure of the corps, there were (directly subordinated to district commands): two MDs (including a training one - 150th TC), Air Assault Division (AAD), two Air Assault Brigades (AAB) and three Sapper Brigades (SapB); two ArtDs, three TBMBs, two HABs, two Army Aviation Brigades, ArtB, an anti-tank artillery brigade, three Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigades.

Units of the 13th AC of the PMD were deployed near the Polish border. The Corps in the first wave had two MDs, including one deployed division (24th MD in Yavoriv).

Places of constant deployment of the units of the 13th AC were located just 30 km from the state border. The numerical strength of the PMD troops amounted to about 94 thousand soldiers and was composed of: 8th, 13th, 38th AC (four MDs, two ArmDs, including a training one - 119th Training Centre, three mechanized brigades (MB), 341th ArtB and 7th Army Aviation Brigade), 8th Special Purpose Brigade, 224th Training Centre of the Airborne Forces, 26th ArtD, 199th TBMB, 188th HAB, three Army Aviation brigades, Pontoon-Bridge Brigade, Engineering-Sapper Brigade, an engineering battalion, a chemical defence brigade, two signals brigades and logistic units. The armament of the PMD included among others: approximately 2,080 tanks, including 1,100 T-72s; 2,800 armoured combat vehicles, including 1,300 BWP-1s and BWP-2s; about 1,700 pieces of artillery of over 100 mm calibre, including 230 multiple rocket launchers (about 130 pieces of 122 mm BM-21 Grad; more than 170 Mi-24 attack helicopters and about 120 other types of helicopters.

Units of the OMD were located in eastern Ukraine, bordering with Russia, Moldova, Romania and Belarus and as a part of the defensive system of the state accounted for one of the main elements protecting its eastern and southern border on the Black Sea and in the Sea of Azov region, including the Crimean Peninsula. The numerical strength of the OMD troops amounted to approximately 120 thousand soldiers, and consisted of 1st, 2nd, 6th and 32th AC, 28th MD (reserve of the district commander), 150th TC, 1st AAD (composed of 25th AB and 45th AAB), 40th AAB, 10th Special Purpose Brigade, 55th ArtD, 159th TBMB, 184th HAB, two anti-aircraft missile brigades (AAMB), ar, Sapper Brigade, Engineer-Sapper Brigade, Chemical Defence Brigade, Signals Brigade, 2nd Army Aviation Brigade, two material-technical bases (in case of war they were to be deployed as two Tactical Units-200th and 204th MD) and logistic units (bases, depots of weapons and military equipment, repair facilities and others). The OMD's armament comprised of: about 1,700 tanks, including 1,500 T-64s; about 2,050 armoured combat vehicles, including 1,100 BWP-1s and BWP-2s; about 1,650 pieces of artillery of over 100 mm calibre, including 270 multiple rocket launchers (180 pieces of 122 mm BM-21 Grad, approx. 50 pieces of Hurricane 9P140 220 mm and 40 pieces of 300 mm 9A52 Smierch) and self-propelled guns (including 280 pieces of 122mm 2S1 Pink, 170 pieces of 2S3 Acacia, and 50 pieces of 2S7 Pion; more than 70 attack helicopters Mi-24 and about 130 helicopters of other types.16

In 2013, the Ukrainian Land Forces had 57 thousand soldiers. In total, they formed the structure of 16 brigades (two armoured, eight mechanized, two aeromobile, one airborne, two artillery and one rocket brigade); eleven independent combat regiments (one mechanized, one aeromobile, three special purpose, three anti-aircraft, two air force and one electronic warfare regiment); nine regiments of support (four engineering, four signals, and one regiment combating the effects of the use of NBC weapons). Nowadays, the land forces may have within its own structure (without territorial defence forces) approx. 140-50 thousand soldiers. The structure of the armed forces since 2014 has been undergoing constant changes, especially during the conflict. According to expert opinions, in the period of 2014-2015, the land forces consisted of among others: - 1st Armoured Brigade (95 tanks in March 2014.), 17th Armoured Brigade (31 tanks in March 2014.), 24th Mechanized Brigade, 28th Mechanized Brigade, 30th Mechanized Brigade, 51st Mechanized Brigade, 72nd Mechanized Brigade, 92nd Mechanized Brigade, 93rd Mechanized Brigade, 128th Mountain Mechanized Brigade (13 tanks in March 2014), 25th Aeromobile Brigade, 95th

Aeromobile Brigade, 79th Airborne Brigade, 80th independent aeromobile regiment, 26th and 55th Artillery Brigade, 19th Rocket Artillery Brigade, 3rd and 7th Air Regiment, 3rd and 8th Independent Special Purpose Regiment, 54th and 74th Independent Reconnaissance Battalion, 15th, 27th and 107th Rocket Artillery Regiment, 140th Special Operations Centre, 300th Training Armoured Regiment (10-14 tanks), 15th Independent Mountain Infantry Battalion.

Since the announcement of mobilization by mid-January 2015, there were, however, some changes introduced in the Ukrainian Army:

- there were formed: 81st Air Assault Brigade, 44th Artillery Brigade based on the disbanded in 2013 11th Artillery Brigade, 1st Naval Infantry Brigade in Nikolaev (subordinated to the Navy), 57th and 59th Motorized Brigade, 53rd Mechanized Brigade, 14th Mechanized Brigade;
- in the process of formation were: 58th Mechanized Brigade, 73rd and 74th Motorized Brigades, 54th Mechanized Brigade, 10th and 15th Mountain Infantry Regiment;
- there were disbanded: 51st Mechanized Brigade.

Ukraine has a total of 24 large military units (another 9 brigades are being organised or planned). It now has a very serious potential, as the brigades were extended after mobilization (from 4.5 to more than 5 thousand people). Some of them have several frontline (armoured and mechanized) battalions, and several support battalions.17

Territorial defence (TD) battalions which fall under the Ministry of Defence constitute the support for these land forces. This is a formation whose organization began in April 2014, initially as a bottom-up operation. Then, the organization of the territorial forces was taken over by the Ministry of Defence. In total, in Ukraine 33 territorial defence battalions (from 14 to 17 thousand soldiers), have been created. Some of them have been additionally armed with heavy equipment and renamed as mechanized battalions, which have been subsequently incorporated into the structures of brigades. Currently, the territorial defence forces after the reforms include 13 territorial defense battalions (the rest are motorized battalions) which are mainly light formations (infantry using off-road vehicles and trucks, mortars, a few APCs, light anti-tank weapons). The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense plans to form a few more battalions. Each TD battalion counts from 420 to 560 soldiers. Some, however, have or are supposed to have sub-units fitted with heavy equipment (according to local authorities they are to receive tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and anti-tank guns of over 100 mm calibre, e.g. 43rd and 44th Territorial Defence Battalion). Territorial defence battalions proved to be for the Ukrainian authorities a very important and serious support for the ground troops. Twelve such units were in November reformed into mechanized battalions (among others, using infantry fighting vehicles BWP-1 and BTR-60/70/80 and on trucks) and incorporated into the regular brigades.

For several months, many different types of volunteer forces have been formed to support the regular army and the Ministry of the Interior troops in the fight against the enemy and secure the rest of the territory of Ukraine (voluntary support for the land forces). It is hard to describe them, but the following should be mentioned, among others: two battalions of the so-called Right Sector, Battalion (kurin) formed by the UNA-UNSO (Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian People's Self-Defence), the battalion of OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), Chechen Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion. In total, it is estimated that in Ukraine as part of independent voluntary formations there may be around 10-15 thousand people active.18

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18 Source: http://forum.militarium.net /12.05.2015/.
Air Defence Forces. Initially, the air force and air defense forces of the country were separate formations of the armed forces. Air defence forces were an integral part of the entire Soviet air defense system. By Decree of the President of Ukraine of 29th April 1995, the Air Defense Forces (ADF) were established. They included the air force (AF) and air defense (AD) troops. Within the structure of the AF and the AD of that time there were: seven bomber regiments, including long-range ones; three air reconnaissance regiments; a medium-range reconnaissance aviation regiment; seven fighter regiments; three air regiments; an air assault regiment; three air transport regiments; two air squadrons and one AD fighter squadron; eight air brigades; two EW helicopter squadrons and an AD helicopter squadron; an air refuelling aircraft regiment; an AF Combat Training Centre.

Due to the non-nuclear status of the state, the Air Defence Forces have gained particular significance for the security of the country. Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Army an efficient AD system with its missiles and radio systems, as well as the considerable potential of modern aircraft equipment and armament. At the time, it was the most manoeuvrable and most powerful - in terms of firepower - of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The ADFs were organized on the basis of units of the 5th and 14th Air Armies, renamed as the 5th and 14th Air Corps (AirC) (without changing their organizational structures) and air defence troops (units of former 8th AD Army, which were formed into three air defence corps - 28th, 49th and 60th Air Defence Corps). By contrast, the former 17th Air Army units were disbanded and subordinated to the ADF Command. At the end of 1995, the air defence forces numbered about 125 thousand soldiers, including 53 thousand in the AD forces.

The organizational structure of the ADF included:
- 13th independent long-range bomber division - Poltava (formed from the disbanded 106th long-range air group all of whose units were incorporated into the division) composed of: two bomber regiments (19 Tu-160s and 28 Tu-22Ms) and an air reconnaissance regiment (about 20 Tu-22RDs). In addition, the division included an air squadron, an air base (more than 30 Tu-22s) and command, signals, engineering-sapper, technical and logistics units. As part of the distribution of the armament of the Black Sea Fleet, Ukraine took over 20 Tu-22 aircraft. The aircraft, previously stationed at the Black Sea Fleet bases in the Crimea, were deployed to the airport in Poltava and became a part of the armament of 13th Bomber Division;
- 5 AirC - Odessa: 32th Bomber Division with three bomber regiments (including more than 110 Su-24s), and other units; 138th Fighter Division composed of three fighter regiments (about 50 Su-27s, more than 70 MiG-29s and MiG-23 7s). Additionally, the division consisted of two independent air reconnaissance regiments (about 60 reconnaissance aircraft Su-17 and Su 24MR; EW helicopter squadron and other units (including training ones);
- 14th AirC- Lviv: 289th Bomber Division composed of three bomber regiments (a total of approximately 130 Su-24s); 6th Fighter Division composed of two fighter regiments (about 90 fighter-bombers MiG-29s). The composition of the divisions included also independent units: an air assault regiment (more than 30 Su-25s); an air reconnaissance regiment (about 30 reconnaissance aircraft MiG-25RB and Su-24MR) and other (electronic warfare, training and support) units;
- 7th air transport division (ATD) - Melitopol composed of three air transport regiments and a refuelling aircraft regiment (20 II-78);
- three Air Defence Corps (ADC). In each ADC there were two fighter regiments. The regiments were equipped with 30-40 fighters of different types (MiG-29, MiG-25,
MiG-23, Su-27 and Su-15). In total, in the fighter units of air defence there were about 200 aircraft.

The units of the air defence forces were equipped with more than 1,500 combat aircraft of various types (including 25 Tu-95MSs, 19 Tu -160s , 50 Tu-22s, approx. 20 TU-6s, 50 TU-22Ms, approx. 250 Su-24s, more than 30 Su-25s, 40 Su-17s, 170 MiG-29s, more than 220 MiG-23s, 110 MiG-21s, about 110 MiG-25s, 50 MiG-27s, 60 Su-15s, 70 Su -27 and 30 Yak-28 and 200 fighters in ADC), 120 helicopters (including approx. 30 Mi-24, 70 Mi-8s, 14 Mi-6s and almost 10 Mi-2s); a variety of long-range antiaircraft systems (Neva, Buk, Volkhov, Krug). Taking into account the provisions of the treaty on the reduction of conventional armaments (Ukraine could hold 1,090 combat aircraft and 330 attack helicopters), reductions became necessary and were carried out stage by stage. Firstly, obsolete equipment, ending its service life, was destroyed19.

In 2013, the Ukrainian Air Force (UAF) consisted of approx. 42 thousand soldiers. Currently, their number could have increased to approx. 60 thousand people. Ukraine was divided into three operating areas: Western: 7th and 114th Tactical Air Brigade and three anti-aircraft artillery regiments; Central: 9th, 40th and 831st Tactical Air Brigade, two brigades and 5 anti-aircraft artillery regiments; Southern: composed of, among others: 299th Tactical Air Brigade and two anti-aircraft artillery brigades20.

Due to the very low level of funding in previous years, the Ukrainian armed forces suffer from the problems associated with efficiency of equipment and level of training. By mid - January 2015, according to official data, 67 aircraft and 42 helicopters were returned to service. It is now believed that of an aircraft in good working order in service there are approx. 80 including, among others, approx. 19 Mig-29s, 11 Su-24s, 16 Su-27s and 15 Su-25s. The rest are transport and training aircraft. This year, Ukraine plans to restore to service 40 helicopters and planes of various types, and to buy 20 McDonnell Douglas CF-18 Hornet aircraft from the Canadian Air Force (proposal of November 2014). It is estimated that before the conflict, Ukraine had about 20-30 different types of aircraft and a similar number of helicopters, but now it is estimated that there may be around 100 aircrafts and helicopters.

The anti-aircraft forces are composed of: 18 Buk-M1 systems , 26 S-300P systems, 4 S-300PS systems, 4 S-300B systems, 12 stored S-200M Vega-M systems part of which may have returned to service because of mobilization (they were withdrawn from service in 2013). In addition, the Air Force of Ukraine has a very large number of hand-held anti-aircraft missile systems and artillery systems, as well as significant reserves of ammunition. It is planned to acquire light anti-aircraft sets from the NATO states21.

The Navy. In mid - November 1991, the Minister of Defense of Ukraine stated that Ukraine considered the possibility of forming its own fleet, but on the basis of the post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet (BSF). In turn, the President stressed that Ukraine, as a republic of the former Soviet Union, had made a major contribution to the process of building the power of the Soviet Navy, and therefore had a right to part of the Black Sea Fleet. By

19 In Ukraine, there were stationed long-range strategic bombers (Tu-160 and Tu-95MS) which formerly belonged to the Soviet Army aviation units. Ukraine decided to sell 19 Tu-160 and Tu-95MS 25 to Russia. The deal was not made. Of the total number of strategic bombers, 40 aircraft were destroyed (the costs were borne by the United States), two aircraft after rearming were destined to serve in the Air Force, two planes were used as exhibits. A. Podkowski, R. Szynowski, Siły Zbrojne Ukrainy w systemie Bezpieczeństwa Państwa … op. cit. pp. 491-525.

20 The Command of the Air Force in the Crimea was disbanded and the whole infrastructure taken over by the Russian Federation. Some of the equipment was returned to the Ukrainian side.

contrast, Russians claimed that in the case of dividing the Black Sea Fleet between the two countries, the naval forces of Turkey would dominate in the Black Sea, which would create a threat to the interests of both Russia and Ukraine. The Black Sea Fleet at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union had the following forces:

- Vessels and submarines: one aircraft carrier "Admiral Kuznetsov" introduced to service in January 1991; in December of the same year it was taken by the Russians to Murmansk in the face of an anticipated attempt to seize the ship by the Ukrainian authorities; two helicopter carriers ("Moscow" and "Leningrad"); ten destroyers; thirty frigates; one hundred patrol and coastal defence ships; sixty mine warfare vessels (minesweepers, mine-layers); twenty-eight submarines; more than one hundred and sixty floating auxiliary units;
- Naval aviation: more than 400 aircraft and helicopters: Tu-22M (approx. 40), Su-25 (over 40), Su-17 (45), MiG-29 (over 30) as well as attack helicopters Mi-24 and transport aircraft of different versions based at five airports: Tuapse in Russia, Sevastopol, Odessa, Balaklava in Ukraine and Poti in Georgia;
- Naval infantry and coastal defence units: 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (NIB) and 126th coastal defense division (CDD) - both of them Russian-Ukrainian units. 810th Naval Infantry Brigade counts about 4 thousand marines and is equipped with over 360 different vehicles. While 126th CDD stationed in Sevastopol and Simferopol in the Crimea, has been a powerful combat force. Its numerical strength has been about 5 thousand soldiers and it had the following armament and equipment: more than 240 T-64 tanks, 140 infantry fighting vehicles BWP-1, 150 BMDs, 370 armoured personnel carriers BTR-60, -70 and -80 and about 120 guns and mortars of over 100 mm calibre.

The most important part of the infrastructure of the Navy (naval bases, ports and airports of naval aviation units) was located in the Black Sea region on the territory of Ukraine. The largest bases and ports were: Sevastopol in the Crimean Peninsula (the command and staff of the Black Sea Fleet, the repair yard, training units and naval arsenal), Balaklava, Donuzlav, Odessa, Ochakov. The base airports of the Black Sea Fleet aircraft were located in Vesoloye, Kulbakino, Oktiabrskoye, Limanskoye, Ovruch and Saki where the Fleet's helicopters were also stationed and the only training vessel of the CIS for naval aviation pilots.

In accordance with the earlier agreement reached by the presidents of Russia and Ukraine, by the end of 1995 the Black Sea Fleet was under joint Russian-Ukrainian command, which comprised officers appointed by the presidents of both countries. The command took over the powers of the United Armed Forces of the CIS, to which the Black Sea Fleet was subordinated. During this period, experts of the two countries developed detailed rules of the division of the Fleet. As a result of the Russian-Ukrainian agreement, Russia received 81.7% and Ukraine 18.3% of vessels of the Black Sea Fleet (agreement provided for equal sharing of 50% for each party - Ukraine, however, agreed to waive to Russia for a fee 31.7% of the Fleet capacity that exceeded its needs). Under the agreements on the division of the Black Sea Fleet, by 1995 Ukraine had taken over 35 coastal infrastructure facilities (and another 40 in 1996).

In that period, the Ukrainian Navy was composed of: a Naval Support Brigade, 4th Naval Infantry Brigade, two fighter regiments, an air assault regiment and an anti-submarine helicopter regiment. The Ukrainian Navy had among others: 10 ships, including the command ship, the destroyer "Slavutich", 4 frigates, an assault ship, two rescue ships and two auxiliary ships. About 150 combat aircraft, including 63 MiG-29s, 44 Su-25s,
41 Su-17s and 9 anti-submarine helicopters Mi-8, over 130 armoured personnel carriers (BTR-60, -70).

After determining the status of the post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet, the command of the Ukrainian Armed Forces planned that the Ukrainian Navy would consist of the Western Naval Command (with a subordinated brigade of river ships), the Southern Naval District, Naval Aviation as well as naval infantry and special forces brigades. Naval forces were to fulfil tasks related to the protection and defense of the maritime borders of Ukraine, protection of the safety of navigation and fishing. Their additional tasks were related to the defense and security of maritime approaches to the Black Sea coast. It was planned that the naval forces (NF) would have about 100 vessels of various classes and count over 40 thousand sailors.

Before the outbreak of the conflict, Ukraine had a naval force composed of approx. 15.7 thousand professional soldiers (approx. 12 thousand in the Crimea), approx. 32 different types of combat ships and 35 helicopters and airplanes of which approx. 2/3 were deployed in the Crimea. Nearly all units were technologically outdated and a large part of them were unfit for combat operations, were broken and required repairs, which was confirmed by the Russians after their takeover\(^22\). After the declaration of independence of the Republic of Crimea on 17 March 2014 and the incorporation of the Crimea by Russia on 18 March 2014, in April 2014, Ukraine had no navy, which stemmed from the fact that the main area of concentration of the Ukrainian naval forces was the Crimea. Ukraine was left with only 10 ships and fewer than 15 helicopters and airplanes. Currently, the Ukrainian fleet has, among others: a frigate 1135 "Hetman Sakhaydachny" with an embarked helicopter Ka-27; a corvette 1241 "Vineyard" (the other two still in the hands of Russia); a missile boat 206MR "Pryluky"; an assault ship 773 "Kirovohrad"; a Zuk patrol boat "Skadovsk"; an assault ship 1758 "Brianka"; an assault cutter 1176 "Svatove"; 25 larger support units of various types (trawlers, tugboats, tankers, research vessels, training ships, ambulance vessels, etc.) without offensive capabilities; 20 small support units (operating mainly in ports) and museum ships; approx. 15 to 20 aircraft and helicopters\(^23\).

Border Protection Force (BDF), Ukrainian State Border Guard (USBG). The Border Protection Force was the earliest to start functioning in Ukraine. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the already independent Republic of Ukraine faced the task of protecting its borders, both internal (between the former republics) and external (with the former Soviet Union). An alternative to the establishment of the national Border Protection Force in the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was a Russian proposal of joint protection of borders. It assumed that the external borders of the different countries of the CIS would be considered at the same time as the borders of Russia and protected by the multinational units of the Border Protection Force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (BPF CIS). The advantage of such a solution would be to reduce the funding by Russia and other CIS states, which could thus decrease by half the number of their own Border Protection Forces. Until the end of 1992, this project was not realized, mainly due to the refusal to participate by some Commonwealth members (including Ukraine) in the multilateral military cooperation and the fact that the CIS members treated protection of their own borders as an expression of national sovereignty. Besides, Ukraine (as well as Moldova and Turkmenistan) does not have armed forces in the military structures of the

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\(^22\) The Russian side returned to Ukraine: 35 vessels. Russia kept: 4 corvettes, 2 minesweepers type 266M, an assault ship type 755M "Konstantin Olshanskiy", a command ship type Bambuk "Slavutich", tug ship type 714, 5 small port units. The "Zaporozhye" submarine was scrapped.

\(^23\) Source: http://www.psz.pl/ Portal Spraw Zagranicznych /informacja z dnia 8 luty 2013 r. /10.05.2015/.
Commonwealth. Ukraine categorically refused not only to participate in BPF CIS, but even to subordinate part of the national Border Protection Force to the joint command in Moscow. As a result, in 1993 Russia was forced to change the plans of the Commonwealth's joint border protection and reorientate the cooperation of border services in the direction of bilateral cooperation. In 1995, the Russians proposed the establishment of joint border protection and defense of the airspace of the CIS. This proposal was accepted only by Belarus and Kazakhstan. Ukraine strongly rejected the proposal, as well as other previous relations with Moscow. Therefore, Ukraine has had a full autonomy in the protection of borders and refuses to cooperate with the Federal Border Service of Russia in this field. The Ukrainian Border Protection Force numbered about 43 thousand soldiers. They had to protect the state border of over 4,600 km, including: with Poland - 526 km, Slovakia - 90 km, Hungary - 103 km, Romania - 531 km (169 km south and 362 km to the west), Moldova - 939 km, Russia - 1,576 km and Belarus - 891 km, the sea border of 2,782 km. In the current conflict, the Ukrainian State Border Guard, numbering almost 60 thousand officers, also constitutes support for the land forces. The Command of the Border Guard of Ukraine has managed to form, among others, a combat battalion and several other small sub-units sent to the front to support the regular forces. A number of smaller components of this formation have also worked for the land forces at their rear, or constituted a very important element of support in sensitive border areas, among others, with Transnistria and Crimea. They also perform regular tasks on other borders and the border section with Russia, which is still controlled by Kiev. It is a light formation, equipped with lightweight all-terrain vehicles and passenger cars, trucks, minibuses and buses, as well as light armament and sparse anti-tank weapons. It has a lot of observation and reconnaissance equipment, which has been useful in securing borders.  

Internal Troops. The President of Ukraine, indirectly, through the Minister of the Interior, also supervises the internal troops. Internal troops, numbering in the mid 1990s about 6 thousand soldiers, were subordinated to the internal troops commander, who was the Minister of the Interior. They consisted of: three convoy (guard) brigades aimed for guard duty in the camps and escorting prisoners of war (prisoners), two battalions of internal troops, aimed to strengthen the special forces of "Berkut" in the event of internal riots (disorder) (such battalions could be deployed from the National Guard, two special units designed to protect the defence industry complexes, special battalions whose task was to protect and defend all kinds of installations and nuclear facilities). The Minister of the Interior, in addition to the internal troops, supervised the service (office) of state protection, special purpose militia units "Berkut" (counting about 5 thousand officers), the militia and the state car inspection. The service (office) of state protection is an institution gathering officers in 750 posts. It consisted of special "Titan" sub-units. In addition to ensuring internal security, the activities of this service consist in protecting government buildings and minor political figures.

Currently, the forces of the Ministry of the Interior also support the land forces of Ukraine. Within its framework, there have been created a number of units of various types (mostly based on militia forces), which perform auxiliary functions at the front and its rear, and along the controlled section of the border with Russia and Transnistria. As part of the Ministry of the Interior (MI), the following units have been established: MI Regiment "Dnipro-1" and about 30 battalions (including MI Battalion "Vineyard", Vinnysia Oblast; MI Battalion "Svitiaz" Volyn Oblast; MI Battalion "Donetsk", Dnipropetrovsk Oblast; MI

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Battalion "Lugansk-1", Dnipropetrovsk Oblast; MI Battalion "Skif", Zaporizhia Oblast; MI Battalion "Tornado" Zaporizhia Oblast; MI Battalion "Ivano-Frankivsk", Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast). The battalions have different sizes, from approx. 100 to more than 500 officers/soldiers. They dispose of police type equipment (patrol vehicles, off-road vehicles, sometimes trucks and buses, a few armoured vehicles, as well as arms and a small amount of anti-tank weapons). The army is also supported by special forces operating within the Ministry of the Interior, including, among others, militia special units "Tytan", "Griffin", "Falcon", spetsnaz Security Service of Ukraine "Alpha" and special formations directly subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior, such as "Falcon", "Shadow", "Omega" or "Jaguar".25

The National Guard of Ukraine (NG). Ukraine is one of the forerunners in terms of the formation of National Guard units among the countries of the former Soviet bloc. The decision to create the NG was taken already in August 1991. The National Guard was established on the basis of internal troops of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and functioned in the period of 1991-2000. The first units of the NG were sworn in on 5th January 1992, and one year and four days later they began training. The NG was initially subordinated to the Chair of the Verkhovna Rada. However, by the Decree of 7th October 1995, the President of Ukraine gained control over this specific formation. In the opinion of the members of the National Security Council, the President as the head of the armed forces and the person constitutionally responsible for state security could not fully carry out his duties with no direct impact on such an important element in the system of state security as is without a doubt the National Guard. Such a solution has contributed to the building of a strong system of presidential power in Ukraine. The main tasks of the National Guard were:

- defence and maintenance of constitutional order and territorial integrity of the country;
- participation in combat operations related to fending off aggression from the outside;
- assisting the Border Protection Force (BPF) in counteracting violations of the state border;
- protection of foreign diplomatic missions and important state facilities;
- participation in ceremonies related to official visits by officials arriving from abroad and in celebrations on the occasion of national holidays;
- supporting the Border Protection Force (BPF) and Civil Defence (CD) in liquidation of the consequences of failures, catastrophes and natural disasters.26

Only Ukrainian citizens could serve in the NG (men and, in some positions, women); privates and non-commissioned officers from 18 to 27 years of age, as well as warrant officers and NCOs up to 30 years of age. These people needed to have completed secondary education and fulfilled appropriate psycho-physical conditions. The National Guard had its own military schools and training centres. The training of officers and specialists for the NG was also conducted at military academies subordinated to the Ministry of Defence and abroad. In the National Guard there served approx. 23 thousand soldiers. In addition to soldiers' personal weapons, the NG was equipped with, among others, 473 armoured personnel carriers (BTR-60, -70, -80) and more than 10 Mi-24 helicopters. The NG was headed by the commander and the main staff, in which the principal role was played by three directorates: operational, organizational-mobilization

26 Source: Cz. Kosior, OAS: Potencjał militarny Ukrainy w obliczu rosyjskiej agresji. Ośrodek Analiz Strategicznych /24.06.2015/.
and communications-automation. Moreover, there were also the following directorates: military training, education, finance, human resources, military technology, supplies, construction, as well as accommodation and press service department. In its organizational structure there were the so called NG's Regional Commands: Western based in Lviv, Central - in Kiev and South-Eastern - in Kharkov. Appropriate NG forces and means were subordinated to each Regional Command. The Western Region was composed of the NG's Lviv Division including: a regiment and four battalions. The region's units counted a total of about 3,200 soldiers and were equipped with 76 armoured personnel carriers (APCs). In the Central Region there were the units of the NG's Kiev Division, composed of a brigade and two regiments. These forces numbered more than 5,400 soldiers and were equipped with 50 APCs. The South-Eastern Region comprised three divisions (Odessa, Donetsk and Chugayevsk) and a NG brigade (Crimea). The units in the region counted over 14 thousand soldiers and had approximately 350 APCs. In addition, there were, directly subordinated to the commander of the NG: a NG special-purpose brigade protecting foreign diplomatic missions, a special-purpose battalion, a helicopter brigade. The development plans provided for equipping the NG units with armoured vehicles and air transportation units and the increase of their numerical strength to 4 thousand soldiers, which would allow for the formation of several additional special purpose sub-units. Increasing the numerical strength (up to 27 thousand soldiers) and rearmament of the NG resulted from the need to create a strong formation which would contribute to the improvement of the internal security of the country. In 2000, the National Guard of Ukraine was liquidated, and its tasks taken over by the internal troops of the Ministry of the Interior.

The National Guard of Ukraine was re-established on 13th March 2014 and it was supposed to count approx. 60 thousand soldier - volunteers. It is estimated that in the NG of Ukraine there are approx. 40-45 thousand guards in service. The National Guard of Ukraine is subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior and is not a part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but it supports them. The structure of the NG is constituted of 5 sectors: Western Ukraine, Northern Ukraine, Central Ukraine, Southern Ukraine, Eastern Ukraine. The following National Guard units should be mentioned, among others: 1. National Guard Operational Brigade; National Guard Regiment "Azov"; - National Guard Battalion "Donbas"; National Guard Battalion "Crow". The National Guard units have so far been equipped with, among others, more than 20 T-64 tanks, a dozen or so T-72 tanks (in total two tank companies in the National Guard), more than 22 BTR-3Es, 150 BTR-4Es, approx. 200 in addition to the 250 already possessed, armoured patrol cars and light transporters Dozor-B, up to 500-600 transport vehicles of various types and a few helicopters. Some of this equipment has already been destroyed during the fighting.

**Conclusion**

Already at the birth of Ukraine as a state, it was announced that the defense of the country was a matter of the whole nation, and therefore the construction of the armed forces has become the most important problem of the state. The complexity of the composition of the armed forces of Ukraine has been determined by many factors: the state

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28 It was assumed that a special battalion can be used if necessary to support the internal troops of the Ministry of the Interior. Its cooperation with special purpose militia units of "Berkut" was not excluded, in case it was necessary to suppress internal riots and anti-government activity.
of troops, permanent reduction in quantity, reconstruction of organizational structures, the lack of modern weapons and military equipment, a chronic shortage of funds, also the lack of uniformity of development of the military-industrial complex and the armed forces of the state, which has precluded the possibility of fully providing them with modern armaments and military technology of its own production. Consequently, these factors have led to a deterioration of combat and operational preparation of the armed forces, which in the initial period of the establishment of the state had acquired substantial amounts of military equipment from the Soviet Union in the Land Forces as well as in the Air Force and the Navy.

Ukrainian air and anti-aircraft potential has been significantly limited to only what Russia has in the region of Donbas and in the Crimea. In a potential new conflict with Russia, Ukrainian combat aviation has no chance maintaining longer combat operations, even ones of a limited range. Only the anti-aircraft defense of the Ukrainian side may prove to be a more difficult opponent. Similarly, the offensive potential of the Navy of Ukraine is very limited, and the fleet as part of the armed forces has been deprived of adequate funds for maintenance of equipment and its upgrades. Currently, the situation of the Ukrainian fleet is incomparsably worse. The loss of the Crimea with most of the essential infrastructure means that the Ukrainian Navy is nothing more than the coast guard.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as the military potential of the state, have for several months been at the stage of mobilization. Ukraine is slowly reconstructing its naval forces, renovating its aviation equipment, has made the effort to organize the combat battalion groupings and, as experts estimate, there are nearly 4 times more of them now than in July 2014. Major support for the armed forces are the units of the National Guard, territorial defence, border guards and the Ministry of the Interior which are actively involved in combat operations in Donbas and protect the remaining area of Ukraine against separatism and terrorism, and ensure relatively stable functioning in the rear of the front line. Ukraine seems today theoretically to be much better prepared for another confrontation with Russia than it was a few months ago. According to military experts, the Ukrainian army has the potential to quell the rebellion in Donbas if Russia maintains neutrality. The Ukrainian army is, however, not prepared for further contact with Russian troops.

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List of abbreviations:
A - army
aaab - anti-aircraft artillery battalion
AAB - air-assault brigade
aamr - anti-aircraft missiles regiment
AB - airborne brigade
ab - artillery battalion
AbD - Airborne Division
AD - air defense
ADF - Air Defence Forces
AF - Armed Forces
AFV - armoured fighting vehicle
ar - artillery regiment
ArmBrig - armoured brigade
ArmD - Armoured Division
ArtB - artillery brigade
ArtD - Artillery Division
atab - anti-tank artillery battalion
atar - anti-tank artillery regiment
ATD - air transport division
atm - anti-tank missile
BoS - brigade of ships
BSF - Black Sea Fleet
Eng-sapp brig. - engineering-sapper brigade
EW - electronic warfare
EWr - electronic warfare regiment
fr - fighter regiment
fr AD - fighter regiment of Air Defense
hr - helicopter regiment
hs - helicopter squadron
MD - Mechanized Division
medb - medical battalion
MGI - Military General Inspection
MIMoD - Main Inspectorate of the Ministry of Defence
mr - mechanized regiment
N - Navy
NIB - naval infantry brigade
NW - nuclear weapons
nwc - nuclear weapons carrier
OMD - Odessa Military District
O-T - operational-tactical
OU - operational unit
PMD - Precarpathian Military District
pontr - pontoon regiment
rar - rocket artillery regiment
rb - reconnaissance battalion
re - radio-electronic
repb - repair battalion
sapb - sappers battalion
sb - signals battalion
SFO - Southern Field of Operations
SIGINTb - SIGINT battalion
sr - signals regiment
supb - supply battalion
TBMB - Tactical Ballistic Missiles Brigade
tmr - tactical missiles regiment
tr - tank regiment
TU - tactical unit
WDO - Western Field of Operations
WMD - weapon of mass destruction