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**DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLAR ARMIES - AS A TOOL OF ARCTIC  
AND ANTARCTIC RIVALRY  
(EXAMPLES OF CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND)**

**Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to present a reflection on the development of military formations capable of operating under extreme polar conditions. Climate change and growing global energy demand are driving oil companies into exploiting raw materials in virgin arctic regions. It is also important to create safe shipping routes, which is becoming more and more likely to emerge from the glacier. It can not be ruled out that in the perspective of the century the rivalry of states interested in the Arctic will also include the polar regions of the southern hemisphere. The determination of territorial claims and the protection of interests shall be provided by specialized units of the armed forces capable of carrying out military operations in the Arctic, such as those discussed by the authors of the formation of the Canadian Rangers. At the same time as an example of the development of analogous formations capable of operating under extreme Antarctic conditions, the authors discuss initiatives taken in the armed forces of New Zealand. This article is a result of investigations and analyzes of Canadian, New Zealand and American literature as well as study tours of authors to the countries concerned.

**Key words**

Polar Armed Forces, Arctic, Antarctic, Canadian Rangers, New Zealand Defence Force

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## Introduction

The changing climate conditions in the High North make this area accessible to geological exploration. Climatologists estimate that the surface of the polar cap has decreased by half in the past fifty years. Climate change and rising global energy demand have prompted oil companies to take up the exploitation of raw materials in virgin arctic regions. In the Arctic, competition for spatial zones and possible territorial gains, raw material reserves, fisheries and the availability of shipping lanes have intensified.

The intention of the authors of this article was to reflect on the development of military formation capable of operating under extreme polar conditions, both Arctic and Antarctic. It can not be ruled out that even in our century the rivalry of states will also include the polar regions of the southern hemisphere. Realizing the interests and emphasizing the political determination of territorial claims serves the development of specialized units of the armed forces.

Such military formations are capable of carrying out operations in the Arctic, such as the Canadian Rangers' formation discussed by the authors. At the same time as an example of the development of analogous formations capable of operating under extreme conditions of Antarctica, the authors discuss organizational development initiatives undertaken in the armed forces of New Zealand. This article is a result of investigations and analyzes of Canadian, New Zealand and American literature, as well as study trips by authors to the countries concerned (Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, United States and New Zealand).

Parties to the conflict of interests in the High North are both Arctic and non-Arctic states, large corporations and indigenous peoples<sup>3</sup>. Geological evidence shows that the Arctic contains huge deposits of raw materials, among which crude oil and natural gas are the most important. In our century, political tension between the countries concerned has intensified. As a result of increased competition, it is systematically increasing the military presence behind the polar circle<sup>4</sup>. The Arctic is in the forefront of the so-called Arctic Five (A5 – Denmark with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Canada, Norway, Russia and the USA), which formed the Arctic Council in 1996 as a regional decision-making forum for Arctic states. It includes, in addition to the A5 countries, the remaining Arctic countries (Finland, Iceland, Sweden) and representatives of the six arctic nations. The non-members of the Council have also been granted the status of observers. By the provisions of the 2008 Illulissat Declaration, decisions of the Council are made by consensus and on the basis of unanimity, and observers are excluded from the decision-making process. China, South Korea and Japan, as well as the European Union, show the greatest interest in exploiting the region.

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<sup>3</sup> S. Borgerson, *Arctic Meltdown: the Economic and Security Implications of global Warming*, „Foreign Affairs” March/April 2008, p. 63-77.

<sup>4</sup> About Arctic rivalry see: *Arktyka na początku XXI wieku. Między współpracą a rywalizacją*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2013, K. Kubiak, *Interesy i spory państw w Arktyce w pierwszych dekadach XXI wieku*, Wydawnictwo Trio, Warszawa 2012 and D. Fairhall, *Cold Front: Conflict Ahead in Arctic Waters*, IB Tauris, London - New York 2010.

## Arctic forces

States of the Arctic Council develop in their armed forces formations capable of polar activities. The challenges associated with the development of this kind of military presence are related both to the enormous costs of building arctic bases, the production of vehicles, equipment and armaments designed to operate at low temperatures, and the proper preparation and training of extreme-duty soldiers<sup>5</sup>. The Russian Federation has been increasing its interest in the Arctic since 2012 in the context of the planned development of tanker shipping and the exploitation of natural gas and oil. The Russian presence in the Arctic has been around for several centuries, but has been weakened by the sale of Alaska and the subsequent period of revolution and civil war<sup>6</sup>. At present, the Russian Arctic Army (“White Army”) consists of at least two brigades stationed in Kola peninsula and forces in garrisons located, among others, on the land of Francis Joseph, the New Land and the Novosibirsk Islands. Russia currently has eighteen military garrisons in the polar zone, the largest of all the Arctic states. During the Victory Day parade on May 9, 2017, Moscow presented a unit equipped with modern weapons and vehicles used in the Russian Arctic.

The United States also clearly states its military presence in the Arctic region of Alaska. In addition to the operational troops stationed in the bases of this state (air, ground and navy), an estimated 1850 soldiers are involved in the Alaska Army National Guard. There are also supporters of the Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF), a small number (280 people) volunteer reserve militia that provides local security, including protection of the oil transport infrastructure.

Norway uses its special forces in the Arctic, and in the Tromsø area has the Armed Forces Brigade Nord. Finland has in its armed forces an infantry brigade (Jääkäriprikaati) specialized in polar operations and stationed in Rovaniemi. Sweden has significant land forces capable of operating under arctic conditions such as the Norbotten Regiment, which consists of Arctic battalions or the Arctic Rangers (Lapplandsjägarerna) stationed behind the Polar Circle in Kiruna. The Sirius Patrol Specialist Armed Forces (Slædepatruljen Sirius) has a similar character to the Canadian Rangers, maintaining in Denmark Greenland. Her duties include patrolling and conducting meteorological observations. This is a symbolic military presence, because the Danish unit consists of only twenty soldiers, divided between military bases and meteorological stations. The skills of Danish soldiers in moving in the Arctic are high, their patrols use dog sleds. Iceland does not have its own armed forces, and its territorial defense functions are fulfilled by the Coast Guard (Landhelgisgæsla Íslands).

Canada regards the Arctic as one of the most important directions of its foreign and security policy. Canadian politicians say the Far North is an important part of the “Canadian national psyche” and their country has played a key role in the history of the region<sup>7</sup>. In official Canadian documents, the North is defined as territories located

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<sup>5</sup> See: J. Terelak, *Człowiek w sytuacjach ekstremalnych. Izolacja antarktyczna*, Wydawnictwo MON, Warszawa 1982.

<sup>6</sup> J. R. Bockstoce, *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2009.

<sup>7</sup> See: M. Jarocki, *Polityka Kanady wobec Arktyki*, FAE Policy Paper No 26/2011, S. D. Grant, *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America*, Douglas&McIntyre, Vancouver-Toronto-

above the parallel of 55 °. From 1925 Canada claims the Arctic portion between 60 ° W and 141 ° W longitude and the North Pole, but these claims are not recognized by the international community. In political rhetoric, Canadian leaders use the notion of defending Canadian sovereignty, the sovereignty of the Arctic, and the need for armed retention of Canadian territories. Canadian arctic areas stretch in an area of nearly four million square kilometers, remain uninhabited and not economically significant. In recent years, however, the Northern Territories gained prominence in Ottawa's political rhetoric, advocating a strengthening of state security policy in sovereign sovereignty over the Arctic.

The military presence in the North, designated as north of 55 ° N, is under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) and the Northern Territory Joint Task Force (North JTFN), based in Yellowknife, with small branches in Whitehorse and Iqaluit. The role of the JTFN is to exercise Canadian sovereignty and security by conducting operations in the north and developing the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to disasters. The specialized Arctic unit of Canadian Rangers (CR) is often metaphorically referred to as “eyes and ears” in faraway parts of the country, “watchers of the north”, “the eye of the Arctic” the Arctic, and the sovereignty of the sovereigns, acting as a defense force and at the same time as tools of expansion. The so-called “patrols of sovereignty” are intended to “show the flag” or political demonstration of Canadian control over Arctic territory. The great strength of the Canadian Rangers is its ability to move in the mountains, in the tundra, in the snow and ice, and in the water, under extreme climatic conditions and extreme situations. Such abilities in polar conditions – not the size or power of fire - determine the combat value of polar ground troops.

According to P.W. Lackenbauer, author of the only monograph of the formation, Rangers are “soldiers-citizens” who serve in their own homes and do not have to sacrifice and lose for their state and army their cultural, political or social identity. On the contrary, they play a special, pro-state role in areas where traditionally dominated opposition to the federal government<sup>8</sup>. The Canadian Rangers (CR, Canadian Rangers, Rangers canadiens) are a voluntary military formation that is part of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve and has 4 985 people grouped in 180 patrols. The formation is composed of five so-called. Patrol groups that are equivalent to battalions operating in a specific territory covering one to four provinces of the country. The main task of the Canadian Rangers is to provide a patrol service providing permanent military presence in the Arctic. Rangers are native to the indigenous peoples of the north, both Indians and Inuit.

The formation was formed in 1947 on the basis of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers operating during World War II, whose task was to defend the coast from possible Japanese attack. The twin formation was at the time the American Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG), commonly known as the “Eskimo Scouts”, as well as the “Tundra Army”. It was a reserve component of the US Army operating between 1942-

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Berkeley 2010 and R. M. Bone, *The Canadian North. Issues and Challenges*, Oxford University Press, Toronto 2008.

<sup>8</sup> P. W. Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History*, UBC Press, Vancouver 2013, p. 19-23.

1947. It counted only 21 professional officers who commanded a troop of 6368 volunteers from 107 different local communities (Eskimo, Indian and White).

The Canadian Rangers are uniformed in distinctive red sweatshirts and caps. This is obviously not a tactical-masking color, but its use is due to several reasons: first, it refers to the traditional color of the British uniform (similarly to the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP), and secondly emphasizes the role of CR as a rescue mission. Third, it is visible in Arctic conditions, which in time of peace is important for the personal safety of Rangers themselves while performing their patrol duties. Rangers are armed with World War II-era rifles Lee Enfield No. 4 cal.303, the only weapon reliable in Arctic conditions at temperatures down to -50° C. Only last year the equipment was introduced new rifles, designed specifically for the Canadian formation. Rangers show very high levels of survival skills, including shelters, forest huts and snow igloos. In addition to shooting skills, they develop the ability to use the bow and set traps for small animals and fish. They show versatility in the wilderness of the Far North, both in snowshoes, skiing, dog sledding, horseback riding, and using motor vehicles, including off-road vehicles, quads and snowmobiles. An important role in Rangers survival training is the ability to cross the waterways, build rafts, and cross rivers, lakes and sea bays. Rangers are familiar with all kinds of boats, both motorboats and paddles, including kayaks and traditional Indian canoe. They are also well versed in water rescue, maritime and ice rescue and climbing.

Rangers units participate in all military exercises conducted in the far North. Annual “Operation Nanook” exercises are officially called “sovereignty operations” in federal documents. The purpose of this operation is, as announced in the 2007 Canada’s Northern Strategy, the Arctic Foreign Policy of 2010, the Northern Northern Support Support Plan of 2011. and the Army Arctic Concept 2021 from 2013 – demonstrating the ability of the authorities to effectively protect the Canadian Arctic and demonstrate air, land and maritime surveillance of the region, in order to increase Canadian presence and ensure readiness to respond to unforeseen events<sup>9</sup>. “Nanook” is the largest, annual North operation that aims to demonstrate the ability of the army to operate effectively in the Arctic. These exercises, planned and led by CJOC, aim at developing interoperability, commanding skills and cooperation with partners in the north. This activity usually involves land, air and maritime components, coordinated with federal, territorial and local entities responsible for security and defense of the territory<sup>10</sup>. JTFN carries out a permanent “Qimmiq” operation involving regular Rangers patrols, patrol flights with CP-140 Aurora aircraft, and patrols of naval units in summer. The “Nunavut” exercise is conducted each spring by the JTFN. Initially organized to take advantage of the Rangers’ ability and 440th Vampire Air Transport Squadron to perform high-altitude patrol missions in Yellowstone, the Yellowknife has four Twin Otter CC-138 DHC-6 aircraft that can land on tires, skids or floats.

The “Nunakput” operation is based on the development of interoperability in collaboration with the Coast Guard (CCG, Canadian Coast Guard), the Canadian Royal Horse and the Department of Fisheries and Ocean (DFO) in the Western Arctic

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<sup>9</sup> *Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy (2010)* [http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada\\_arctic\\_foreign\\_policy\\_bookletla\\_politique\\_etrangere\\_du\\_canada\\_pour\\_arctique\\_livret.a\\_spx?lang=eng&view=d](http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/canada_arctic_foreign_policy_bookletla_politique_etrangere_du_canada_pour_arctique_livret.a_spx?lang=eng&view=d) (17.05.2017).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-canada-north-america/north.page> (17.05.2017).

in the area between the McKenzie River Valley Lakes of Slavery and Beaufort Sea. The purpose of all “N-” operations is to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty and prepare the armed forces for a broad spectrum of potential missions<sup>11</sup>. Due to the high cost of the arctic cruise, the exercise is carried out by the Canadian Navy. The preparation of naval forces is extremely expensive due to the necessity of using icebreakers. Hence the reason for the small number of people and equipment and the short duration of such exercises.

### **Future direction of rivalry**

Upon discussing the development of armed forces of the Arctic states, or in broader terms, the militarization of that part of the globe, it is suitable to examine similar processes on the opposite side of the world. In actuality, we could look at the Arctic as a test site for what might also take place in Antarctica in the future. Obviously, there are major differences between the two areas that should be considered, especially in the context of international legal ties and regulations. The authors will attempt to sketch such context for one of the Antarctic countries, deliberately chosen for that purpose. Substantial ties with Antarctica, a long history of presence in the region, and dynamic internal politics which balance national interests with the expectations imposed by the current international system make New Zealand a perfect example. This paper will discuss the New Zealand politics and the role of the New Zealand army in relation to Antarctica.

New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has played a crucial role in the defence and security policy of the country. Due to the geographical location of New Zealand, the army has to be able to successfully operate in diverse environmental conditions. Additionally, since New Zealand relies on sea trade, its armed forces have to protect the main sea trade routes and participate in operations to enhance the security of sea transport, for instance in the Middle East area. Such requirements impose a lot of tasks on the army of a country which is perceived as small by its government and citizens. The New Zealand armed forces have to be prepared to maneuver in severe Antarctic conditions, which results from physical proximity and vital interests connected to this region. New Zealanders, however, see this issue in broader terms than only in the context of a vicinity of the South Pole.

Such broader perception is caused by the ongoing climate change and its consequences. Discussing possible future challenges for NZDF, Jim Rolfe concludes that the military will have to become more flexible to provide an appropriate and fast response to sudden weather events<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, he calls for improvement of the emergency response capacities within the national borders in the event of natural disasters, for protecting the economic zone and borders, and for leading humanitarian and stabilizing operations in the region. The region, in this case, includes not only the

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<sup>11</sup> P. W. Lackenbauer, A. Lajeunesse, *The Canadian Armed Forces in the Arctic: Building Appropriate Capabilities*, „Journal of Military and Strategy Studies” Volume 16, Issue 4 (2016), p. 7-66.

<sup>12</sup> J. Rolfe, *Climate change and security: the defence component* [in:] Ed. by Jonatan Boston, Philip Nel, Marjolein Righarts, *Climate Change and Security. Planning for the future*, Victoria University, Wellington 2009, p. 94.



South Pacific area with nearby islands, but also the Antarctic. According to Rolfe, the special role of NZDF should be stressed in the following areas<sup>13</sup>:

- Civil defense, which includes assisting civil authorities in dealing with the effects of natural disasters;
- Hydrography, which means updating nautical databases and charts;
- Protecting borders against illegal economic migration;
- Guarding the Exclusive Economic Zone, especially since fishing flotillas follow migrating fish stocks towards the South Pacific, which requires the general enhancement of the navy;
- Stabilizing missions and supporting operations in the states that failed or are failing;
- Providing assistance in the event of conflicts between different countries, for example those concerning the access to natural resources. It is assumed that while the New Zealand forces should always be ready to intervene, they will respond only if it is beneficial to the country's national interests;
- Developing new strategies and skills, including training with equipment designed for warmer waters;
- Balancing the need for military training and maneuvers with the changing natural environment. A special emphasis is put on conservation strategies.

It becomes clear that the expectations of NZDF connected with the climate change are quite significant. This is one of the reasons why the governing New Zealand National Party has promoted a program which strengthens national defense. It was initially mentioned in the Defence White Paper 2010<sup>14</sup>, developed in the Defence Capability Plan 2016<sup>15</sup>, and further discussed in the Defence White Paper of the same year<sup>16</sup>. This process transformed the postulates set in the programming documents into the premises of the capability development plan for the armed forces. Importantly, in a long run, such situation secures the necessary amount of funding. For instance, the necessary enhancement of the navy includes obtaining new ships that are equipped with effective ice protection systems.

This postulate brings us to the crux of the matter analyzed in this paper. In reality, the military development has not been promoted solely because of the climate change. Another important argument stems from growing fears of changes in the status quo on the Antarctic upon revising the international laws regulating this region. Such option will become legally possible no earlier than in the 40s of the 21<sup>st</sup> century but the need to consider and prepare for possible consequences is urgent. The amount of time and resources required to secure adequate defense capabilities is quite challenging. Moreover, it is likely that one of the countries may decide to proceed without an authorization, which becomes increasingly probable considering the current state of international relations. If there are countries which have developed military forces in the Arctic, what would stop them from using the same forces in the Antarctic region as well? With its vital interests connected to this area, New Zealand

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<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 100.

<sup>14</sup> *Defence White Paper 2010*, New Zealand Government 2010.

<sup>15</sup> *New Zealand Government Defence Capability Plan 2016*, November 2016.

<sup>16</sup> *Defence White Paper 2016*, New Zealand Government 2016.

is especially concerned with such possibility. The ties are strengthened by geographical proximity, historical bonds (for example, many Antarctic expeditions set off from New Zealand), and environmental similarities (for example, Antarctica was once covered with forest similar to the one in New Zealand today).

The expedition of 1841 which led to the discovery of Ross Dependency is very significant for New Zealanders since it opened the door for further explorations of Antarctica. This region was declared a dependent territory of New Zealand and officially named a part of the Realm of New Zealand in 1983 in the Letters Patent Constituting the Office of Governor General of New Zealand<sup>17</sup>. New Zealand's claims to that region were justified by defining it as an extension of the continental shelf named Ross Ice Shelf. Even though New Zealand signed the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, is still asserts its claim to the territory expecting the parties to the Treaty to respect the previously acquired rights. This implies that New Zealand has to be prepared for a possibility of a similar, even if warrantless, operation initiated by other countries with sufficient military forces. Consequently, New Zealanders support the Treaty regime and push to represent their national interests by taking part in rescue missions, securing the presence in research stations, and so on. Moreover, as a country promoting pragmatic politics and multilateralism, it is open for collaboration with international partners in terms of conducting research in Antarctica.

Special institutions have been developed to oversee the Antarctic issues, such as the Antarctic Policy Unit in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The unit hires three representatives who negotiate the New Zealand interests concerning Antarctic politics on the international arena<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, many other ministries include smaller units responsible for certain subjects, for example, the development of tourism. Antarctica New Zealand - Crown also plays an important role in shaping the current political relationship with the Antarctic. Located in Christchurch, the institution is staffed with six members of a managing council and 25 workers. They are responsible for maintaining the research station, delegating personnel, and organizing transport and logistics among others. The importance of that place is clear when considering the fact that 75% of scientists visiting Antarctica set off from Christchurch. Additionally, the Officials Antarctic Committee coordinates the operations of all institutions.

However, the key place in the process of asserting New Zealand's rights to the area is another research station. Scott Base was built in 1957 in Pram Point. It opens doors to ca. 350 visitors from New Zealand every year, which is comparatively more than the number of Chinese employees in that area<sup>19</sup>. The base can hold maximum 85 people during the summer, while during the winter time, it is usually limited to eleven workers. The managing of the base is a collective responsibility of New Zealand, the USA, and Italy, providing a great example of a multilateral cooperation and sharing

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<sup>17</sup> See: [www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1983/0225/latest/whole.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1983/0225/latest/whole.html), Reprint as at 22 August 2006.

<sup>18</sup> A.M. Brady, *New Zealand's Antarctica* [in:] Ed by Anne-Marie Brady, *The Emerging Politics of Antarctica*, Routledge, 2013, p. 150.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152. This comparison is not accidental. It clearly shows the level of New Zealand's engagement in Antarctica, which is much bigger than China's even though China is getting closer to its borders.



the expenses of securing the presence in Antarctica. Such openness for collaboration, as well as establishing the base in the very center of New Zealand, is supposed to present the host country as the „intellectual and logistic gate to Antarctica”<sup>20</sup>, thus making it the leader of the international scientific efforts, and perhaps of the future development of Antarctica as well. New Zealand is deeply invested in such idea, which is illustrated by the political strategy for that region, especially:

- conducting scientific research partially funded by the government (in 2010, the financial assistance was 21 million NZD);
- focusing on economic interests, tourism development, and fishing; for example, organizing trips to Antarctica brings the Canterbury region ca. 88 million NZD of profit annually. The entire New Zealand economy brings 133 million NZD yearly, after adding income from tourism and fishing<sup>21</sup>;
- representing the New Zealand interests concerning Antarctica in international institutions, especially the need to maintain the current political order founded by the Antarctic Treaty;
- upholding the highest standards of environmental protection and remaining an active agent in the area of international policies concerning conservation of the natural environment, since the climate change in Antarctica immediately influences the environment of New Zealand;
- supporting the military forces by providing a civil presence in Antarctica, and handling tasks like ensuring logistics assistance, including flights to Antarctica.

According to Ann-Marie Brady, Antarctica is so vital to New Zealand’s strategic interests that its government should protect the actual state of affairs „at almost any cost”<sup>22</sup>. It is hard to dispute that. Since the military is expected to support those interests, the navy and air force have to display specialized skills to operate in this region. Therefore, the policy makers in New Zealand have chosen this very direction in their modernizing proposals. The program for the development of armed forces until 2035 proposes that the capabilities of the New Zealand army have to increase in five areas in particular: Antarctica and the South Pacific, air surveillance, littoral operations, cybersecurity, and intelligence support<sup>23</sup>. Placing Antarctica as the first on the list proves a high priority of this case. In practice, it may mean upgrading patrolling ships and tankers to versions that can successfully operate in polar conditions. Other key documents concerning defence policies, such as the aforementioned Defence White Paper of 2016 or the Defence Capability Plan, confirm that this is the main direction taken. For example, the Defence Capability Plan is very clear about the need to change tankers and patrol vessels, making it a priority in the introduction<sup>24</sup>. At the same time, the authorities emphasize that such strategies are supposed to enable New Zealand to keep a peaceful presence in Antarctica and not to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 159.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 156.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 160.

<sup>23</sup> *Future35. Our strategy to 2035*, New Zealand Defence Force, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> *New Zealand Government Defence Capability Plan 2016*, November 2016, p. 4.

militarize it, which would be ultimately against New Zealand's vital interests. This is also why the planning sections for the air force enhancement are focused on transport (illustrated by the outlined program of upgrading aircraft called Future Air Mobility Capability) in collaboration with Americans and Italians<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, there is a real necessity to protect fisheries against intensive fishing, prepare for the continuous influx of tourists, and develop emergency response capabilities. What is significant, the plans include the evaluations of maritime and air operations only and do not mention land forces, therefore it is clear the need to develop land combat skills is not one of the main concerns of New Zealand's defence policy. In reality, land forces actively participate in supporting the Antarctic program by providing specialized services, but there is no mention of the need to prepare for land warfare in that region, at least, not in the accessible official documents<sup>26</sup>. Since New Zealanders expect and appreciate the transparency of their government and decision making processes, such documents are carefully constructed. For example, the last report on the activities of the armed forces explains that 55% of planned flights to Antarctica were successful, which makes six out of eleven. Four were canceled due to bad weather and one due to technical problems<sup>27</sup>.

In conclusion, one can observe that unlike the countries in the Northern hemisphere, New Zealand is not interested in a militant demonstration of power but rather in developing strategic capabilities. Such strategy gives other countries no excuse to undermine the current legal order regulating the issue of Antarctica. Its political game plan is pragmatic and careful, because without threatening any previous agreements, New Zealand also does not give up on its exclusive rights to the parts of the territory. Strong arguments are followed by actions; national defense forces support the strategy to keep New Zealand's civil presence in that area. Moreover, the development of air and maritime capabilities may be the first step in the process of creating more of such forces. Already skilled in airlifting and protective operations, they will be enough to guard New Zealand's interests in that area, should such threat become real.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> See the summary: Antarctica: 1965-Present, NZARMY, 21 IX 2017, <http://www.army.mil.nz/about-us/what-we-do/deployments/previous-deployments/antarctica/default.htm>

<sup>27</sup> *The 2015-2016 Annual Report* for the year ended 30 June 2016, New Zealand Defence Forces, p. 58.

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### **Streszczenie**

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie refleksji na temat rozwoju formacji wojskowych zdolnych do działania w ekstremalnych warunkach polarnych. Zmiany klimatyczne i rosnące zapotrzebowanie na energię w skali globalnej skłaniają koncerny naftowe do podejmowania eksploatacji złóż surowców w dziewiczych regionach arktycznych. Istotne jest też tworzenie bezpiecznych szlaków żeglugi, co wobec topnienia lodowców staje się coraz bardziej prawdopodobne. Nie można też wykluczyć, że w perspektywie stulecia rywalizacja państw zainteresowanych Arktyką obejmie też obszary polarne południowej półkuli. Ukazaniu determinacji roszczeń terytorialnych oraz ochronie interesów służyc mają wyspecjalizowane jednostki sił zbrojnych zdolnych do prowadzenia operacji wojskowych w Arktyce, jak np. omówiona przez autorów formacja kanadyjskich Rangersów. Jednocześnie jako przykład rozwoju analogicznych formacji zdolnych do działania w ekstremalnych warunkach Antarktyki, autorzy omawiają inicjatywy podejmowane w siłach zbrojnych Nowej Zelandii. Przedstawiony artykuł jest efektem dociekań i analizy

piśmiennictwa kanadyjskiego, nowozelandzkiego i amerykańskiego, jak również studyjnych podróży autorów do omawianych krajów.

### **Rozwój wojsk polarnych jako narzędzia rywalizacji arktycznej i antarktycznej (na przykładzie Kanady i Nowej Zelandii)**

#### **Słowa kluczowe**

Wojska polarne, Arktyka, Antarktyka, Kanadyjscy Rangersi, Siły Zbrojne Nowej Zelandii

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