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Dissolution of the Military Intelligence Services in the Context of Establishing the Fourth Republic of Poland

Abstract: The article presents the process that led to the dissolution of the Military Information Services in 2006 and the establishing of the Military Intelligence and the Military Counterintelligence. At the same time, the article delves into the genesis and objectives of the Fourth Polish Republic. It discusses how the process influenced the shape of the military intelligence services in Poland. Moreover, the article describes the political dispute that accompanied the reform and presents conclusions drawn.

Key words: Fourth Republic of Poland, electoral program, military special services, decommunization

Introduction

Military intelligence services play a crucial role in ensuring state security. They provide essential intelligence to the armed forces, offering insight into potential adversaries while safeguarding their own capabilities from intelligence threats, sabotage, or disinformation. The effectiveness of these services becomes particularly evident during times of crisis when the potential, strategies, and plans of the armed forces are critical to the state's ability to manage both foreign and domestic affairs.

In Polish history, from the time of independence in 1918 until 2006, Military intelligence services, though institutionally separate, were always part of the armed forces. Their close connection with the army meant that the political, organizational, and personnel conditions within the military directly influenced them. Additionally, due to the army's prominent position in both the Second Republic and the People's Republic of Poland, the



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role of these special services often extended beyond simply supporting the armed forces, taking on broader responsibilities within state operations.

In the political transformation following 1989, the military intelligence services, much like the army itself, were not subjected to the same verification processes applied to civilian institutions. The “thick line” policy, which emphasized a break from the past without a thorough reckoning, was fully reflected in how these services were handled during this period.

The changes that occurred after 1989 within the military intelligence services did not lead to any fundamental transformations. The Military Intelligence Services, established in 1991, effectively inherited both the personnel and operational methods of their communist-era predecessors. Despite efforts by various defense ministers to address this situation, the ongoing political disputes in Poland allowed these services to continue functioning largely unchanged until 2006. That year marked the dissolution of the Military Intelligence Services and the creation of two new entities: the Military Intelligence Service and the Military Counterintelligence Service.

The purpose of this article is to verify the hypothesis that the development of military intelligence services is closely aligned with the implementation of the prevailing political agenda. The article explores whether, despite their defined responsibilities of providing counterintelligence and intelligence security for the armed forces, military intelligence services remain influenced by the broader state policy. A second key question addressed is the underlying motives that drove policymakers to significantly interfere in intelligence and counterintelligence operations.

To confirm the hypothesis, the decision-making method was employed to examine cause-effect relationships within the decision-making center and to analyze these relationships against the value system of the decision-makers. Additionally, the historical method was applied to describe the genesis, course, and significance of events, placing these processes in the wider context of social and political change. The scope of the research focuses on the years 2005–2006, during which the source material was collected.

The concept of the Fourth Republic

The year 2005 was a pivotal moment in Poland’s history, marked by an accelerated pace of political change and highly dynamic processes. For the first time since 1989, both parliamentary elections, which offered

Poles the chance to exercise substantive and real power, and presidential elections, significant from both a prestigious and symbolic standpoint, were held simultaneously (Jezierski, 2006, p. 8). Given this unique situation, it was anticipated that the concurrent election campaigns would be defined by firmness and determination, driven largely by the need for a profound restructuring of the political landscape.

The Democratic Left Alliance, which had gained significant support in 2001, saw its popularity almost completely erode during its four years in power – an unprecedented event for the Polish left. This shift presented a real opportunity for opposition parties, particularly Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS), to seize control and form a right-wing coalition government (Jezierski, 2006, p. 7). A unique political arrangement was envisioned, potentially involving Donald Tusk, Jan Rokita, and the Kaczyński brothers in key positions – Speaker of the Sejm, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and President, respectively (Warzecha, 2010, p. 50). The atmosphere was charged with a sense of political transformation, and expectations among political actors for a significant breakthrough were high (Legutko, 2013, p. 175). During the campaign, the leaders of the major opposition parties debated coalition possibilities, emphasizing their ideological alignment, leading to widespread assumptions that Poland was headed for a Civic Platform–PiS partnership.

Pre-election forecasts initially suggested that Civic Platform would emerge as the winner of the parliamentary elections. However, with the launch of Lech Kaczyński's presidential campaign, which centered on the idea of building a "Fourth Republic," there was a notable surge in support for Law and Justice. As a result, PiS quickly overtook Civic Platform and became the frontrunner in the polls.

The concept of the Fourth Republic was first introduced by political scientist Rafał Matyja in 1998. Paweł Śpiewak also referred to it in his article in **Rzeczpospolita**, where he described Poland's political system as flawed, arguing that the issues stemmed from the institutions and personnel inherited from the People's Republic of Poland. Śpiewak wrote: "There are very many indications that the Third Republic has exhausted its possibilities for self-repair. It is time to start thinking about the Fourth Republic" (Śpiewak, 2003). The message of the idea was clear to sociologists and centered around four basic slogans: nation, state, Church, and decommunization. It resembled the traditional values of God, honor, and homeland, with God symbolized by the Catholic Church, honor by decommunization, and homeland by

the Polish nation, backed by a strong state (Śpiewak, 2010, p. 10). Lech Kaczyński and the leadership of Law and Justice viewed the concept of the Fourth Republic as a precise reflection of their own goals for state reform and chose it as their main election slogan (Dudek, 2013, p. 530). This decision was driven by the party leaders' perception of Poland as a weak state facing numerous problems. The Third Republic was seen as a counterweight to the model state that the Fourth Republic was intended to become. In this comparison, the Third Republic was depicted as a state crippled by pathologies, dominated by "post-communists," and unable to exercise effective political power. Consequently, building a strong state required a deep reorganization of its structures (Dudek, 2013, p. 530). This perception of the state's weaknesses was undoubtedly shaped by the numerous scandals that rocked the Polish public scene during the waning years of the SLD government.

Lech Kaczyński emphasized this point by stating: "The strength and efficiency of the state, the quality and effectiveness of the functioning of its institutions are determined not only by regulations and procedures. Our country needs competent officials who are impartial and loyal to the state, with high moral qualities and modern thinking" (Kaczyński, 2007, p. 20).

In the case of Civic Platform, the criticism of the post-communist camp and the need to establish new institutions, while abolishing others, alongside vetting and decommunization, allowed the party to declare a commonality of views with Law and Justice. This paved the way for the possibility of a coalition government between the two parties (Lipiński, 2016, p. 298). Both shared the view that the state could not continue in a condition of such deep-rooted pathology, and that failure to address and reform its structures would be immoral. Thus, the pursuit of the ideal – the Fourth Republic – became necessary, standing in stark opposition to its predecessor and aligned with the vision of the state promoted by Law and Justice politicians.

However, a prerequisite for establishing a model state was the introduction of transparency in its functioning, which required the reconstruction of organizational structures and the operational rules of public institutions. This included creating new organizations that operated outside the existing network of interests and dependencies, many of which were rooted in the People's Republic. The state needed full control over its institutions. Jarosław Kaczyński emphasized this by stating, "the fact that the state is a moral quality entails that people who are morally, intellectu-

ally incapable of performing their functions well in public life must be eliminated” (Borejza, 2009, pp. 54–55).

The attitude toward decommunization also distinguished the PiS electorate. For them, the past remained unfinished. Law and Justice voters believed that a “soft version” of communism still existed, and that former functionaries of the party nomenklatura continued to go unpunished. In their view, the Fourth Republic needed to be free of the presence of post-communists and their sympathizers in the public sphere (Śpiewak, 2010, p. 13). These individuals formed a group of “others” – a collective linked by various interests, who had appropriated the state to serve their own needs. This network was seen as a “quadrangle between the secret services, politics, special groups, and business, a system often rooted in the structures of the People’s Republic of Poland” (Kornowski, Zaremba, 2006, p. 22).

According to the Law and Justice Party, those in power after 1989 aimed to preserve this arrangement. They did so by allowing the special services, composed of functionaries with roots in the People’s Republic of Poland, to remain in place. These individuals were seen as lacking the moral qualifications necessary to act in the best interests of the state.

The method for removing them was through decommunization, which involved both the removal of individuals deemed to lack the necessary moral qualifications and the creation of new institutions that operated outside the established “system.”

The term quickly gained popularity and was soon attributed to nearly all socio-business connections. According to those pointing to its existence, the result of these ties was often the unlawful pursuit of interests by using or influencing state institutions. “The arrangement” was perceived as so powerful that public institutions were rendered helpless against it, leaving citizens feeling powerless. It offered a clear explanation for the failure of state institutions and the widespread sense of injustice and inequality.

At the time, Antoni Kamiński observed, “When the leaders of the Law and Justice Party encounter resistance, they immediately speak of a ‘deal.’ Sometimes they are not wrong, but too often the word ‘deal’ becomes an incantation with no substance behind it. Meanwhile, they replace old arrangements with new ones, which are not necessarily better” (Kamiński, 2006). Similarly, Piotr Semka noted that the term “deal” was later mythologized in a mocking manner, suggesting that it was a product of an overactive imagination (Semka, 2010, p. 91).

Tomasz Lis, on the other hand, wrote: “The system could have been anywhere, and probably was everywhere. The system interfered, worked against, and put a stick in the spokes. If something didn’t go right, it was clear – the arrangement was to blame, just like saboteurs more than half a century ago. Because the arrangement was so broad, anyone could be part of it; because it was hard to break, it seemed deeply conspiratorial; and because there was no trace of it, it became all-powerful” (Lis, 2007, p. 9).

Thus, the idea of the Fourth Republic was intended as a compelling slogan for the election campaign, with the ultimate goal of seizing power and creating a new state. However, executing this “revolution” required not only the right substantive qualifications but also strong moral integrity (Jarosławska, 2007, p. 27).

The foundation for the success of the slogan used in the election campaign to build a new state was, according to Bogumił Luft, rooted in the growing fear within Polish society that the country had not fully extricated itself from the legacy of the totalitarian system. Luft pointed to “the shocking truth about the web of dark mafia connections linking many politicians, businessmen, and government officials of post-communist provenance,” which came to light mainly through press reports and parliamentary investigative committees. Therefore, in his view, the slogan of the Fourth Republic was essentially a project aimed at dismantling the Third Republic and building a new state on its ruins (Luft, 2005).

There was also a prevailing belief that the program of the Fourth Republic was not merely about changing the political system, but about recognizing the previous sixteen years as a period marred by “mistakes and distortions.” As early as the mid-1990s, within the circles of Porozumienie Centrum and the Conservative Coalition – both now part of Law and Justice – the view was expressed that the Third Republic was essentially a hybrid of the People’s Republic of Poland. Discussions surfaced regarding the façade nature of Polish democracy, where elections were technically free, yet underneath the official political life lay pathological arrangements created by figures from the old regime, who continued to exert substantial influence on the mechanisms of power.

For those subscribing to this diagnosis, the only proper remedy was to end the Third Republic, seeing it as a transitional phase between the People’s Republic and a truly free, democratic state. The Fourth Republic was envisioned as this new state, a core element of Law and Justice’s election campaign. This approach was not surprising given that the par-

ty's founding circles had already formulated similar critiques earlier (Owczarek, 2005). The narrative that emerged from this public discourse led to the clear assessment that anyone who did not support the proposed political agenda was, in effect, seen as a defender of the old system and its pathological structures of power.

From a formal perspective, the term Third Republic was enshrined in the 1997 Constitution, meaning that the introduction of the Fourth Republic would require a constitutional amendment, as Lech Kaczyński emphasized. Law and Justice Vice-President Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski also highlighted that the draft constitution "breaks with the dual identity of the Third Republic, shaped by post-communism, blending elements of the traditions of an independent Polish state with the remnants of the People's Republic of Poland." He further noted that the draft constitution represents a comprehensive political vision, reflecting the ambition to establish the Fourth Republic (Projekt konstytucji IV RP, 2005).

Lech Kaczyński also consistently emphasized that the weaknesses of the Third Republic called for a thorough repair of the state. He strongly supported Law and Justice's flagship project, which was part of the election program – namely, the dissolution of the Military Intelligence Services and the verification of its personnel. He viewed this as the final step in Poland's definitive break from its Soviet-era political dependence. Equally, he was firm in his stance on limiting the influence of the establishment formed during the transition, particularly at the intersection of the communist nomenklatura, the secret services, the criminal underworld, and state-licensed big business (Wawrzyński, 2012, p. 93).

Plan for reorganization of military intelligence services

The Law and Justice Party's election program explicitly identified the Military intelligence services as an institution entrenched in post-communism, operating largely outside parliamentary oversight, and in need of thorough cleansing: "We need to restore historical memory, distorted by 45 years of communism and 16 years of post-communism. Poles have the right to know who served Moscow and who fought for an independent Fatherland. Who was the executioner and who was the victim." [...] "We inherited from the People's Republic of Poland, along with informal arrangements and interest groups, often tied to the secret influence of communist services and their connections to the criminal underworld.

This resulted in what Law and Justice described as a ‘systemic hybrid’ of post-communism” (Pislegionowo.pl, 2005). Moreover, the party sought to empower the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) to reveal the names of officers and secret collaborators of the communist secret services (Jóźwiak, 2006, pp. 56–57). The party believed that these actions would garner public support for the creation of the Fourth Republic and fulfill its reform agenda. A key condition for achieving this goal was the formation of a cross-party government, with a coalition between Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS), effectively sidelining the post-communist faction (Semka, 2010, p. 93).

In the parliamentary elections held on September 25, 2005, the Law and Justice party emerged victorious with over 3.1 million votes, accounting for 27% of the total, and secured 155 seats in the Sejm. Civic Platform came in second with 24.14% of the vote, translating to 133 seats. Four additional political groups managed to secure representation in the Sejm. Samoobrona received 11.41% of the votes, winning 56 seats, while the Democratic Left Alliance garnered 11.31%, giving it 55 seats. The League of Polish Families, with 7.97% of the vote, earned 34 seats, and the Polish People’s Party gained 6.96%, resulting in 25 seats (Dudek, 2013, pp. 535–536).

Thus, the two parties advocating for the reform program won a clear majority in the Sejm, controlling 288 seats. They began negotiations to form a joint government. Law and Justice (PiS) offered Civic Platform (PO) half of the sixteen planned ministries, but notably excluded the so-called “power ministries” such as interior, justice, and the minister-coordinator of the special services (Dudek, 2013, p. 544). This led to conflict within the coalition before it was even officially formed. The interpretation of this discord varied depending on the party. According to PiS, “we made a fair offer to our partners – half of the ministerial positions in the government.” In contrast, PO argued, “we were offered ministries that were unrewarding and unattractive” (Szałamacha, 2009, p. 25). Additionally, Jarosław Kaczyński, despite earlier statements that he would take the position of Prime Minister himself, proposed Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz for the role instead. Kaczyński also openly admitted that this decision was intended to improve his brother Lech Kaczyński’s chances in the upcoming presidential election.

Politicians from Civic Platform (PO) criticized Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of Law and Justice (PiS), for his inconsistency. He had previously stated that he would assume the position of Prime Minister if his party

won, but later said, “The power of two brothers, twins, still similar to each other, is not accepted by Polish society. Therefore, we decided that I should not be a candidate for prime minister” (Dudek, 2013, p. 538). This sentiment was reinforced by sociologists at the time, who argued that Poles were cautious and hesitant to grant full power to a single political option. The idea of twin brothers holding the two highest offices in the state only heightened their reluctance.

Jarosław Kaczyński was transparent about his decision to step down as a candidate for prime minister. He believed that “the Fourth Republic can only be established if Lech Kaczyński is the president” (Dudek, 2013, p. 538). He further elaborated, stating, “It will not be acceptable to the citizens for two brothers to occupy the two most important positions in the state” (Śmiłowicz, 2005). In his view, the outcome of the parliamentary elections indicated that Poland was still in “Republic three and a half.” Jarosław also suggested that it would be challenging for the Law and Justice Party to fully realize the vision of the Fourth Republic if Lech Kaczyński lost the presidential race to Donald Tusk, a remark some interpreted as political pressure (Makowski, 2005).

Thus, the possibility of a PO-PiS coalition was ultimately doomed. Jarosław Kaczyński determined that Samoobrona and the League of Polish Families (LPR) would be more attractive coalition partners for Law and Justice in every respect (Subotić, 2005). As a result, the coalition formed a government led by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz.

In his exposé, Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz declared: “The core of this government’s program is to repair of the state. The Polish state is broken in a twofold sense: rotten as a mechanism that does not properly perform the functions for which it was created and morally rotten. State of affairs makes effective governance impossible. Poles urgently need a state that would no longer be a bridge table for deals made between politicians, business people, current and former secret service officers, and common gangsters. My government’s mission is to pull the Polish state out of this Bermuda quadrilateral.”

In his speech, Marcinkiewicz also addressed the issue of special services, acknowledging that this topic is not typically part of a prime minister’s exposé because, in a healthy state, their activities should remain secret. However, he argued: “The infamous role of special services in the Third Republic necessitates breaking this norm. I declared my government’s intention to abolish the Military Intelligence Services and create new military intelligence and counterintelligence services. We will elimi-

nate the pathological links between military intelligence and the civilian economy and p introduce new rules for civilian and judicial oversight of these services” (Stenogram, 2005).

Less than two months later, during his oath of office before the National Assembly, newly elected President Lech Kaczyński proclaimed: “I will use all the powers that the Constitution and laws grant me, including those rarely used so far, to urge those in power to make necessary changes, to denounce those who do harm, reject the common good, and act in the name of partisan interests or outright self-interest. I will be guided in these matters by loyalty to no one other than loyalty to Poland” (Semka, 2010, p. 127).

The above shows that the Kaczyński brothers assumed that if the Military Intelligence Services were not disbanded during their rule, no other political team would have the determination to complete this Herculean task (Semka, 2010, p. 181). Despite the failure of the coalition talks, the Civic Platform (PO) leader did not rule out that the party would support the liquidation of the Military Intelligence Services. However, he set a condition: it could not be a cosmetic operation. The package of laws had to lead to the genuine abolition of these services, the dismissal of personnel, and the creation of a new service from scratch (Marszałek, 2006a).

Coalition government

In January 2006, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of Law and Justice (PiS), proposed a so-called stabilization pact to the parliamentary groups, excluding the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). The pact was intended to last six months, during which its participants would be obliged to refrain from initiating a vote of no confidence against government members and to support the passage of laws aimed at implementing the Law and Justice program. Roman Giertych of the League of Polish Families (LPR) and Andrzej Lepper of Self-Defense (Samoobrona) agreed to join the pact.

The coalition’s program declaration outlined a comprehensive agenda for the reconstruction of the Polish government and the implementation of agreed-upon reforms. It emphasized coordinated actions in the Sejm and Senate, as well as a unified public presentation of government initiatives. The government aimed to break from past policies that perpetuated flawed mechanisms and connections rooted in the communist era. One of its primary goals was to equip state institutions with effective tools to

combat social pathologies, which included abolishing the Military Intelligence Services (WSI) and implementing significant reforms in the civilian secret services.

Annex No. 1 of the declaration specifically addressed the overhaul of the special services, including the liquidation of the WSI and the creation of new military intelligence and counterintelligence agencies from the ground. Meanwhile, Annex No. 3 affirmed that all parties to the agreement would support legislative proposals submitted by the government and the President of Poland. Among the list of legislative priorities was the project to dissolve the WSI (*Deklaracja Programowa*, 2006). The coalition agreement thus provided the formal foundation for realizing the vision of the Fourth Republic and its flagship project.

As Piotr Zaremba argued, “After all, there are many indications that in this first period Jarosław treated Poland as a potential battlefield and sought more spectacular victories over the ‘forces of evil’ – shady businessmen preying on the state budget, secret service officers using their knowledge for nefarious purposes, gangsters intertwined with the world of politics” (Zaremba, 2010, p. 292).

Jarosław Kaczyński himself said: “A state pathologized and entangled in informal arrangements ceases to be an instrument of the nation. In the most profitable areas, the arrangement organized with former or current special services triumphs. [...] We want to tear this curtain to the end. And this means not only a gigantic discrediting of the system and its defenders, but also the way for this Polish state to become a state of ordinary citizens” (Zaremba, 2010, p. 349).

The bills on the dissolution of the WSI were supposed to be a government initiative, created under the supervision of Zbigniew Wasserman, Minister of Coordinator for Special Services. However, they were twice removed from the government’s agenda. According to media reports, the reason was said to be a dispute between the coordinator’s minister and Defense Minister Radosław Sikorski. Wasserman’s draft, which provided for the abolition of the WSI, proposed that the newly-established military intelligence and counterintelligence services be government administration offices subordinate to the head of the Defense Ministry. Civilian specialists from outside the military were also to be admitted to these military services. The minister coordinator of special services would have the right to issue orders and request information. The heads of these services would be appointed by the prime minister, based on the recommendation of the defense minister. Radosław Sikorski, however, held a different

view, stating, “Military services are needed by the army. It would be unacceptable and even dangerous to try to subordinate these services twice – to the head of the Ministry of Defense and the coordinator for special services” (Ordyński, 2006).

In the end, the government, contrary to its announcements, did not adopt the bill on the dissolution of the WSI. The formal reason given was doubts about the constitutionality of one of the provisions. However, Law and Justice politicians themselves admitted that the delays in the drafting process were primarily due to a dispute between Defense Minister Radosław Sikorski, to whom the WSI was formally subordinate, and Zbigniew Wassermann, who was responsible for coordinating the special services.

Meanwhile, Civic Platform began expressing growing impatience. Jan Rokita remarked: “I hope that this time the Government will make a decision on the WSI, because this issue is coming back like a boomerang and for some mysterious reason cannot find its finale” (Marszałek, 2006b). Jarosław Kaczyński himself confirmed that the Government was unable to adopt the proposed legislation due to a dispute over authority regarding the military services between the coordinating minister and the head of the Defense Ministry. At the same time, he assured that “with all certainty the WSI will be liquidated to the core,” and that a package of laws establishing two new services to replace the WSI would be submitted in the coming days by President Lech Kaczyński, in the version prepared by Zbigniew Wassermann (Marszałek, 2006b).

At the same time, Zbigniew Wassermann acknowledged that his concept had gained the president’s support, as it was deemed more beneficial for state security. Speaking to reporters, he clarified that the new service would be subordinate to the Minister of National Defense and coordinated by the Minister for Special Services. He emphasized that “the coordinator will have the ability, with the approval of the prime minister, to obtain information that civilian authorities have never obtained in Poland before.” Wassermann also argued that civilian control over the new military services would prevent their pathologization. He reassured that Minister Sikorski’s oversight of the military services would remain intact, as he would be their superior and oversee the operation of the armed forces, ensuring the distinction between military oversight and civilian control. The coordinating minister’s role would be to synchronize the military services with their civilian counterparts and manage the military services in the area of state security, always with the knowledge of the Defense Ministry’s head (Marszałek, 2006b).

Zbigniew Siemiątkowski, a former Minister of Coordinator of Special Services in the SLD government and a representative of the parliamentary opposition, also weighed in on the issue. He remarked, “Double subordination will cause a huge competence babble. These new services will have four or even five masters: the head of the Ministry of Defense, the prime minister, the coordinating minister, and the president and head of the National Security Bureau. With so many masters, they will be practically controlled by none, and if there are clever service chiefs, they will lead them all into the field and pile on each other” (Marszałek, 2006c).

However, the Head of the President’s Chancellery, Andrzej Urbański, issued a statement that President Lech Kaczyński would take the lead on the project to liquidate the WSI, and it would be he who would complete work on the package of related laws. He emphasized that it was essential for the president to address the unresolved legacy of the services from the previous sixteen years. Lech Kaczyński himself believed that the Military intelligence services had not undergone any meaningful transformation after 1989. While the collapse of the system caused some disruption in the hierarchy, he argued that the core of the service remained unchanged, having never been subjected to public scrutiny. Questions about the relationships between personnel and their former superiors were left unanswered (Warzecha, 2010, pp. 141–142).

In his statement, the President said: “On the issue of the liquidation of the WSI, I pressed Marcinkiewicz gently, but this did not yield results. In the end, I took the issue to him, and it turned from a government initiative into a presidential initiative” (Warzecha, 2010, p. 93). He claimed: “Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz took to it like a dog to a hedgehog. Jan Rokita has already announced that the Law and Justice Party is the ‘party of the WSI,’ because it announced their dissolution but is not living up to it. I came to the conclusion that Marcinkiewicz is simply mentally too weak for this, and that’s why I took it over” (Warzecha, 2010, p. 143).

The ruling camp’s mood at the time seems to have been aptly summed up in “Rzeczpospolita” by Maciej Rybiński: “Few things probably did as much damage to the Third Republic as the abandonment of the zero option in 1990. All the special services, skewered by the PRL, further degenerated in the new environment of the democratic struggle for power, market economy, privatization, as well as through the disintegration of old alliances and the formation of new ones. Even today, I believe that a zero option would be most effective, instead of another purge, signing of loyalties, new overseers and other formal procedures. I’m afraid that

anyone who has come into contact with the WSI, communism's most enduring institution, is deprived forever" (Rybiński, 2006).

Presidential bills on the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service

On March 13, 2006, pursuant to Article 118(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Skrzydło, 2005, p. 270), the President of the Republic of Poland referred to the Speaker of the Sejm a draft law on the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service. In justifying the need for its enactment, the drafters emphasized that the previous possibility of unlawful interference by the special services in politics and economics posed a serious threat to the state's proper functioning. They argued it was unacceptable for the Military intelligence services to be governed by secret departmental regulations, which underscored the inadequacy of civilian and parliamentary oversight. The drafters cited repeated instances of illegal operations, violations of the law, and the political use of these services to combat opposition forces (Druk nr 404, 2006).

Furthermore, the law of July 9, 2003, on the Military Intelligence Services failed to ensure genuine civilian control over military services that had significant powers to encroach upon basic civil rights and freedoms. According to the drafters, this law served primarily to achieve narrow political goals, preserving outdated organizational and personnel structures that were incompatible with the new challenges to state security in the 21st century.

President Lech Kaczyński emphasized that the fundamental premise of the proposed reform of the Military intelligence services was to change the structural organization of counterintelligence and military intelligence services. This reform aimed to separate these functions into two distinct, specialized state services, both under the Ministry of Defense. The draft law proposed that these services be recognized as government administrative offices, representing a significant structural shift. The reform also introduced a departure from the traditional view that only professional soldiers could head these services. According to the President, these positions should be occupied by people "with a strong sense of responsibility and dedication to the public good, avoiding the influence of vested interests" (Druk nr 405, 2006).

Additionally, the heads of these services would be appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister upon the recommendation of the Minister of Defense, and would hold the status of central government administrative officials. The draft law proposed granting the Prime Minister greater powers over both military intelligence and counterintelligence, a move that, according to the drafters, would enable real oversight and ensure that the services remained focused on their substantive, statutory responsibilities (Druk nr 404, 2006).

Parliamentary work on projects and signing of laws

On March 23, 2006, during the 14th session of the Sejm, the first reading of the bill on the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service, presented by the President of the Republic of Poland, took place. The head of the President's Chancellery remarked that the difficulty of reforming the military services was most evident in the fact that no significant actions had been undertaken in this area for over a dozen years (Stenogram, 2006a). He emphasized that the law governing the Military Intelligence Services (WSI) had not brought meaningful reforms, particularly in terms of establishing real civilian oversight of the military services. The 2003 law on the WSI, he argued, served merely a political objective of maintaining existing organizational and personnel structures, which were inadequate for addressing the security challenges of the 21st century.

Representatives from the Law and Justice (PiS) party echoed this sentiment, describing the debate as one of the most significant parliamentary discussions of the past 17 years. PiS deputies emphasized the importance of distinguishing which political groups were committed to breaking with the legacy of the People's Republic of Poland. They specifically highlighted the liquidation of the WSI as a critical step in this process, alongside the expulsion of soldiers who had been trained in Soviet military academies. During this discussion, PiS representatives also declared that any criminal activities discovered among former or current WSI officers would be exposed to the public (Stenogram, 2006a).

Thanks were also expressed to President Lech Kaczyński, who, by taking the legislative initiative, tackled what the Law and Justice Party viewed as an unresolved issue: the elimination of one of the last remnants of the communist system in Poland. Law and Justice deputies did not hide

their views on potential opponents of the changes, making it clear that the result of the vote would answer the question of which political group genuinely wanted to break with the legacy of the People's Republic of Poland (Marszałek, 2006d). They argued that anyone defending the WSI was either acting against the interests of the state or was involved in the notorious "arrangement" that had corrupted the system.

Opposition parties, however, did not remain passive. They raised questions about whether it was prudent to dismantle the previous achievements of the military services due to what they characterized as the phobias of a few individuals. They questioned whether a desire for revenge over some perceived wrongs justified putting the state's security at risk by undermining such a crucial component as its armed forces. Opposition deputies emphasized that "each of the services removes mistakes, fixes procedures, but it does not occur to anyone to liquidate them" (Stenogram, 2006a). Moreover, they argued that if, after two years of operation, the WSI law had not fully met its goals or some provisions were not functioning correctly, efforts should be made to amend the law and introduce new instruments of civilian and democratic control. They suggested that the government's true motive was not reforming the services but gaining control over them for the benefit of one political faction.

On May 24, 2006, during the 18th session of the Sejm (Stenogram, 2006b), a vote was held on the bill concerning the establishment of the Military Counterintelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service. The bill was passed in its entirety. On June 9, 2006, the President of the Republic of Poland signed the bill into law, officially abolishing the Military Intelligence Services and marking a significant restructuring of Poland's military intelligence framework.

Summary

The article demonstrates how changes in the state's security system, particularly in the Military intelligence services, were subordinated to the pursuit of a specific political objective. Identifying the Military Intelligence Services (WSI) as a key component of the so-called "deal" was not merely a popular campaign slogan. It also served to highlight institutional barriers that stood in the way of realizing the vision of a universal rule of law and justice, which was central to the political concept of the Fourth Republic.

The Military Intelligence Services (WSI), which in 2005 remained one of the few state agencies largely unaffected by the systemic changes after 1989, was, in reality, ill-suited to be identified as the core of the so-called “deal.” Existing regulations on the protection of classified information and on the service of Polish Army soldiers, coupled with the sensitive nature of the cases the WSI handled, essentially precluded any substantive debate with its critics. As a result, the WSI became the proverbial “whipping boy,” with no real means of defending itself or even engaging in counterarguments.

While placing the blame on the Third Republic and the post-communist elites for the perceived weakness of the state and its institutions, the Military Intelligence Services (WSI) were simultaneously held up as the epitome of the forces that had allegedly appropriated the state for their own interests. Operating with little change since 1989, the Military Intelligence Services, both institutionally and personally tied to the communist era, were seen as evidence of the failure of the “thick line” policy. In this narrative, the WSI became a focal point, embodying the traits that, according to the proponents of the Fourth Republic, characterized all those who were opposed to an independent Polish state.

In 2006, the restructuring of the military intelligence services was shaped by the political climate and the needs that arose from it. The concept of the Fourth Republic, introduced into public discourse as a counterpoint to the Third Republic, required identifying the “systems” perceived as responsible for the state’s weaknesses. The dissolution of the WSI and the creation of new military intelligence and counterintelligence services were intended, in the eyes of their proponents, to cleanse public life of individuals with questionable moral integrity and sever the connections between public administration and suspect interest groups. This process was seen as essential for Poland to regain political and economic sovereignty and to purify its state institutions. Ultimately, the establishment of the Fourth Republic was envisioned as the means to achieve these goals.

The analysis presented in the article highlights how the military special service was instrumentalized to further a political agenda. The abolition of the WSI and the creation of new military intelligence and counterintelligence services fulfilled an electoral promise, serving as evidence of the Polish state’s rebirth and the government’s effectiveness. In this process, the prevailing political objectives overshadowed a more comprehensive reflection on the Military intelligence services’ role and their place within the broader state security framework.

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Likwidacja Wojskowych Służb Informacyjnych w świetle wprowadzenia w życie idei IV RP

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono proces, jaki doprowadził do likwidacji w 2006 roku Wojskowych Służb Informacyjnych i powstania w konsekwencji Służby Wywiadu Wojskowego i Służby Kontrwywiadu Wojskowego. Scharakteryzowano jednocześnie genezę i założenia idei IV Rzeczypospolitej. Omówiono w jaki sposób wpłynęła ona na

kształt wojskowych służb specjalnych w Polsce. Przedstawiono przebieg procesu legislacyjnego zakończonego likwidacją dotychczasowych struktur wojskowych służb specjalnych i powołaniem nowych. Opisano przebieg sporu politycznego, jaki towarzyszył powyższej reformie. Na zakończenie dokonano podsumowania rozważań.

Słowa kluczowe: IV Rzeczpospolita, program wyborczy, wojskowe służby specjalne, dekomunizacja

