

COMPATIBILITY OF STATE BORDER GUARD AND NATIONAL ARMED FORCES IN THE STATE OF EXCEPTION OR WAR SITUATION

Arvils Mikazans¹, Olegs Ignatjevs²

¹*Bc.prof., Lecturer of the Military and Physical Training Department,
State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia,
e-mail: arvils.mikazans@rs.gov.lv, Rezekne, Latvia*

²*Bc.phil., Assistant of the Military and Physical Training Department,
State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia,
e-mail: olegs.ignatjevs@rs.gov.lv, Rezekne, Latvia*

Abstract: *The aim of the current paper is to study the compatibility of the State border guard and National armed forces of the Republic of Latvia in the state of exception or war situation. To achieve the aim, following objectives were defined: to state current status of military training in State border guard, to compare State border guard equipment, armament, procedures and training with National armed forces ones, to make proposals for improvement of current compatibility. Following research methods were used: monographic or descriptive method, document analysis, logic-constructive method, analytic method. Within the topic of military compatibility research, the author thoroughly examined State border guard tasks in military sphere, the cooperation between both institutions and the compatibility of State border guard and National armed forces.*

Keywords: *compatibility, cooperation, State border guard, National armed forces, military, state of emergency, war.*

Introduction

Modern world shows constantly changing situation in politics, economics and other spheres. Concerning this fact, countries develop their security to respond to inner and outer threats. Latvia, together with NATO and EU allies, has faced the upheaval of the European security environment caused by Russia's aggression in Ukraine, by changing the internationally recognized borders and disregarding the international obligations, Russia is undermining the existing international order. In 2014, Russia illegally annexed Crimea and included it in the Russian Federation. And in February 2022, Russia, violating Ukraine's sovereignty and international norms, invaded Ukraine, where the main directions of the attack were from the territory of Russia and Belarus, and the main target of the attack is Kyiv. Latvia issues new regulatory enactments, as well as amendments to existing regulatory enactments, including norms where Latvian law enforcement agencies should carry out internal strengthening of the state to avoid or prevent internal conflicts, as well as to strengthen the inviolability of the state's sovereignty from external enemies. The State border guard is



improving its direct tasks by improving the infrastructure and integrating basic military skills (military training at the squad and platoon level, communications training) into the training of the State border guard personnel.

Tasks of the State border guard in military sphere

The functions of the State border guard (further in text – SBG) are to ensure the inviolability of the state border and prevent illegal migration (State Border Guard Law, 2020). The SBG law stipulates that the function of the border guard is to ensure the inviolability of the state border and "in cooperation with the National armed forces, to prevent threats to the territory of the Republic of Latvia at the border" (State Border Guard Law, 2020). SBG continuously guards the state border, ensuring its inviolability, and prevents illegal migration. SBG does not ensure the inviolability of the state border alone, it does so in cooperation with the National armed forces (further in text – NAF), in accordance with the NAF law: "The National Armed Forces provide support to the State Border Guard - in ensuring the inviolability of the state border" (National Armed Forces Law, 1999). This is confirmed by the statement of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Latvia, A. Pabriks, that "NAF will do everything to ensure the safety of Latvia's border and society. We will initially involve several hundred soldiers and national guardsmen in providing support to the State Border Guard" (Pabriks, 2020). SBG requested NAF support from March 30 to April 14, 2020 in order to limit the spread of Covid-19 in Latvia. Therefore, the first steps were already taken for the ability of SBG and NAF to integrate and perform joint tasks. Considering the fact that this type of integration took place in peacetime and the aim was to limit the pandemic, there was no integration in the military sphere of SBG and NAF.

In order for the SBG to be able to integrate into the NAF in a state of emergency or war, the Cabinet of Ministers in 2015 supported the procurement of SBG equipment and weapons, applying the NAF weapons and equipment standards (Latvian Ministry of Defense, 2017).

According to the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On Emergency Situation and State of Exception", a state of exception is a legal regime that is declared in the event that:

- the country is threatened by an external enemy;
- internal riots have broken out or are threatening to break out in the country or part of it, which threatens the democratic state system (Latvian Law on Emergency Situation and State of Exception, 2013).

If the country is threatened by an external enemy or riots have broken out in the country, mobilization can be announced in the country, which also includes the involvement of the SBG in ensuring national security, as a result of which the SBG would be integrated into the NAF.

According to the author of the paper, the tasks of the SBG in case of war, when integrating into the NAF, are as follows:

- obtain intelligence (performing Observation Post tasks);
- observe the actions/activities of the opponent (performing Observation Post tasks);
- disrupt the opponent's resupply (performing Ambush tasks);
- destroy small enemy units (up to platoon level unit) (performing Ambush tasks);
- create obstacles (impeding the enemy's movement or redirecting the enemy's units to an area where their maneuverability is limited).

The elements and tasks of the above-mentioned military tactics are taught in the educational programs and advanced training courses of the State Border Guard College.

In order for the successful integration of the SBG, at the end of 2017, the NAF handed over the first "Glock 17" pistols to the SBG, which were purchased as part of the rearming of the SBG (Latvian Ministry of Defense, 2017). As a result, the SBG Makarov pistols were replaced with a new type of firearm, Glock 17 pistols, in 2019, Kalashnikov assault rifles were replaced with G36 assault rifles. From 2019, the G36 assault rifle is not only the basic weapon of the soldiers of the National armed forces, but is also introduced in the armament of the National guard and the State border guard (Sargs.lv, 2019). The replacement of this type of firearms by the SBG is aimed at having a unified resupply of the NAF and the SBG. In 2020, the SBG received additional weapons in its arsenal - UMP submachine guns, grenade launchers, under-barrel grenade launchers and machine guns, thus, the State border guard became mobile in the use of weapons.

Looking back at the period in which the SBG was rearmed from Soviet-era armaments to modern armaments such as those of the NAF and the armed forces of our allies, or NATO, a long time has passed. The author of the research will take the reference time from Latvia's accession to NATO, that is 2004.

Since joining NATO, Latvia regularly participates in various joint exercises of the Alliance's armed forces abroad, as well as military exercises are held on the territory of Latvia. Participation in such exercises allows developing the necessary combat readiness of the NAF, as well as provides an opportunity for NATO members to better familiarize themselves with the combat capabilities of other countries, thus promoting mutual

interoperability (Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). Until 2014, the SBG has not been involved in any joint military exercises with the National armed forces, although the Border Guard Law of the Republic of Latvia, which has already lost its force, defined the role of the SBG: "in cooperation with the National armed forces, to prevent and repel armed incursions into the territory of Latvia, territorial and internal in the waters, as well as in the air space, to prevent armed provocations on the state border, to provide assistance to border residents in case of criminal threats" (Border Guard Law of the Republic of Latvia, 1998). Until 2014, SBG and NAF operated in parallel, ensuring internal and external security, instead of working together to ensure national security. From 2004, NAF developed and improved, but SBG did not develop as actively as NAF. Only when the conflict between Ukraine and Russia started in 2014, Latvia began to pay more attention to the SBG, because the SBG is the first security line of Latvia's sovereignty.

According to the author, the development of SBG depends on external factors and the political situation of other countries. For instance:

1. Since 2004 till 2014, the SBG used obsolete weapons, which are used in the former Soviet Union countries. In 2014, when the conflict between Ukraine and Russia took place, Latvia paid attention to the armament of its security structures only because of the mistakes of other countries, where the armament of the SBG was not compatible with the armament of the NAF at that time. From 2017 to 2020, the rearmament of the SBG took place.
2. In 2022, the war between Russia and Ukraine - Latvia is only now increasing the defense budget and will strengthen the structures of the Ministry of the Interior in order to increase the country's internal security, which previously received only superficial attention, but only external security was strengthened.

In order to prevent the state from being threatened, Latvia needs to develop action plans in time to prevent emergency situations in the event of a threat to the country's external border and to guarantee internal security.

Cooperation between National armed forces and State border guard in military sphere

SBG and NAF are subordinated to separate ministries - the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defense. The two ministries and their subordinate structural units have a common task - to ensure national security.

In order to achieve the goals of the assigned tasks in the provision of national security, the levels of cooperation have been determined - the strategic, operational and tactical levels of cooperation:

1st strategic level of cooperation - Ministry of Interior and Defense. At the strategic level of cooperation, tasks are defined in order to achieve the set goals based on the guidelines set at the political level;

2nd operational level of cooperation – institutions of SBG and NAF. The level of operational cooperation – to arrange tasks in a certain order in order to achieve the goals set at the strategic level;

3rd tactical level of cooperation – SBG structural units cooperate with NAF and National guard units. At the tactical level of cooperation, the tasks set at the operational level of cooperation are implemented and the set results are achieved.

In compliance with the national regulatory framework for ensuring national security, at the operational level of cooperation between SBG and NAF on April 8, 2008, interinstitutional agreement No. SL-2008/2 "On the training of officials of the State border guard and the National armed forces" (hereinafter - Agreement). The purpose of the Agreement is to determine the procedure by which the State border guard and the National armed forces organize training for officials in order to increase their professional qualifications and fulfill the tasks set out in the SBG and NAF regulatory acts in ensuring the inviolability of the state border and ensuring the inviolability of the national territory (State border guard, National armed forces, 2008).

From 2015 to 2021, NBS has trained 188 VRS officials in various military courses. The largest number of SBG officials trained in the period from 2015 to 2021 was in 2018 and 2019, when a total of 101 officials from the total number of trained officials were trained. The most trained SBG officials are in such courses as weapon handling courses, Junior staff officers' course, Boat driver - lifeguard course etc. The purpose of these courses is to work as part of NBS units, plan military operations and fulfill the given tasks (State border guard unpublished materials).

In order to ensure the resources of military knowledge, armaments and equipment acquired in the field of SBG and NAF cooperation, SBG is involved and participates in military exercises, such as "Mazais Namejs", "Namejs" and Summer Field Camp, where various situations in military tactics are played out.

In total, 468 or 22% of all State border guard officials **have completed** various courses related to ensuring national security and 1,632 or 78% of SBG officials **have not acquired** additional knowledge and skills in the military sphere. In the period from 2014 to 2021, a relatively small number of SBG officials have been trained in order to ensure the compatibility of the SBG and NAF in the field of military training as defined in the National defense concept.

Only since 2014 SBG has been involved in the NAF routine (military exercises). On May 19, 2014, the combined armed forces exercise "Namejs

2014" began at the Adazhi base. Although the exercise "Namejs 2014" is an exercise of the National armed forces, it also involves the SBG and certain US military units. In the period from 1998 to 2014, the state and NAF did not pay attention to strengthening SBG. These 16 years are a long period of inactivity for the strengthening of national security, especially in ensuring the security of the external border.

The participation of SBG officials in military exercises allows practicing military skills, as well as developing an understanding of the tasks of the State border guard in X hour.

In 2020, in the unified exercise cycle "Namejs 2020", in addition to the National guard exercises, autumn field tactical exercises of NAF units, Training Command exercises "Wise Adder", Security Command exercises "LOGEX/RSOMEX", Navy exercises "Flotex", Headquarters battalion exercises were also held "Lightning", Air Force exercise "Air Fist", Military police exercise "Core" and Land Forces Mechanized Infantry Brigade military exercise "Silver Arrow".

Both in Riga and in the rest of the territory of Latvia, the presence of the army was clearly visible. Soldiers of the Latvian and allied armed forces, national guards, reserve soldiers, employees of the Ministry of Defense and personnel of the structures of the Ministry of the Interior - employees of the State police, SBG, State fire and rescue service and Prisons administration took part in the training. The legend of the training was that an opponent has come from Vidzeme, who wants to break into the capital and take control (Vingris, 2021).

Since this scenario of the adversary's actions and the allied forces was played out in peacetime, the highest quality of military exercises and the fulfillment of the task of the NAF and allied structures (including SBG) was ensured. But when faced with a real situation, all defense mechanisms may not work, as chaos would arise in society and security structures in response to the actions of the adversary. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure closer cooperation between civil and military structures, e.g., State border guard and National armed forces.

In 2020, the provision of SBG with military means of communication has been started in order to ensure a quick exchange of information with the National Armed Forces. Communication system interoperability is required to ensure SBG compatibility with NAF. Currently, the Ministry of Interior uses the Motorola communication system, which is not compatible with the NAF communication system. As part of the US 333rd support program in 2022, SBG received Falcon third generation military radios Harris AN/PRC-152A and Harris AN/PRC-117G, which will be distributed among SBG structural units. Radio communication devices and equipment of the US corporation "Harris" are used by the majority of NATO member states, as well as many

NATO "Partnership for Peace" countries, therefore their use ensures the efficiency and compatibility of the NAF communication system with the communication systems of other NATO countries (Latvian Ministry of Defense, 2018). Currently, the State border guard college, in cooperation with the NAF and/or the National guard, from 2019, implements the qualification program "Border Guard Special Military Training Course" and one of the parts of this course is "Communication Training", where specific knowledge and skills in military communications are learned.

According to the National Defense Concept, which stipulates that the national security institutions and the NAF are primarily responsible for information to be obtained, analyzed and passed on to decision-makers in a timely manner, the infrastructure of the State border guard system and of the external border must be integrated into a unified early warning system. The effectiveness of early warning is formed by following:

- the ability to detect changes in the situation;
- ability to quickly transfer information to decision makers;
- Prepared response plans for potential scenarios (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, 2020).

Currently, the SBG is being prepared for the effective execution of the tasks defined in the National Defense Concept, in order to ensure the high-quality operation of the early warning system.

Compatibility of State border guard and National armed forces

The threat of illegal migration with small groups of migrants on the border of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with Belarus appeared in the summer of 2021, since then the border has been increasingly threatened. Mass activities of illegal migrants can escalate into conflicts, mass riots with national security services, so Latvia has declared a state of emergency on the Latvia-Belarus border and in the administrative territories adjacent to it, restricting the access of civilians to the border zone.

And since September 28, 2022, an emergency situation has been declared on the Latvian-Russian border. An emergency situation has been introduced in the territory of Alūksne, Balvi and Ludza districts, as well as in ports, airports, airport border crossing points and railways (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2022), when mobilization for war with Ukraine was announced in the Russian Federation. The purpose of the implementation of the emergency situation is to reduce the flow of Russian citizens, as well as for the SBG to carry out increased border surveillance and border checks of Russian citizens, attracting additional resources from other services.

Accordingly, in case of declaring a state of emergency, SBG support is provided by the State Police, NAF and National guard.

Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On Emergency Situations and State of Emergency" defines what an emergency situation is and in what cases it is declared:

- The state of emergency is a special legal regime, during which the Cabinet of Ministers has the right to limit the rights and freedoms of state administration and local government institutions, natural and legal persons, as well as to impose additional obligations on them, in accordance with the procedures and to the extent prescribed by law.
- A state of emergency can be declared in the event of a national threat related to a disaster, its threats or a threat to critical infrastructure, if the security of the state, society, environment, economic activity or human health and life are significantly threatened (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2013).

Thus, the declaration of a state of emergency imposes both restrictions and obligations, allowing the state institutions, in this case the SBG, the State Police, the NAF and the National guard, to have a greater capacity to act in the prevention of illegal migration, for example, not to accept an application for asylum.

The NAF exercises "Decisive Point" in the Southeast of Latvia started on November 13, 2021 and lasted until December 12. About 3,000 representatives of the armed forces participated in them, including national guardsmen from the National guard's 1st Riga Brigade, 2nd Vidzeme Brigade, 3rd Latgale Brigade and 4th Kurzeme Brigade. The aim of the military exercises was to improve mutual cooperation of large-scale units, force synchronization and mobility, as well as to solve logistical issues. According to the author of the paper, there is no direct participation of the SBG in the training scenario, but the SBG operated in parallel within the framework of these military exercises, ensured the protection of the state border, involving additional human resources of the SBG and National guard units if necessary. As part of the given exercises, the NAF and the National guard moved their units closer to the national border in case the number of illegal immigrants increases or an emergency situation develops with mass riots or armed attacks on the national border. In such a situation, the involvement of the NAF and the National guard in ensuring the inviolability of the state border is shortened. If such a scenario develops, can such a situation be considered an "emergency"? In the opinion of the author, in such a case, the Cabinet of Ministers would have to declare a state of emergency, because the country's border is threatened by an external enemy, and in this case an attack on border guards and soldiers would take place. In the event of a state of

emergency, the SBG would become part of the NAF and the NAF would take over the control and neutralization of the situation under its competence. NAF resources are able to control and neutralize such a situation.

In 2022, SBG organized exercises to suppress mass influx of illegal immigrants and mass riots. Unfortunately, only with theoretical/practical training and role-playing trespassers, it is not possible to fulfill such training in sufficient quality if the resources of special means are limited (shields, long sticks, leg guards, arm guards, helmets with protective glass, light body armor, gas canisters, electric shock devices). SBG needs to find a solution for purchasing these resources in sufficient quantity.

In order to strengthen cooperation and interchangeability with NAF, the SBG needs to create a working group of SBG officials who have graduated from the "Junior Staff Officer Course" of the National Defense Academy of the NAF Training Management Command, because during the 4 months of this training course, the border guards acquire knowledge and skills in battalion-level tactics, planning of various combat operations and headquarters procedures. These officials would be able to analyze possible current and future threats to the state border, as well as to develop plans to prevent or neutralize these threats. According to the author, current development of threat prevention plans takes place without conducting any analysis of situations, and are based only on assumptions. Furthermore, the developed plans require a testing, or MAPEX – a map exercise. This type of play would allow determining the resources of friendly forces in relation to the opponent, time, the involvement of additional resources, and the goals to be achieved. As a result of MAPEX, conclusions could be drawn to implement its objectives, and only then could practical lessons be implemented.

According to the opinion of the author of the research, the conclusions drawn, currently the SBG is not ready to be fully integrated into the NAF, because currently only the armament is unified. But concerning the individual provision of border guards, the integration of communications in the SBG infrastructure, the maximum training of border guards – it is currently impossible to operate as part of the NAF.

Conclusions

Within the research of military compatibility made, the author gave insight into the State border guard tasks in military sphere, the cooperation between both institutions and the compatibility of State border guard and National armed forces.

During the current research the author made following conclusions. SBG rearmed from Soviet-era armaments to modern armaments, such as those of the NAF and the armed forces of our allies, or NATO. In the event of a state of

emergency or war, SBG and NAF will have a unified resupply. The development of SBG is based on foreign policy processes or military/political conflicts of other countries. Latvia began to pay more attention to the development of the SBG and the security of the national border only taking into account the events between Russia and Ukraine of 2014. The threat of mass illegal migration will exist until the diplomatic relations between the EU, USA, NATO and Russia improve. As well as until the Russia-Ukraine war, which is supported by Belarus, ends, because now Belarus can directly affect the security of the EU's external border with artificially created massive illegal migration.

Taking into consideration previous conclusions, the author starts following proposals. The SBG should find opportunities to organize and implement joint military exercises with the NAF, which would allow to understand the possibilities of the compatibility between the two structures. SBG Main Board should urgently find an opportunity to integrate a unified communication system between SBG and the NAF, which would allow timely provision of information circulation between SBG and NAF. The SBG Main Board should create a task group of graduates of the Junior Staff Officer course to develop emergency plans in the field of a military threat to the state border, as a result of which the response capabilities of the SBG and an assessment of the preparedness level would be carried out. The State Border Guard College should provide a training program on Harris Falcon III radio stations for the full-time and part-time students of the State Border Guard College of the first-level professional higher education study program "Border Guard".

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