

II. BEZPIECZEŃSTWO PAŃSTWA – ZAGADNIENIA ORGANIZACYJNE I PRAWNE

BUILDING A SYSTEM OF CIVIL AIRPORTS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY: THE WARSAW/MODLIN AIRPORT IN THE WARSAW METROPOLITAN AREA

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Abstract. A former military air base of the Warsaw Pact era serves now several purposes of broadly defined national security of Poland. With EU help, regional and local self-government and the national government together converted the base into the new civil Warsaw/Modlin Airport. The article identifies twelve reasons for, and benefits from, the establishment of the second international civil airport in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area, besides the old Warsaw Chopin Airport: 1. Diversification, resilience and invulnerability of the aviation infrastructure as part of the critical infrastructure of Poland, NATO and the EU; 2. Stability of air transportation – including government and military flights – between the capital of Poland and the rest of Europe and the world; 3. A strong and resilient system of airports also for commerce and pleasure, including private business travel, tourism, mail and cargo; 4. Assured connections to the rest of Poland, Europe and the world for non-government and non-military flights, including mail and cargo ones; 5. A closer access to air transportation for the part of the region located far from the Warsaw Chopin Airport; 6. Prospects for further growth of the aviation infrastructure thanks to a large reserve of space in Modlin; 7. Economic benefits from the specialization of airports; 8. Cheaper air travel thanks to the increased presence of low-cost airlines and their competition; 9. Local and regional economic growth, development and modernization with a prospect for an “Airport City” of advanced economy in Modlin; 10. An economically beneficial conversion of no longer needed military property for civil use; 11. A better quality of life in Warsaw and the part of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area surrounding the Warsaw Chopin Airport, thanks to diversification of air traffic and associated road traffic; 12. Protection of the environment thanks to geographic diversification of air operations and to a railroad line between the two airports and Warsaw that will replace a large share of automobile traffic associated with air travel, mail and cargo. In addition, the nearby Modlin Fortress of a great architectural and historic value may attract more interest, visitors, care and investment, contributing to national security of Poland and its allies and partners through education.

Introduction

A military air base born amid hot and cold global wars serves now national security purposes, broadly defined, under civil public ownership. The conversion strongly contributes to economic development and quality of life. These values also belong to the priorities of modern national security.

Before the construction of a civil international airport on the site of an abandoned Warsaw Pact-era Polish Air Force base near the historic Modlin Fortress on the Vistula River north of Warsaw, only one major airport existed in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area, home to over three million people. The capital city of Poland – the sixth largest nation of NATO in Europe in terms of population, GDP and military potential – was fully dependent on the Warsaw Chopin Airport (IATA code: WAW), established 1934, often called the Okęcie Airport after a neighborhood it occupies. There already were eleven other civil international airports – big and small – in most of Poland’s regional capitals, and a twelfth such airport was near completion. They all are located, however, far from Warsaw, at distances of between about 150 and about 550 kilometers by road or railroad.

Similar distances separate Warsaw from air force bases which therefore could not serve as backup for the Warsaw Chopin Airport even in an emergency. The only exception is a Polish Tactical Air Force Base near of town of Mińsk Mazowiecki, about 50 kilometers east from Warsaw. In Central Europe, this is NATO’s easternmost air force base in which military operations must always have a priority over civil aviation. Finally, the Warsaw Military Airport in Okęcie has a special terminal (used mainly for state visits and VIP flights) but no separate runways. It shares most of its infrastructure with the civil Warsaw Chopin Airport.

Therefore, a simple technical malfunction, an accident, a terrorist attack or threat, or a single event of another kind was able to disrupt Warsaw’s vital connection to the rest of Europe and the world. In February 2010, a small electrical device failure paralyzed the whole Warsaw Chopin Airport for several hours. It did not take a war, an earthquake or a snowstorm. Incoming planes were diverted to airports in other regions of Poland, far away from the helpless capital. That event showed the weakness and vulnerability of the existing aviation infrastructure and became a turning point in the public decision making process to build another airport¹. The project was already fully prepared. After the incident, the implementation began. Heavy construction work started on 8 October 2010.

The second airport opened on 15 July 2012 under a commercial name of Warsaw/Modlin Airport (WMI)². Its distance to the center of Warsaw is approximately 40 kilometers by road or railroad, and approximately 30 kilometers in straight line. On a clear day, Warsaw skyscrapers are visible from the towers of the Modlin Fortress and from the planes taking off or landing.

¹ G. Kostrzewa-Zorbas, *Metropolia nielotna* [A Flightless Metropolis], „Polska The Times”, Metropolia Warszawska Edition, No. 41 (714), 18 February 2010, p. 11.

² The name of the owner and operator – a joint venture of regional and local self-governments and agencies of the national government – is: The Mazovian Warsaw-Modlin Airport, Ltd.; in Polish: Mazowiecki Port Lotniczy Warszawa-Modlin Sp. z o.o.

This article presents several national security reasons for, and benefits from, the establishment of the second civil airport – and thus a system of airports – in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area. The principal source is the author's participation in the policy making process, from December 2006 to November 2010, as Chairman of the Committee on Strategy of Regional Development and Spatial Planning³ of the regional parliament – the Assembly of the Mazovian Voivodship⁴.

Background: from World War II to Poland in NATO and the EU

While the Modlin Fortress has its origin in the Napoleonic Wars, the air force base under the same name was built by the Third Reich in 1940, during the World War II occupation of Poland. Then it served the Polish Air Force both in and after the era of the Cold War and the Warsaw Pact. All military aviation presence in Modlin ceased by 2000, one year after Poland's entry into NATO.

After 2000, a temporary arrangement for general aviation started the conversion of the air force base to commercial and other civil uses. From 2010 to 2012, the final and comprehensive conversion included the construction of a passenger terminal (with an initial capacity of two million passengers per year and the possibility to expand by adding new segments) and several other buildings, and a major alteration of the runway. The total cost of the Warsaw/Modlin Airport amounted to approximately 90 million euros, 45 percent of which was a grant from the European Union. More costly will be a railway connection – not yet completed – between Modlin and Warsaw, including new dedicated trains. The railroad project is also co-funded by the EU. Ryanair, the largest low-cost airline in the world, and WizzAir, a low-cost carrier based in Budapest, became the first airlines flying from Modlin, to destinations throughout Europe and the Mediterranean.

Unlike Okęcie, Modlin is located outside of the city limits of Warsaw but within the Warsaw Metropolitan Area, Poland's demographic, economic and cultural center. Other international airports serve the following regional capitals: Łódź (LCJ) in central Poland; Gdańsk (GDN) and Szczecin (SSZ) on the Baltic coast in the northwest; Szczytno-Szymany (SZY) near Olsztyn in the northeast (currently not operational due to an extensive renovation); Bydgoszcz (BZG), Poznań (POZ), Wrocław (WRO) and Zielona Góra (IEG) in the west; Katowice (KTW) and Cracow (KRK) in the south; and Lublin (LUZ, opened in December 2012) and Rzeszów (RZE) in the southeast. Several new airports are under construction or planned in or near Radom and Kielce in central Poland, Gdynia on the Baltic coast, and Białystok in the east. All are too far from the Warsaw

³ In Polish: Komisja Strategii Rozwoju Regionalnego i Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego.

⁴ In Polish: Sejmik Województwa Mazowieckiego.

Metropolitan Area to provide an alternative to Modlin and become part of the airport system of the national capital.

Three levels of public authority cooperated to create the Warsaw/Modlin Airport and thus achieve national security and other objectives. The leader of the project was the regional self-government of the Mazovian Voivodship. On the local self-government level, the suburban town of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, where both the Airport and the Fortress are located, participated in many ways, with additional support of the Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki County self-government. Poland's national government took part through its two specialized agencies: one for military property, the other for airports. Land with old military aviation infrastructure was contributed to the public joint venture by the Military Property Agency⁵ supervised by the Minister of National Defense.

The Warsaw/Modlin Airport is often called "regional". This does not contradict its international nature. All flights in its first year were to foreign destinations. "Regional" means that the focus is on serving the people, organizations and economy of the Mazovia Voivodship – Poland's largest – including the Warsaw Metropolitan Area. In this sense, "regional" are all airports mentioned above, except the Warsaw Chopin Airport of a nationwide focus. Modlin, however, is unique by playing a major national role beside the regional one.

Twelve national security functions of the Warsaw/Modlin Airport

Various economic and social functions of the Warsaw/Modlin Airport were emphasized in official strategic planning documents of the regional self-government, including a specialized study of civil aviation infrastructure⁶ and a general strategy of development of the Mazovia Voivodship⁷. Because the European Union provided almost half of the funding, the European Commission conducted its own evaluation of the project and confirmed that it created major economic and social opportunities for the region.

⁵ In Polish: Agencja Mienia Wojskowego.

⁶ *Studium rozwoju infrastruktury lotnictwa cywilnego na Mazowszu* [A Study of the Development of Civil Aviation Infrastructure in Mazovia]. [Document of the Self-Government of the Mazovian Voivodship] Warszawa: Mazowieckie Biuro Planowania Regionalnego w Warszawie, 2009.

⁷ *Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Mazowieckiego do roku 2020* (aktualizacja) [Strategy of Development of the Mazovian Voivodship through the Year 2020 (Update)]. Dokument uchwalony na posiedzeniu Sejmiku Województwa Mazowieckiego w dniu 29 maja 2006 roku [A Resolution of 29 May 2006 of the Assembly of the Mazovian Voivodship].

A broader and complete list of the envisioned functions – including those beyond the economy and beyond regional development – was part of the decision-making process and appeared half-officially in the media⁸ and literature⁹.

Political and military functions

Two of the several national security functions of the Warsaw/Modlin Airport strongly exceed its regional focus. They are of importance not only to Poland, but also to NATO and the European Union.

1. **Diversification, increased resilience and invulnerability of the aviation infrastructure as part of the critical infrastructure of Poland and, by extension, of NATO and the European Union.** The addition of the new Warsaw/Modlin Airport to the old Warsaw Chopin Airport created a resilient system of mutually supporting airports instead of a vulnerable single airport for the capital of Poland, the largest new member state of both NATO and the EU, located on the eastern frontier of both organizations. Warsaw is, in particular, the seat of FRONTEX – the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union.
2. **Stability of air transportation between the capital – and the largest region – of Poland and the rest of Europe and the world.** For vital government and military flights, the resilient system of airports greatly lowered the risk that natural, technical or man-made obstacles will cut off the capital of Poland from the rest of Europe and the world, including the seats of major international organizations and the capitals of Poland's allies. Most capital cities of NATO and European Union member states, except the smallest ones, have airport networks consisting of two or more separate airports each. Berlin undertook a contrary experiment to concentrate all civil air transportation in a large single airport – the Berlin Brandenburg Airport – instead of an existing network of smaller airports. After seven years of construction with delays and no end in sight, the experiment seems unsuccessful.

⁸ G. Kostrzewa-Zorbas, *Co dla nas z lotniska w Modlinie?* [Modlin Airport: What's in It for Us?]. "Mazowieckie To i Owo" (Legionowo, Mazovia), No 12 (1039), 25 March 2010, p. 17. The article also appeared in other local new magazines in Mazovia, including "Tygodnik Nowodworski" in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, where the Modlin Airport is located, and "Gazeta WPR" in Pruszków – inside an area affected by the close vicinity of the Warsaw Chopin Airport in Okęcie.

⁹ Idem, współpraca [with the cooperation of] K.L. Czubkowski, *Mazowsze 24* [Mazovia 24]. Warszawa: IMBIR 2010.

Economic and other national security functions

All other functions, including several economic and social ones, also belong to national security as broadly defined in modern thought, acts of law and policy documents. The most recent Polish example is *The White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland* published by the National Security Bureau in 2013¹⁰. It enumerates many large domains divided into narrower sectors, including transportation, critical infrastructure and environmental protection within the economic domain. The list below fully corresponds to the content of *The White Book* and related documents.

The first two functions listed below are similar to the political and military functions described above, but here they belong to the realm of commerce and pleasure, including private business travel, tourism, mail and cargo. A system of airports equally benefits all domains of public and private life.

3. **Strong and resilient system of airports.** Especially important for non-government and non-military traffic will be the railroad line, served by fast train, between the two airports and, in between, the center of Warsaw and many boroughs and towns. The last 5 kilometers of the line near the Warsaw/Modlin Airport should be completed in the near future.
4. **Assured connections to the rest of Poland, Europe and the world** for non-government and non-military flights, including those carrying mail and cargo.
5. **A closer access to air transportation** for the northern and eastern boroughs of Warsaw and parts of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area and the entire region (the western and southern boroughs, towns and counties have shorter distances to Okęcie than to Modlin).
6. **Prospects for further growth of the aviation infrastructure.** Whereas the Warsaw Chopin Airport, surrounded by the city and densely populated suburbs, is unable to build new runways, the Warsaw/Modlin Airport has the reserve space for a second parallel runway and for an extension of the existing one. Over time, Modlin may become the main international airport in Poland for mass traffic, and Okęcie may adopt the model of “City Airport” focused on business travel.

¹⁰ *Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [The White Book on National Security of the Republic of Poland], Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego [National Security Bureau], Warszawa 2013. Especially, a table on p. 19.

7. **Specialization of airports and the macroeconomic benefits of specialization.** The two airports in the system are very different and destined to specialize more than to compete one with the other. For the Warsaw/Modlin Airport, the natural niche is low-cost and charter travel, night flights, mail and cargo. But a degree of overlap and competition will also contribute to the macroeconomic efficiency of the system.
8. **Cheaper air travel** thanks to the increased presence of low-cost airlines and their competition with traditional carriers on the market. The costs of operating in Modlin are significantly lower than in Okęcie.
9. **Local and regional economic growth, development and modernization** with the long-term prospect of an “Airport City”¹¹ of advanced economy around Modlin. A short-term growth and development stimulus in Modlin and vicinity occurred instantly.
10. **Economically beneficial conversion of no longer needed military land and infrastructure** into civil use.
11. **Raised quality of life** in Warsaw and the parts of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area surrounding the Warsaw Chopin Airport thanks to gradual relocation of nighttime flights to Modlin, and through general diversification of air traffic and associated road traffic.
12. **Increased protection of the environment** thanks to geographic diversification of air operations and to the railroad line replacing a large share of automobile traffic associated with air travel, mail and cargo.

Conclusions

The establishment of the civil Warsaw/Modlin Airport allowed the creation of a comprehensive and resilient system of transportation infrastructure for public and private purposes, contributed to a more diversified, effective and efficient air transportation market, stimulated economic growth, development and modernization, helped to protect the environment, and raised quality of life. All these benefits are important components of national security as now understood. All belong to the way of life promised by the European Union and protected by NATO.

¹¹ Güller Güller Architecture Urbanism [Mathis Güller, Michael Güller], *From Airport to Airport City*, Edited by Airport Regions Conference, Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2003. See also related books in the Bibliography below.

A bonus from the Warsaw/Modlin Airport is a greatly increased opportunity that the nearby Modlin Fortress will attract more interest, visitors, care and investment. Its architectural and historic heritage is priceless. First designed and erected by Napoleon Bonaparte, it played vital strategic roles in the empires of Russia and Germany, then of independent Poland, including the war of 1920 and the campaign of 1939^{12, 13}. Visions of a modern museum and an international educational center in the Modlin Fortress are ready¹⁴. Memory and education would also contribute to national security of Poland and its allies and partners.

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¹² *200 lat Twierdzy Modlin (1806-2006)* [200 Years of the Modlin Fortress], Mazovia: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Twierdzy Modlin, Modlin 2006.

¹³ R.H. Bochenek, *Twierdza Modlin* [The Modlin Fortress], Bellona, Warszawa 2003.

¹⁴ G. Kostrzewa-Zorbas, współpraca [with the cooperation of] Karol Lech Czubkowski, *Mazowsze 24* [Mazovia 24], Warszawa: IMBIR 2010. Chapters 1, 16, 20.

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TWORZENIE SYSTEMU LOTNISK CYWILNYCH DLA BEZPIECZEŃSTWA NARODOWEGO: LOTNISKO WARSZAWA/MODLIN W MIEJSKIM OBWO- DZIE WARSZAWY

Streszczenie. Była baza sił powietrznych z czasów Układu Warszawskiego służy dziś wielu celom szeroko zdefiniowanego bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski. Z pomocą UE samorządy regionalny i lokalny oraz władze państwowe wspólnie przekształciły bazę w nowe cywilne Lotnisko Warszawa/Modlin. Artykuł określa dwanaście powodów i korzyści, dla których utworzono drugie międzynarodowe lotnisko cywilne na Obszarze Metropolitalnym Warszawy obok starego Lotniska Chopina: 1. Dywersyfikacja, wytrzymałość i niewrażliwość na zagrożenia infrastruktury lotniczej jako części infrastruktury krytycznej Polski, NATO i UE; 2. Stabilność komunikacji lotniczej – włącznie z lotami państwowymi i wojskowymi – między stolicą Polski a resztą Europy i świata; 3. Mocny i wytrzymały system lotnisk także na potrzeby gospodarki i wypoczynku, obejmujący podróże biznesowe i turystyczne oraz transport poczty i towarów; 4. Zapewnione połączenie z resztą Polski, Europy i świata dla lotów niepaństwowych i niewojskowych, w tym pocztowych i cargo; 5. Bliższy dostęp do transport lotniczego dla części regionu oddalonej od Lotniska Chopina; 6. Perspektywy dalszej rozbudowy infrastruktury lotnictwa dzięki wielkiej rezerwie terenu w Modlinie; 7. Korzyści ekonomiczne ze specjalizacji portów lotniczych; 8. Tańsza komunikacja lotnicza dzięki zwiększonej obecności i konkurencji linii niskokosztowych; 9. Lokalny i regionalny wzrost gospodarczy, rozwój i modernizacja z perspektywą powstania w Modlinie „miasta lotniczego” zaawansowanej gospodarki; 10. Ekonomicznie korzystne przeznaczenie zbędnego majątku wojskowego na użytek cywilny; 11. Wyższa jakość życia w Warszawie i części Obszaru Metropolitalnego otaczającej Lotnisko Chopina dzięki dywersyfikacji ruchu lotniczego i związanego z nim drogowego; 12. Ochrona środowiska przez geograficzną dywersyfikację operacji lotniczych i budowę łączącej dwa lotniska i Warszawę linii kolejowej, która zastąpi dużą część ruchu samochodowego, towarzyszącego podróżom lotniczym i transportowi poczty oraz cargo. Dodatkowo sąsiednia twierdza Modlin o wielkiej wartości architektonicznej i historycznej może uzyskać więcej zainteresowania odwiedzających, opieki i inwestycji, wnosząc wkład do bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski oraz jej sojuszników i partnerów przez edukację.