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# ***A Political Manoeuvre to Strengthen Poland's Military and Economic Potential on the Eve of the Outbreak of the Second World War: A Contribution to Decision Analysis***

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*Abstract.* The analysis of the situation in Poland in the second half of the 1930s proves the significant activity of Inspector General of the Armed Forces, Edward Śmigły-Rydz, in the area of the economy, especially in the period of its mobilization, which is understood as a broad and accelerated process of activating the war and economic potential to meet the needs of the army in time of danger. Therefore, it is about the implemented military policy, an area of decision-making in which the concepts of politics, governance, and the creativity of state authority converge to develop a program and employ specific methods to achieve the assumed goals. In the face of threats and war, the state must address two types of problems: on the one hand, it must adapt the methods and forms of directing and managing the economy to the new reality; on the other, it must link manufacturing issues to meeting war needs. The basic goal of this article is to take a new look at the role of the military and Edward Śmigły-Rydz in the processes of developing

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and then implementing decisions in the sphere of strengthening the war and economic potential (decision analysis).

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**Keywords:** *Edward Śmigły-Rydz, war and economic potential, Second Polish Republic, decision-making analysis.*

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*Anotacija.* XX a. ketvirtąjį dešimtmečio antrojoje pusėje Lenkijos ginkluotųjų pajėgų vyriausiasis inspektorius Edvardas Rydzas-Smiglas aktyviai veikė ekonominėje srityje, ypač jos mobilizacijos laikotarpiu, kuris suprantamas kaip plataus masto ir spartus karinio bei ekonominio potencialo aktyvinimo procesas, siekiant laiku patenkinti kariuomenės poreikius pavojaus akimirka. Straipsnyje analizuojamas tuometės karinės politikos įgyvendinimas, susidedantis iš sprendimų priėmimo srities, kurioje politikos sąvoka derinama su valdymo menu ir valstybės institucijų kūrybiškumu, programos kūrimo ir konkrečių metodų numatytiems tikslams pasiekti. Susidūrusi su karine grėsme valstybė turi spręsti dviejų rūšių problemas: viena vertus, turi pritaikyti ekonomikos valdymo ir tvarkymo metodus bei formas prie naujos realybės, kita vertus, susieti gamybos klausimus su poreikių per karą tenkinimu. Pagrindinis šio straipsnio tikslas – naujai pažvelgti į kariuomenės ir Edvardo Rydzo-Smiglo vaidmenį priimančias sprendimus, susijusias su karinio ir ekonominio potencialo stiprinimu, ir vėlesnį jų įgyvendinimo procesą (sprendimų analizę).

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**Esminiai žodžiai:** *Edvardas Rydzas-Smiglas, karinis ir ekonominis potencialas, Antroji Lenkijos Respublika, sprendimų priėmimo analizė.*

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## 1. Preliminary Remarks

The modern world has returned to an arms race, long associated with the Cold War and rivalry between superpowers, and we are seeing more and more countries participating. However, there are no broader international actions to limit military and economic potential. The experience of the war in Ukraine, as well as tensions in various parts of the world, show that thinking in terms of force has not disappeared; on the contrary, there has been a return to increasing and modernising weapons potential and threats of their use, including nuclear weapons, both on a global and regional scale. In this context, it seems important to remember and reflect on the experiences that strengthened Poland's war and economic potential in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War.

We intended to present the role of the military in the processes of developing and then implementing decisions, in changing geopolitical and intra-state conditions, in the sphere of solving the fundamental problem of strengthening the war and economic potential in the years 1935–1939 (the last in the history of the Second Polish Republic). “Political manoeuvre” is understood here as the organised allocation of forces and resources to

achieve the optimal (best possible) state in relation to the war-industrial potential of the alleged enemy and to create conditions for effective action in the event of war. The above means that the crucial issues of modernisation and expansion of the Polish army in this period will be omitted.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. A Decision-Making Approach

In a narrow sense, decision-making is choosing between at least two possibilities (variants). The choice must be arbitrary, that is, dependent on the will of the person choosing (decision maker), as well as conscious and non-random. A decision in this sense is a consciously selected, non-random variant (mode of action) that solves a problem. The analysis of the decision-making process is a procedure focused on assessing the developed variants and selecting a rational solution<sup>2</sup> (deciding in the strict sense).

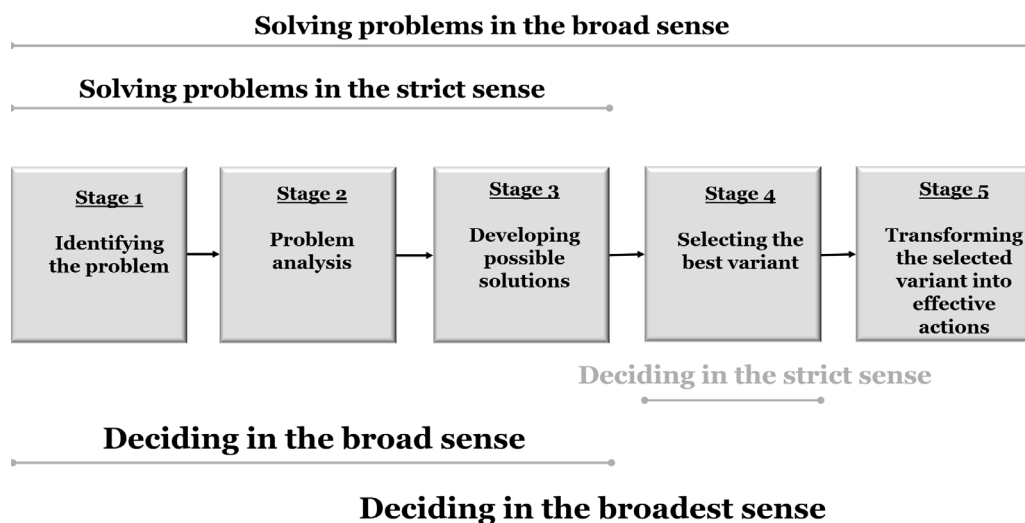


Figure 1. *Simplified Model of the Decision-Making Process.* Source: authors' own illustration.

The aim of the analysis, understood in this way, is to answer the question of why certain decisions were made. An inherent element is therefore the identification of the decision-maker, whether an individual or a group, and the definition of their (often hidden)

<sup>1</sup> See PAWŁOWSKI, T. *Armia marszałka Śmigłego. Idea rozbudowy Wojska Polskiego 1935–1939*. Warsaw, 2009; or KAŁA, G. *Sen o potęgę. Plany i działalność polityczna Edwarda Śmigłego-Rydza w latach 1935–1939*. Olsztyn, 2022. This article is an extension of our research presented in: JABŁONOWSKI, M.; JAKUBOWSKI, W. Rola wojskowych w budowie Centralnego Okręgu Przemysłowego. *UR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2022, No. 1(22), pp. 102–121.

<sup>2</sup> See STABRYŁA, A.; KALETA, A.; MOSZKOWICZ, K. (eds.). *Analiza decyzyjna w projektowaniu strategii zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem*. Wrocław, 2010, p. 407.

preferences and values. It is also necessary to define the decision-making situation, specify the mechanisms for reaching the decision, and outline the methods for implementing it.<sup>3</sup>

A potential advantage of the decision-making approach is its comprehensive and informal treatment of political phenomena. It allows for the analysis of dynamic changes and integrates other research approaches. Among the possible disadvantages, it is worth noting: a) absolutization of political decisions and too superficial treatment of an important stage that is the implementation of the decision, which often affects the entire decision-making process; b) excessive attention to the technique of making rational decisions, rather than how they are actually made; c) fragmentary nature of the analysis, because we are not sure whether the decision-maker made a specific decision independently (informal centres, “court coteries,” pressure groups) or under someone else’s influence, or whether the decision-maker was capable of conscious action; d) omitting certain determinants of political decisions, e.g., cultural or axiological determinants of a political decision, when states are treated as identical political entities.<sup>4</sup> The essence of this analysis of the decision-making process in the broadest sense is the issue of practical implementation of the “political manoeuvre” outlined by the then Inspector General of the Armed Forces during the 12th and 13th Congresses of Delegates of the Association of Polish Legionnaires [Union of Polish Legionnaires] in 1935 and 1936.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. A Decision-Making Situation

We call a decision-making situation the state of political reality, all objective and subjective factors independent of the decision-maker, but determining their behaviour. In other words, it is an issue that the decision-making centre should solve.<sup>6</sup>

#### 3.1 Key Problem: *War Potential*

In the wars of the modern era, economic forces and resources were used until the country’s capabilities were exhausted. The entire economy was reshaped to meet the

<sup>3</sup> JAKUBOWSKI, W.; ZAŁĘSKI; ZAMĘCKI, Ł. *Nauki o polityce. Zarys koncepcji dyscypliny*. Pułtusk, 2013, p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198–199.

<sup>5</sup> ŚMIGŁY-RYDZ, E. *Byście o sile nie zapomnieli. Rozkazy, artykuły, mowy 1904–1936*. Warsaw, 1936, p. 235. See more JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Sen o potęgę Polski. Z dziejów ruchów byłych wojskowych II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939*. Olsztyn, 1998, and KOSSEWSKA, E. *Związek Legionistów Polskich 1922–1939*. Warsaw, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See PIETRAŚ, Z. J. *Decydowanie polityczne*. Warsaw–Krakow, 2000, pp. 46–52.

needs of the armed forces. The concept of *war potential* had appeared, which includes four sets of issues<sup>7</sup>:

- spiritual (moral and political) potential;
- military potential (armed forces, trained reserves, supplies of combat means, military infrastructure);
- civil defence (all defence possibilities resulting from the forces, means and devices, such as shelters, available in times of peace);
- war and economic potential.

The latter includes agriculture and industry, the base of strategic raw materials, infrastructure (transport and communications), the issue of reserves, the ability to adapt the state's economy to the needs of war, and the state's sensitivity to possible disturbances. In this context, the war-economic potential should be understood as the ability of the state's economic forces to perform maximum war production during economic mobilisation and war.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2 The Internal Dimension

In light of the current state of knowledge, there is no doubt that Poland in the interwar period was a state on the “periphery” of European capitalism, as well as the fact that in the camp of the Piłsudski-ites (Piłsudski's supporters), opinions had been expressed since the late 1920s about the country's economy requiring thorough reforms.<sup>9</sup> The view that the state needed to become more involved in the production and distribution of goods began to dominate. They believed that the country's economic preparation for war was becoming an urgent problem. At the same time, they had the necessary professional knowledge, willingness to act, and ambition. After 1935, on their initiative or with their participation, attempts were made to prepare the war and economic potential for the wartime effort. The aim was to strengthen the defence potential (qualitatively and quantitatively) and to minimise the threat of external pressure and political blackmail. General Edward Śmigły-Rydz headed the mentioned group.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See BECZKIEWICZ, Z. *Szkice z ekonomiki wojennej*. Warsaw, 1965, p. 372. Potencjał wojenny. *Mała encyklopedia wojskowa*, 1970, Vol. 2, p. 761.

<sup>8</sup> STANKIEWICZ, W. *Ekonomika wojenna*. Warsaw, 1970, p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> See STANKIEWICZ, W. *Deflacja polska w latach 1929–1936*. Introduction: K. Badziak, M. Łapa. Łódź, 2003; KWIATKOWSKI, E. *Dysproporcje. Rzecz o Polsce przeszłej i obecnej*. Warsaw, 1989; or JANUS, P. *W nurcie polskiego etatyzmu. Stefan Starzyński i Pierwsza Brygada Gospodarcza 1926–1932*. Krakow, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M.; JAKUBOWSKI, W. Rola wojskowych w budowie Centralnego Okręgu Przemysłowego. *UR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2022, No. 1.

### 3.3 The External Dimension

In the mid-1930s, the political order in Europe established after the end of the war began to shake seriously. The international situation was deteriorating, and conflicts were intensifying. The main opponents of the Versailles system included the German Reich, ruled from 1933 by Adolf Hitler in a totalitarian manner and proclaiming territorial revisionism, as well as the USSR, where Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin started gaining a dominant position in the late 1920s and whose internal policy—including economic policy—boiled down to the rule of one party with the use of coercion (terror), propaganda, and a command economy. Both countries made significant changes to the structure of institutions responsible for implementing armament programs, significantly increasing military spending. Their military-industrial complexes were not only the largest sectors of their economies, but also the most important instruments of social engineering and potential foreign expansion.<sup>11</sup> The policies of both countries caused serious concern among other countries, including Poland, a close neighbour of both Germany and the USSR, which was interested in defending the political order in Europe.

#### 3.3.1 The Soviet Union

##### The Planning Factor

In line with communist principles, the USSR's economy was centrally planned and almost entirely state-owned. The direction of economic policy was determined to meet the army's needs. As the process of forced collectivisation and industrialisation progressed, the political role of party activists responsible for central planning (command economy) increased. Economic choices made under the influence of the law of value were replaced by a system of production tasks forwarded for implementation from the country's economic centre (five-year economic plans). The head of the supreme planning body (State Planning Commission of the USSR, Gosplan) became the all-powerful director of the mega-enterprise that was the entire Soviet economy. The defence sector had operated within Gosplan since 1927. In the years 1937–1941, the body of political supervision over the “central planner” was the Economic Council at the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, chaired by Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, formally the head of the central government (chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR) and the second person of the regime.

<sup>11</sup> The period of 1922–1939 was also a time, with various periods, of military cooperation between the USSR and Germany. In the opinion of PIPES, R. *Rosja bolszewików*. Warsaw, 1994, p. 465, as early as the beginning of the 1920s, during Lenin's rule, the foundations of the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 were laid, making it possible to wage the Second World War and thanks to which Germany, with the favorable neutrality of Moscow, conquered most of Europe.

In both the strategic and operational aspects, the tasks of war and economic directive planning during 1937–1941 were carried out by the Defence Committee of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Until 1940, it was chaired by Molotov himself, who Kliment Yefriemovich Voroshilov replaced,<sup>12</sup> who had just been dismissed as People's Commissar for Defence. The executive body of the Committee was the Secretariat.<sup>13</sup> In 1939, the Aviation Council was established within the Committee.

### The Executive Factor<sup>14</sup>

In 1936, based on the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry (the equivalent of the ministry operating in 1932–1939), the People's Commissariat of Defence Industry (1936–1939) was established. The structure of the Commissariat included seven main directorates: GUAP (aviation industry), *Glawmorprom* (shipbuilding industry), GUPV (military industry—responsible for weapons production), GUP (ammunition), *Glawor-gkchimprom* (organic chemistry), *Glawazot* (explosives), *Glawesprom* (electric and battery-powered apparatus), VOTI (precision industry) and two trusts—the All-Union Trust for Power Supply Production (batteries) and the *Specstal* Trust (manufacturers of special grades of steel and welds). The head of the Commissariat was Moisey Lvovich Rukhimovich (1936–1937), who was shot in 1938. After several months, he was replaced by Mikhail Moiseyevich Kaganovich (1937–1939). In 1939, the ministry was divided into: the People's Commissariat of Aviation Industry, the People's Commissariat of Shipbuilding Industry, the People's Commissariat of Machine Tool Construction, the People's Commissariat of Arms, and the People's Commissariat of Munitions.

Until the outbreak of the war with Germany, the military-industrial complex included—apart from the NKVD economic empire—four “civilian” ministries:

- the People's Commissariat of Aviation Industry (NKAP)—the former I Main Board of the People's Commissariat of Defence Industry (GUAP);
- the People's Commissariat of Shipbuilding Industry (NKS)—the former II Main Board of the People's Commissariat of Defence Industry (*Glawmorprom*). The ministry supervised the work of 41 production plants and 10 design offices. In 1939, it employed or exploited 173,284 workers and prisoners;
- the People's Commissariat of Arms (NKV), which supervised the work of 28 production plants and 8 design offices. In 1939, it employed or exploited 204,458 workers and prisoners;

<sup>12</sup> This apparent promotion was in fact a classic kick up and a political response to the compromising course of the war with Finland.

<sup>13</sup> The similarity to the Polish Secretariat of the Committee for the Defense of the Republic of Poland is noteworthy.

<sup>14</sup> See JAKUBOWSKI W.; JABŁONOWSKI, M.; VAIŠNYS, A.; WOJNICKI, J. Atlas systemu rządów Związku Socjalistycznych Republik Radzieckich. Vol. I: *Centrum dyspozycji politycznej*. Płock, 2024, pp. 149–180.

– the People's Commissariat of Munitions (NKBP), which supervised the work of 53 production plants, 12 design offices, 5 construction enterprises, 5 universities, and 11 technicians. In 1939, the department employed or exploited 337,141 employees and prisoners.

The first Five-Year Plan led to the creation of many industrial facilities and to economic development in the USSR.<sup>15</sup> The main direction of industrialisation was the construction of the arms industry (including the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant, the Azovstal plant, and Uralmash) and branches of military importance (mining, metallurgy, energy, and machinery).<sup>16</sup> The result of the implemented industrial and economic policy was the creation of an industrial and military power before 1939. "This militarisation has created a war state, intending to be able to wage war without much preparation. The USSR had not only the largest military-industrial complex in the world, but also trained administrative staff with experience in conducting a war economy [translation]."<sup>17</sup>

### 3.3.2 German Reich

#### The Conceptual Factor

Within a few months after taking power, the leadership of the Third Reich, headed by Adolf Hitler, created a centralised totalitarian state to destroy any real or perceived resistance. The economy was strengthened, and from then on, it focused mainly on expanding the military potential. In the mid-1930s, Germany's gigantic rearmament program was already well advanced. However, its further implementation was hampered by the exhaustion of raw materials and food reserves. Due to the collapse of foreign trade, a difficult foreign exchange situation had also emerged. There was an urgent need to define economic priorities and resolve the conflict between the Reichsbank (and the Ministry of Economy) on the one hand, and the army, which paid no heed to financial constraints, on the other. The first step was the Führer's appointment of Hermann Göring—President of the Reichstag, Commander of the Luftwaffe, Minister of Aviation, and Prime Minister of Prussia—as Special Commissioner for Currencies and Raw Materials. The head of the Security Police was entrusted with organising the foreign currency asset control service.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> On the plans, implementation, and achievements of the first Five-Year Plans, see WILK, M. *Człowiek i stal. Radzieckie przeobrażenia 1928–1941*. Warsaw, 1988, p. 73, et seq.

<sup>16</sup> On the priorities in the economy of the USSR in the 1930s see MALIA, M. *Sowiecka tragedia. Historia komunistycznego imperium rosyjskiego 1917–1991*. Warsaw, 1998, p. 238. In the 1930s, the USSR built 100 dual purpose plants. Tractor factories assembled tanks, fertilizer plants produced explosives and ammunition, and automotive factories, in addition to the actual product range, produced engines and aircraft airframes.

<sup>17</sup> FRITZ, S. G. *Ostkrieg. Front wschodni: wojna na wyniszczenie*. Oświęcim, 2018, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> See TOOZE, A. *Cena zniszczenia. Wzrost i załamanie nazistowskiej gospodarki*. Oświęcim, 2017, pp. 222–227.

However, the real turning point occurred with the announcement of the Memorandum on the Four-Year Plan.<sup>19</sup> Hitler's political project assumed that the German army would be ready for action within 4 years. At the same time, the economy was to be adjusted to wartime requirements. This resolved the trade-or-conquest dilemma.<sup>20</sup> Forceful rearmament was to be associated with the construction of autarky, which boiled down to obtaining domestic raw materials and producing substitute materials<sup>21</sup> regardless of economic profitability.

In November 1936, the office of the plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan was created. The function of the "dictator of the economy" was taken over by Göring, who, from then on, stopped using the word *Prussia* in the name of his office as prime minister of Prussia. The plenipotentiary was equipped with legislative powers. The administrative headquarters of the Four-Year Plan<sup>22</sup> was located in the Prussian Ministry of State, and the actual executive director was Paul Körner, its head. Several sectoral commissioners and plenipotentiaries subordinated to Göring were also established.<sup>23</sup>

### The Executive Factor<sup>24</sup>

The war and economic "brains" of the army (the *Reichswehr* was transformed into the *Wehrmacht* in 1935) was the Defence Economy Office (1935), headed by Georg Thomas.

However, each of the three branches of the German armed forces, and, from 1938, their commands, operated as separate government departments and had separate administrative apparatuses responsible for armament, resulting in enormous chaos and a waste of forces and resources.

\* \* \*

A new situation was emerging in Europe in the 1930s—the Versailles system was being torn apart, and the security of the continent was significantly deteriorating. The changes

<sup>19</sup> On October 18, 1936, Hitler issued a decree introducing a four-year economic development plan with the aim of improving the standard of living of the German nation. The objectives of the plan (*Der Vierjahresplan*) and the related series of economic reforms included a reduction of unemployment (public works) and the development of numerous industries (including chemical, automotive). The development of the armed forces was also envisaged by increasing the size of the army and developing new types of weapons. See more: KLIMIUK, Z. *Zmiany w strukturze gospodarczej Niemiec hitlerowskich w latach 30. XX w. Społeczeństwo i Polityka. Pismo edukacyjne*, 2022, No. 1(70), pp. 57–86; or KREPA, M. *Gospodarka Trzeciej Rzeszy w okresie Planu Czterolletniego. Zarys problematyki*. [Accessed: August 6, 2023]. Prieiga per internetą: [https://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/Content/41111/13\\_Malgorzata\\_Krepa.pdf](https://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/Content/41111/13_Malgorzata_Krepa.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> TOOZE, A. *Cena zniszczenia. Wzrost i załamanie nazistowskiej gospodarki*. Oświęcim, 2017, p. 234.

<sup>21</sup> On the eve of the war, the Axis powers controlled only 6% of the iron ore deposits and less than 1% of the oil deposits.

<sup>22</sup> The first economic plan covered the years 1934–1937. It was called the "new plan" (*Der neue Plan*) – its author was Hjalmar Schacht.

<sup>23</sup> JAKUBOWSKI, W. *Atlas systemu rządów III Rzeszy Niemieckiej. Instytucje władzy. Vol. I: Centrum dyspozycji politycznej*. Warsaw, 2020, pp. 242–243.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190–196, 220–231.

and moves undertaken in Germany and the USSR significantly strengthened both countries and their war and economic capabilities, thereby worsening the Republic of Poland's strategic position. In Poland, the authorities, constitutionally responsible for state security, felt forced to take security measures.

## 4. The Decision-Making Centre

### 4.1 A Decision-Maker in the Strict Sense: The Inspector General

On the night of May 12-13, 1935, the Cabinet Council entrusted the duties of the Inspector General of the Armed Forces to Major General [*generał dywizji*] Edward Śmigły-Rydz, who was a close and outstanding collaborator of the late marshal. He quickly revealed serious political ambitions to consolidate the state's power in politics, the economy, and the military. In a few months, after a period of certain fluctuations in the Piłsudski camp, he took the second position in the country, right after the president of the Republic of Poland.<sup>25</sup> He was active in foreign policy, and under his leadership, significant efforts were made to prepare the country for defence, reduce the Polish Army's organisational and technical backwardness, and raise the level of education of senior command staff.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the Armed Forces, a decision was made to significantly develop anti-tank and anti-aircraft defence and armoured and aviation formations, and, above all, to strengthen the existing large military units of heavy artillery and anti-aircraft weapons, and only secondarily to create appropriate reserve units. Mobilisation matters were also sorted out. Śmigły-Rydz slowed the process of generals transferring from the military to the administrative apparatus and from direct political activity, which had been practised before 1935. During the period of Śmigły-Rydz's service as Inspector General of the Armed Forces, work on the East and West operational plans continued. They were intensified and updated after March 1939.

There is a view in the literature that Marshal Piłsudski, who focused primarily on army and foreign policy issues, initiated studies on the threat to the state in the early 1930s, which led to the establishment of the "Laboratory" unit.<sup>27</sup> Analytical work on

<sup>25</sup> The period of the above-mentioned fluctuations is the months after the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski. The prevailing view, unforeseen by the creators of the Constitution, was that the exercise of the state's sovereign rights was *de facto* exercised by two offices: the President of the Republic of Poland and the Inspector General of the Armed Forces. In a radio speech on March 27, 1937, President Ignacy Mościcki, when defining the relationship with E. Śmigły-Rydz, used the terms "supreme factor" (head of state) and "determining factor" (inspector general). See more: KAŁA, G. *Sen o potęgę. Plany i działalność polityczna Edwarda Śmigłego-Rydza w latach 1935–1939*. Olsztyn, 2022, p. 43; et seq.

<sup>26</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M.; STAWECKI, P. *Następca komendanta. Edward Śmigły-Rydz materiały do biografii*. Pułtusk, 1998, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> See GLABISZ, K. *Laboratorium. Niepodległość*, 1958, No. 6.

the two totalitarian regimes–neighbouring powers–was to be interrupted by the death of the leader in May 1935.<sup>28</sup> The marshal's passing did not interrupt the analytical work; rather, it intensified it.<sup>29</sup> From the second half of 1935, in the opinion of the influential and well-informed politician Bogusław Miedziński, Poland found itself in a new reality–a reality without Józef Piłsudski,<sup>30</sup> in which General Śmigły-Rydz set the significant tone.<sup>31</sup>

At the end of 1935, the government coordinated the preparation of the country's economy for the war effort. According to the division of tasks and competencies, the Ministry of Military Affairs was to supply the armed forces in peacetime and, in the event of mobilisation and war, prepare (by producing or purchasing) equipment, ammunition, and other materials necessary for mobilisation and war, and was also responsible for their storage.<sup>32</sup> In the Ministry, the second deputy minister was directly responsible for economic, defence, and organisational matters, as well as for managing the material supply process. His competencies included preparing materials and industrial mobilisation.<sup>33</sup> The Ministry had at its disposal two advisory bodies: the Committee for Armament and Military Equipment<sup>34</sup> and the Temporary Advisory and Scientific Committee under the Second Deputy Minister of Military Affairs. There were military offices or departments within the ministries of industry and trade, communications, agriculture and agrarian reforms, internal affairs, and treasury.<sup>35</sup> However, these institutions showed little activity.<sup>36</sup> In General, Śmigły-Rydz believed that these solutions were insufficient. He believed that the state administration, in the new internal and external situation of Poland, would not be able to handle the tasks in the field of economic defence preparations, as they required

<sup>28</sup> PAWŁOWSKI, T. *Armia Marszałka Piłsudskiego. Idea rozbudowy Wojska Polskiego 1935–1939*. Warsaw, 2009, p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> See more T. Kutrzeba (KOZŁOWSKI, E. *Studium gen. Tadeusza Kutrzeby nad możliwościami Niemiec i Polski. Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny*, 1964, No. 3; *Studium planu strategicznego Polski przeciw Niemcom Kutrzeby i Mossora*. Introduction: P. Stawecki, footnotes: M. Jabłonowski, P. Stawecki. Warsaw, 1987; or KUTRZEB, T. *Wojna bez walnej bitwy*. Warsaw, 1998), see the studies prepared after 2000: OLSTOWSKI, P. *Generał Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer (1889–1936). Dowódca wojskowy i działacz społeczno-polityczny*. Toruń, 2000; WOŹNY, A. *Niemieckie przygotowania do wojny z Polską w ocenach polskich naczelnych władz wojskowych w latach 1933–1939*. Warsaw, 2000; J. Pałka, *Generał Stefan Mossor (1896–1957). Biografia wojskowa*. Warsaw, 2008; PAWŁOWSKI, T. *Armia marszałka Śmigłego. Idea rozbudowy Wojska Polskiego 1935–1939*. Warsaw, 2009; KAŁA, G. *Sen o potęgę. Plany i działalność polityczna Edwarda Śmigłego-Rydza w latach 1935–1939*. Olsztyn, 1922.

<sup>30</sup> MIEDZIŃSKI, B. *Wczoraj – dziś, jutro*. Warsaw, 1937, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> See ADAMCZYK, A. *Bogusław Miedziński (1891–1972). Biografia polityczna*. Toruń, 2000; MALCZEWSKA-PAWELEC, D. *Bogusław Miedziński. Polityk i publicysta*. Łódź, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> *Konstytucje oraz podstawowe akty ustawodawcze Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918–1939*. Warsaw, 1967, pp. 284–285; and LITWINOWICZ, A. *Materiały do zagadnienia przemysłu wojennego w Polsce (1918–1939)*. *Niepodległość*, London, 1958, Vol. 6.

<sup>33</sup> BÖHM, T. *Z dziejów naczelnych władz wojskowych II Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja i kompetencje Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych w latach 1918–1939*. Warsaw, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> KOZŁOWSKI, E. *Wojsko Polskie 1936–1939. Próby modernizacji i rozbudowy*. Warsaw, 1974, p. 84–85.

<sup>35</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Tymczasowy Komitet Doradczo-Naukowy przy II wiceministrze spraw wojskowych. Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny*, 1982, No. 3.

<sup>36</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Z dziejów gospodarczych Polski lat 1918–1939*. Warsaw, 1992, p. 116.

cooperation, coordination, and contacts at many levels. This translated into the need to seek new organisational solutions.

## **4.2 A Decision-Maker in the Broad Sense: The Inspector General's "Team"**

Seeking to strengthen the country's military and economic potential, Śmigły-Rydz needed a team of specialists. So, did he create a team in economic matters, or did he select the right people?

The Inspector General made his decisions quickly and decisively. In a short time, he surrounded himself with colleagues who shared his view that the experiences of the First World War proved that military and economic potential were among the most important indicators of whether it was possible to oppose the aggressor. The above, especially given the autarkic practices of many countries, raised the question of the state's self-sufficiency in the event of war. This group included, among others, generals: Tadeusz Kasprzycki, Aleksander Litwinowicz, Tadeusz Malinowski, Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, and Wacław Stachiewicz.

The new chief of the Main Staff (SG), Brig. Gen. W. Stachiewicz and his deputy, Brig. Gen. T. Malinowski gathered a group of officers and specialists from various branches of the military and the economy. In the near future, they would constitute the backbone of the Secretariat of the Committee for the Defence of the Republic of Poland (SeKOR), the Inspector General's basic tool for economic issues (more on this later in the text). It included Colonel Orest Teodor Dżułyński, Colonel Alojzy Gluth-Nowowiejski, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Maetze, and Lieutenant Colonel Jerzy Marian Orski. The vast majority of them were senior officers exhibiting experience and thorough knowledge. Among the officers cooperating with the Main Staff, it is also worth mentioning the following names: Lt. Col. Janusz Dżugay, specialising in preparing agriculture for war, and Lt. Col. Bolesław Pikusa, an expert in raw materials matters.

## **5. The Decision-Making Process**

The decision-making process includes three main stages:

- preparation of decisions (recognition and analysis of the problem, construction of variants of solving the problem—decision variants, establishing criteria for assessing decision variants);
- making a decision (evaluating the decision options, selecting the best option, making the decision);

- implementation of the decision (submitting the decision for implementation, observing the implementation of the decision, and monitoring the achieved results).

## 5.1 The Decision Preparation Phase (1935)

Assessing a country's preparations for an impending war requires a comparative scale. For the purposes of analysing the situation in Poland, E. Śmigły-Rydz found it necessary, almost on the spot in 1935, to attempt to compare the capabilities of the Republic of Poland with the potential of Germany and the USSR<sup>37</sup> (in parallel to activities aimed at selecting a group of officers-specialists in the field of war and economic potential). We have four documents, most likely prepared in 1935 and 1936. Their addressee was the chief of the Main Staff, General Wacław Stachiewicz, and the subject matter concerned:

- the possibility of meeting the demand for strategic raw materials in Germany, Poland, and the USSR;
- preparing the economy in Germany, Poland, and the USSR for wartime needs;
- a trial balance of plant and animal production in Poland compared to Germany and the USSR;
- Poland's financial potential compared to Germany and the USSR.<sup>38</sup>

The conducted research demonstrated a much better preparedness of the economic entities of Germany and the USSR to operate in wartime conditions. The Polish economy, the state's energy and financial capabilities, the supply of raw materials and food, and industry, especially the war industry, were critically assessed.

It is worth noting that officers conducting studies on the western area of the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces (GISZ) in the late 1930s extensively used information on the Polish military and economic potential, as well as data on neighbouring countries. The works of General Tadeusz Kutrzeba stand out in this group, which is clearly visible in the most valuable and fully strategic study devoted to the defence of Poland in the face of possible aggression—*Studium planu strategicznego Polski przeciw Niemcom* [*Study of Poland's Strategic Plan Against Germany*] from the turn of 1937 and 1938. According

<sup>37</sup> See T. Kutrzeba published by E. Kozłowski (*Studium gen. Tadeusza Kutrzeby...*) which presented the anachronistic structure of the Polish armed forces, their technical backwardness and poor equipment.

<sup>38</sup> See *Możliwości pokrycia zapotrzebowania na surowce strategiczne w Niemczech, Polsce i ZSRR w połowie lat trzydziestych w ocenie Biura Wojskowego Ministerstwa Przemysłu i Handlu*, introduction: M. Jabłonowski, „Teki Archiwalne”, Vol. 22 (1992); *Przygotowanie gospodarki w Niemczech, ZSRR i Polsce do potrzeb czasu wojny w połowie lat trzydziestych w ocenie Biura Wojskowego Ministerstwa Przemysłu i Handlu*. In JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Wobec*. Annex, document No. 1, p. 303, and see *Referat nieznanego autora do Sekretariatu KOR w sprawie próbnego bilansu produkcji roślinnej i zwierzęcej w Polsce na tle Niemiec i ZSRR oraz Referat nieznanego autora do Sekretariatu KOR w sprawie możliwości finansowych Polski na tle Niemiec i ZSRR*. In JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Cztery lata przed wojną. Z dziejów gospodarki polskiej 1936–1939*. Olsztyn, 1996, pp. 52, 172.

to its creators, the document was intended to serve as supporting material for Marshal Śmigły-Rydz in making decisions on the western war plan.<sup>39</sup> Comparing Poland's war and economic potential with Germany's, the authors of the study concluded that the advantage of the western neighbour in industry was so great that it could be approximated numerically. As a conclusion from the considerations on the ratio of forces of the two countries, they emphasised the statement: "The war potential of Poland itself is so small compared to Germany that Poland must be considered incapable of waging an independent war against Germany [translation]."<sup>40</sup>

It can be assumed with high probability that the findings and conclusions on which they were based became one of the elements underlying the decision to strengthen the Polish military and economic potential in the following years. Śmigły-Rydz actively participated in decision-making, and his opinion often proved decisive.

## 5.2 The Decision Phase (1936)

Fundamental decisions for Poland's war and economic potential were made in April and May 1936 in five steps:

- first: April 1st – during a meeting at the Castle<sup>41</sup> (the official seat of the President of the Republic of Poland), with the significant participation of the Inspector General, a decision was made to accelerate work on a comprehensive program for the development of the arms industry;<sup>42</sup>

- second: April 9th – the decree of the president of the Republic of Poland on the establishment of the National Defence Fund was published.<sup>43</sup> At the time, negotiations were also underway to obtain a loan in France. E. Śmigły-Rydz finalized it<sup>44</sup> during his stay on the Seine at the turn of August and September. The loan became the basis for moves aimed at strengthening the country's war and economic potential;<sup>45</sup>

- third: May 9th – the president issued a decree on the exercise of sovereignty over the armed forces, in which, apart from the new position of the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, he established the Committee for the Defence of the Republic of Poland

<sup>39</sup> *Studium planu strategicznego Polski przeciw Niemcom Kutrzeby i Mossora*. Introduction: P. Stawecki, footnotes: M. Jabłonowski, P. Stawecki. Warsaw, 1987.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>41</sup> The name "Castle" refers to the political environment centered around President Ignacy Mościcki.

<sup>42</sup> GOŁĘBIEWSKI, J. *COP. Dzieje industrializacji w rejonie bezpieczeństwa 1922–1939*. Kraków, 2000, pp. 78–79. The meeting was attended by President I. Mościcki, E. Śmigły-Rydz, head of the Border Guard W. Stachiewicz, ministers T. Kasprzycki, J. Beck, and E. Kwiatkowski, and R. Górecki – the president of *Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego*.

<sup>43</sup> OJ RP 1936, No. 28, item 225.

<sup>44</sup> STAWECKI, P. Pożyczka francuska z 1936 r. *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 1967, No. 1.

<sup>45</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Wobec*. Annex, document No. 1, pp. 212–213.

(KOR).<sup>46</sup> The decree reduced the president's powers, while significantly strengthening the Inspector General of the Armed Forces compared to the previously applicable regulations. The Committee was a potential forum for considering key issues related to state defence and for establishing guidelines for the government in this respect, that is, for making strategic decisions.<sup>47</sup>

The Inspector General dominated the Committee, as he was the deputy chairman and without whose opinion no resolution could be adopted. In Śmigły-Rydz's view, KOR was to serve as a platform for understanding and cooperation among military and civilian actors involved in preparing the economy for the demands of mobilisation and war. However, it did not play the role to which the provisions of the decree predisposed it. A different practice was developed. It quickly became customary for the issues of state defence in the most general and fundamental aspects to be discussed and debated at meetings in the Castle. The meetings were attended by the president of the Republic of Poland, the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the minister of the treasury, and the ministers of military affairs and foreign affairs. These meetings were therefore informal meetings of KOR, bypassing the minister of industry and trade and representatives of the Main Staff;

– fourth: the Secretariat (SeKOR), organizationally incorporated into the Main Staff, was established as the executive body of KOR. It was tasked with preparing the civil ministries and some of their subordinate areas for war, in line with the army's needs.<sup>48</sup> At the request of the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, civilian ministries were obliged to agree with SeKOR on all actions related to state defence.<sup>49</sup> The Secretariat was headed by Gen. T. Malinowski, who was close to Śmigły-Rydz and was also the head of the Central Industrial District [*Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy*, COP],<sup>50</sup>

– fifth: May 15th, there was a profound reconstruction of the government. It seems simplistic to consider the appointment of the cabinet of Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski solely as a result of the struggle for power within the Sanation camp.<sup>51</sup> The reconstruction of the government provided an important justification for Śmigły-Rydz's efforts to implement a plan to modernise the economy and the army. The newly appointed prime minister, previously the second deputy minister of military affairs and the head of the Army Administration, knew the Inspector General's intentions well and could count on

<sup>46</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw* [Journal of Laws] 1936, No. 38, item 286, section IV; KOR was dominated by representatives of the army, it included five generals in active service, two senior military officers out of active service and three civilians.

<sup>47</sup> See *Dziennik Ustaw* [Journal of Laws] 1936, No. 38, item 286.

<sup>48</sup> MALINOWSKI, T. *Kampania wrześniowa i nasze przygotowania do wojny*, „Zeszyty Historyczne” (Paris) No. 62, p. 102.

<sup>49</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw* [Journal of Laws] 1936, No. 38, item 286. See *Wojna obronna Polski 1939. Wybór źródeł*, Warsaw 1968, pp. 71–72.

<sup>50</sup> MALINOWSKI, T. *Kampania...*, p. 102.

<sup>51</sup> JĘDRUSZCZAK, T. *Piłsudczycy bez Piłsudskiego*, Warsaw 1963, pp. 78–84, or ZIELIŃSKI, H. *Historia Polski 1914–1939*, Warsaw 1985, pp. 246–247.

his full support. In the Ministry of Military Affairs, in July 1936, Składkowski's place was replaced by General Aleksander Litwinowicz, who, after taking up the position of second deputy minister of military affairs, supervised the implementation of the arms industry expansion program.<sup>52</sup>

## 5.3 The Decision Implementation Phase

The role of Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz and his collaborators in the decision-making processes regarding the war and the economic potential after 1936 was decisive, as illustrated by several examples.

### 5.3.1 The Issue of Raw Materials

The country's raw material supply, after the military became interested in the issue, was given the highest priority. SeKOR, together with the ministries of industry and trade and of military affairs, attempted to develop the principles of the state's raw materials policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was tasked with reorienting Polish trade policy in this area. On February 11, 1938, KOR adopted general principles of the raw materials policy, and on July 8, it adopted guidelines for the government on this matter. On this basis, on July 22, 1938, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution which entrusted matters of the state's raw materials policy and economy to the Minister of Industry and Trade. The resolution covered all natural and synthetic raw materials (except agricultural raw materials), established the Raw Materials Office at the Ministry of Industry and Trade and specified its competencies. The tasks assigned to the executive authorities in this regard were, on the one hand, to maximise the use of their own raw material resources, and on the other hand, to develop new forms of cooperation with foreign countries.

### 5.3.2 Provisioning Issues

To prepare agriculture for war, SeKOR developed a document outlining the basic activities in this area as early as November 1936. The aim was to determine the needs of the army and the civilian population, normalise the division of competencies among the authorities responsible for supplying the country, and designate food collection and storage centres. Decisions were made to stimulate the development of bread grain production in the central regions of the country, increase the total acreage of oats, hay, flax, and cannabis, and expand the breeding of sheep, horses, and silkworms. In 1938, the Department

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<sup>52</sup> GOŁĘBIEWSKI, J. *COP*, p. 40.

of Provisioning was established in the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reforms, followed by the development of the Provisioning [Food Supply] Office, whose work was headed by Deputy Minister M. Wierusz-Kowalski. The food supply apparatus was to start functioning on the 15th day after the announcement of mobilisation.<sup>53</sup>

### 5.3.3 War Industry

The war industry, prepared for war and mobilised by the Ministry of Military Affairs, comprised approximately 260 enterprises.<sup>54</sup> It is worth emphasising the military's involvement in planning its development. The work initiated in April 1936 resulted in a new version of the 6-year war industry expansion plan. It envisaged two phases: 1937–1940 and 1940–1942. In the first one, planned for completion by March 1940 and including 24 items, the expenditure was to exceed PLN 264 million,<sup>55</sup> and priority was given to plants producing finished products for army equipment and supplies. The second one included, among others, investment in Starachowice, Jawidz near Lubartów, and Radom. The expected cost of expanding the war industry at this stage was over PLN 122 million.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, the military, primarily the Main Staff and SeKOR, conducted extensive studies on the dislocation of industry in the security area. First of all, operational and strategic considerations were taken into account, assuming that the primary criterion for the safety of this industry should be the location of plants far from areas of future military operations. All other considerations were subordinated to operational considerations and were to be taken into account only when the basic condition of safety was met.<sup>57</sup> It is worth emphasising that investments in the Central Industrial Region were monitored on an ongoing basis by representatives of the Main Staff and the Ministry of Military Affairs.

### 5.3.4 Transport

Due to the underdevelopment of other modes of transport, land transport, especially the railways, was of fundamental importance for Polish defence preparations. With the military's participation, a transport plan was developed in the event of war. Work on the plan in the event of a conflict with Germany was completed by August 1, 1939.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> See JABŁONOWSKI, M.; ZAMEŃCKI, L. *Zasady i wytyczne wykonawcze dla mobilizacji przemysłu wojennego oraz mobilizacji cywilnej* [in:] *Planowanie wojenne i przygotowania obronne II Rzeczypospolitej. Studia i materiały*, Ed. T. Kośmider, Warsaw 2012, p. 204.

<sup>54</sup> See JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Wobec*. Annex, document No. 1, p. 129.

<sup>55</sup> The state's share significantly exceeded 90%, see GOŁĘBIEWSKI, J. *COP*, pp. 82–83.

<sup>56</sup> STAWECKI, P. *Polski potencjał wojenny* [in:] *Wojna obronna Polski 1939*, Warsaw 1979, p. 104.

<sup>57</sup> GOŁĘBIEWSKI, J. *COP*, p. 85.

<sup>58</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M. *Wobec*. Annex, document No. 1, p. 167.

When Poland regained its independence, road transport was clearly less popular than rail transport. After 1935, army representatives became particularly interested in it. The period of removing obstacles to the automotive industry's development had begun. In 1938, vehicle models suitable for the army's needs were selected, and the plants that would begin production were determined. A plan to motorise the army was created and adopted to be realised in five years. The implementation of the planned program was to be supervised by the Automotive Commission, established in the Ministry of Communication and headed by Deputy Minister Julian Piasecki, who was close to Śmigły-Rydz.

Due to the industry's insufficient production capacity, the military decided to open an assembly plant for automotive equipment. As a result, the number of vehicles manufactured and assembled in 1937–1939 grew exponentially.<sup>59</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

The tasks of political scientists, especially those dealing with modern history, include generalising from past policy data by applying methodologies specific to the social sciences, especially decision analysis. This enriches the classic historiographic description and allows us to present the depth of the phenomena and processes under analysis. From this perspective, the second half of the 1930s— in the context of changing external and internal conditions— appears to be too short a period for the military to have achieved complete success in strengthening Poland's war and economic potential. The above-mentioned actions, however, made General Śmigły-Rydz the second person in the state, earned him a marshal's promotion, and secured him the position of commander-in-chief in the 1939 defensive war. The collected material allows us to draw several general conclusions:

1. After taking over the position of the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, General E. Śmigły-Rydz appreciated the factor of economic preparation of the country for defence. This became one of the fundamental premises for changes in state policy regarding the war and the economy, leading to a forced interpenetration of the economic and military spheres.
2. The policy implemented by General E. Śmigły-Rydz was a deliberate defensive action (forced response), undertaken in a situation of threat to the country and in connection with the development of military and economic potentials in Germany and the USSR.
3. The Inspector General made decisions quickly and decisively. He gathered a group of officers and specialists from the Main Staff and the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, experts in various aspects of war and the economic potential. In

<sup>59</sup> JABŁONOWSKI, M., Transport kolejowych i drogowy II Rzeczypospolitej a problem przygotowań wojennych. *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, 1988, No. 30.

the near future, they would constitute the core of the Secretariat of the Committee for the Defence of the Republic of Poland.

4. Before the decision was made, at the turn of 1935 and 1936, Poland's situation (threat) was recognised against the background of its neighbours and potential opponents.
5. April and May 1936 were the key months for strategic decisions made in relation to the implemented policy of concentrating all the state's forces and resources to strengthen the country's defence potential in the face of the impending war.
6. Expansion of the country's war and economic potential after 1935 was largely driven by military institutions, whose role significantly increased. Their activities were coordinated by Marshal Śmigły-Rydz, who had tools in the form of the Main Staff and SeKOR, which became important state instruments in the last years of interwar Poland.
7. The defeat of the Second Polish Republic in September 1939 should not obscure the reality that the Polish Army and military thought existed, the external and internal situation was generally assessed rationally, and in the face of the threat, attempts were made to strengthen the country's war and economic potential.

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## Politinis manevras Antrojo pasaulinio karo išvakarėse, siekiant sustiprinti Lenkijos karinį ir ekonominį potencialą: indėlis į sprendimų analizę

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## Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas maršalo Edvardo Rydzo-Smiglo vaidmuo stiprinant Lenkijos karinį ir ekonominį potencialą 1935–1939 m., prieš pat Antrojo pasaulinio karo pradžią. Autoriai Antrosios Lenkijos Respublikos valdžios institucijų veiksmus vertina kaip sąmoningą „politinį manevrą“, apimančią valstybės išteklių sutelkimą, atsižvelgiant į didėjančią grėsmę iš Vokietijos ir Sovietų Sąjungos pusės. Taikant sprendimų priėmimo analizės perspektyvą, galima išskirti grėsmės identifikavimo, sprendimo parengimo ir įgyvendinimo etapus. Ypač svarbūs buvo 1936 m. sprendimai, ginklų pramonės plėtra, žaliavų politika, transportas ir tiekimas bei gynybos

pasirengimo koordinavimo struktūrų sukūrimas. Autoriai pabrėžia, kad, nepaisant pralaimėjimo 1939 m. rugsėji, šie veiksmai parodė racionalų situacijos įvertinimą ir nuoširdžias pastangas stiprinti valstybės gynybos pajėgumus.

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