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Between Washington and Brussels – Potential Development of Polish Foreign and Security Policy

1. Introduction

Poland's recently acquired membership in the European Union, and the accession to NATO earlier on, combined for a qualitatively new situation in every area of Polish political, economic and social life. This especially relates to a broadly understood area of foreign relations, which has quite naturally become the fundamental forum upon which to redefine and reformulate our country's vital interests following the accession to such important structures of international integration.

At the same time, however, there is an astonishing phenomenon in Polish political life we are witnessing: namely, a deficit or a plain lack of a profound, informed debate over the fundamental, strategic directions of development of our foreign and security policy. Even when voices about that subject appear (in quarterly "Studia Europejskie", for example),¹ they cause no remarkable reaction or, in any case, apparently fail to really influence assumptions or methods the State's foreign policy is based upon.

This results, among other things but most importantly, from a general consensus occurring in Poland, both among politicians and broad public opinion, that some axioms of that policy are in fact unmoveable. This suggests, on the one hand, that this important area of the State activity remains beyond the range of temporary pressures and political plays (often

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¹ See: S.Bieleń, *Paradoksy polskiej polityki zagranicznej (Paradoxes of Polish Foreign Policy)*, "Studia Europejskie", no. 2/2004 or S.Sowiński, *Suwerenność, ale jaka? Spór o suwerenność Rzeczypospolitej w polskiej eurodebacie (Which Sovereignty: The Dispute over Poland's sovereignty in Polish Euro-debate)*, "Studia Europejskie", no. 1/2004.

very rough in Poland), which is certainly a positive sign. On the other hand, however, this results in no extensive debate really occurring about issues that are crucial for the country's future.

It has been quite obvious how Poland's alliance with the United States is regarded in our country as the fundamental and absolute priority, an undisputed axiom, both as concerns political relations and military ties within NATO. This is particularly manifested in the way subsequent political groups in authority remain unanimous in this very respect. No matter which political option they represent, they all declare so and, moreover, support it with particular decisions, such as sending a Polish military contingent to Iraq, purchasing a U.S. aircraft or negotiating on establishment of American military bases and installations in our country.

In such a context, political-and-military aspects of Poland's membership in the European Union – generally advocated, but, at the same time, still contested in certain political and opinion-influencing circles – appear as relatively less important from the point of view of strategic national interests. Our country (by the way, just like most newly-adopted EU Member States from Central and Eastern Europe) since having regained full independence at the turn of Eighties and Nineties has followed a resolute policy of close relations with the United States and with the US-controlled North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It is in this political-and-military alliance that Poles tend to see their principal guarantees of safety against Russia's neo-imperial ambitions. Besides, whilst they generally tend to regard the European Union as a structure of economic integration which is favourable or even indispensable for their further development, they are much less keen on treating it as a form of political or defensive integration, quite understandably if we consider deficiencies of the EU foreign and security policy.²

The adoption of such a strategy provokes objections and sometimes irritation in some of our EU partners (especially in France).³ It should be

² More on the same subject – see: D.Milczarek, *Unia Europejska we współczesnym świecie* (*The European Union in the Modern World*), Warszawa 2005, esp. Chapter. 4; O.Osica, *Wspólnota bezpieczeństwa czy koalicja chętnych?* (*The Security Community or a Coalition of the Willing?*), "Nowa Europa. Przegląd Natoliński", no. 2/2005; A.Harasimowicz, P.Żurawski vel Grajewski, *Korzyści i koszty przystąpienia Polski do UE na odcinku Wspólnej Polityki Zagranicznej i Bezpieczeństwa oraz Europejskiej Polityki Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony w: Korzyści i koszty członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Raport z badań* (*Costs and Benefits of Poland's Accession to the European Union in the Areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Policy of Security and Defence in: Costs and Benefits of Poland's Membership in the European Union, The Study Report*), Warszawa 2003.

³ It will suffice to remind a non-diplomatic remark made by the President J.Chirac who admonished our country for "having missed an opportunity to keep silent and not to vote" or

remembered, however, that our country is not the only one to behave this way. Indeed, it belongs to a broad group of Member States manifesting pro-Atlantic attitudes, including the United Kingdom (traditionally the USA's faithful ally) as well as Italy, Spain (which actually quit that tendency, but not earlier than mid-2004) and several other countries which had given political and military support to the USA, too. One can argue, therefore, that pro-American policy of the EU new Member States, Poland in particular, rather than bringing brand new elements to transatlantic relations, in fact consolidated – perhaps very much so – a political option favouring close co-operation with the United States, that had in fact been present in the European Communities/European Union for quite a long time.

In other words, our position was only inscribed into the already-existing controversies – both internal (especially along the France-UK line) and external (EU-USA), but by no means had provoked them. This should be emphasised in the context of some inapt opinions of American politicians, who – such as the Secretary of Defence D.Rumsfeld – sometimes oppose the “new Europe” of the EU newly-adopted and USA-supporting Member States to the “old Europe” of long-standing Member States ill-disposed to the USA, whilst actual disputes are held along quite different dividing lines.

One must not, however, deny the aptness of the question, whether such a pro-American option is the only one effective or – as some people believe – the only one right for Poland's foreign and security policy? It should be pointed out that, apart from unconditional support, it also stirs a great deal of controversy and objection, both as regards the very essence of strategic importance of that option (discussed below) and specific issues of lesser importance. So, along with problems whose importance, while prestigious, is really minor, such as the USA's vague attitude towards abolition of a visa requirement for Polish citizens, this relates to much more serious matters, such as incomplete meeting, by the USA, of its off-set obligations taken as Poland had purchased the F-16 aircraft, or well-justified doubts, raised since some time, as to sense and consequences of Polish involvement in Iraq.⁴

However, those problems are not actually the most serious ones for our foreign and security policy, because it is possible to solve them, one after

opinions of J.-M. Le Pen, the leader of the rightist Front National who compared Poland to American <Trojan donkey> in Europe”.

⁴ See: for example P.Winczorek, *W zgodzie z prawem (In Line with the Law)*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 17.03.2003; R.Sikorski, *Wielkie rozczarowanie (Great Disillusion)*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 10-11.11.2003. See also: interview with an American historian D.Halberstam in: “Rzeczpospolita”, 17-18.04.2004. It should be reminded that, according to a public opinion poll, c. 70% of Poles declare themselves against Poland's participation in the war in Iraq.

another, within a certain foreseeable time-perspective. What is really disturbing, instead, is the plans – revealed as late as at the end of 2005⁵ – to co-operate with Americans in construction of their anti-missile defence system in the territory of Poland. Potential implementation of such a project is going to confront us – in a long-term – with almost irreversible negative consequences in the area of foreign policy (permanent aggravation of relations with some EU partners and with some of our neighbours, especially with Russia). Worse still, this will complicate the area of our national security, since, while not actually improving our defence potential, American military installations may, for example, become a target of terrorist attacks.

The fundamental question, then, is about which real opportunities Polish foreign and security policy really has? It needs pointing out forthwith that what we have to deal with are political matters *i.e.* ones not subject to normatively evaluating assessments, since a choice of any specific political option is up to sovereign authority and to the society. This, however, doesn't preclude analyses in political science, made from a point of view of functional efficiency of a given solution. This is the method applied in the present study. Before we focus thereupon, however, it is appropriate to extend the scope of preliminary remarks.

1.1. General evolution of foreign and security policy

While the matters considered below are broadly discussed in literature, it is nevertheless worthwhile to shortly reiterate basic arguments. Firstly, it needs reminding that a notional scope of both foreign policy and security policy terms has underwent significant transformation over recent fifteen years.

As regards foreign policy, one should appreciate how the way this category is conceived has evolved. This can be seen, among other things, in the fact that distinguishing between two levels of applying a policy by actors of international relations, long-established and traditional in both science and practice, namely high politics and low politics, has relatively been abandoned. The former level was understood as proper foreign policy run by States, mostly identified with the use of traditional diplomatic and military instruments, while the latter category included more “down-to-earth” areas of foreign trade-related, economic or other relations.⁶ There is, in fact, much evidence that we are presently witnessing a sort of change, hierarchy-wise,

⁵ See: press news of 14-16 November 2005.

⁶ From historical perspective – see: E.Morse, *Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations*, London 1976 and R.Morgan, *High Politics, Low Politics. Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe*, London 1973.

between *high politics* and *low politics*. In effect, economic and trade relations grow much more important, compared to purely political ones (some go as far as saying about “foreign economic policy”) or differences between the two levels simply disappear.⁷

This is accompanied by a profound evolution of the notion of national sovereignty, which is no longer limited to its traditional meaning of a State’s authority over all the areas of its relations with the outside world. In modern form, instead, this category means necessity to acknowledge numerous inter-relations or even restrictions with which all actors of international relations – no matter how powerful – are faced with by today’s world with its intense phenomena and processes of globalisation.

The same thing relates to the way international structures operate, such as the European Union within which a new category of sovereignty develops. It features, on the one hand, delegation, by Member States, of some attributes of traditionally understood national sovereignty to the Communities, but, on the other hand, at the same time the actors’ actual scope of possibilities to act is extended thanks to them having acquired much stronger influence upon their partners’ and the EU’s as the whole policies and actions.⁸

On the other hand, what is most peculiar in evolution of the category of security⁹ is that, following the decline of the communist system at the turn of the nineteen eighties and nineties and formation of what is really a unipolar system in the global scale, that category includes many more aspects than just military one. Specifically, it takes social, economic, environmental and other types of threats into account. This means that military potential alone has no longer been the fundamental guarantor of security for actors of international relations. Moreover, the nature of most important threats to international

⁷ See: M.Smith, *Does the Flag Follow Trade?: ‘Politicisation’ and Emergence of a European Foreign Policy in: A Common Foreign Policy for Europe? Competing Visions of the CFSP*, eds. J.Peterson, H.Sjursen, London-New York 1998; S.Duke, *Consistency as an Issue in EU External Activities*, EIPA Working Paper, 99/W/06.

⁸ Of many studies, see: *Suwerenność i integracja europejska. Materiały pokonferencyjne (Sovereignty and the European Integration. A Conference Materials)*, eds. W.Czapliński, I.Lipowicz, T.Skoczny, M.Wyrzykowski, Warszawa 1999.

⁹ In Polish literature – see: *Porządek międzynarodowy u progu XXI wieku (International Order at the Turn of the 21st Century)*, ed. R.Kuźniar, Warszawa 2005; J.Stańczyk, *Przeobrażenia międzynarodowego układu sił w Europie na przełomie lat osiemdziesiątych i dziewięćdziesiątych. Analiza uwarunkowań i mechanizmów w kontekście bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego (Transformations in an International Power Arrangement in Europe at the Turn of Eighties/Nineties. Analysis of Conditions and Mechanisms in the Context of International Security)*, Warszawa 1999; *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i międzynarodowe u schyłku XX wieku (National and International Security at the End of the 20th Century)*, eds. D.B.Bobrow, E.Haliżak, R.Zięba, Warszawa 1997.

security has changed, as well. In the bipolar era of two major blocks opposing each other, the principal, obvious threat was that of an outburst of global armed conflict (especially one involving nuclear weapon). In the present days, instead, types of threats are plenty. Apart from various types of local or regional conflicts (not only involving States, but all sorts of extremist organisations as well), they include activities of international terrorism and organised crime, as well as the so-called humanitarian disasters, in the form of massive migration of refugees, famine, devastation caused by armed conflicts or natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, *etc.*) or by human activities, in particular in the form of environment pollution (*vide* Chernobyl).

It should also be observed that the above catalogue of threats, shaped in the early Nineties, underwent no major change in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001. Contrary to widely published, if sometimes too hasty opinions, no fundamental revolution seems to have taken place in the way the notion of international security is understood, or in basic categories in the area of foreign policy, such as shaping of the power arrangement on the global scale or attitudes towards the principle of national sovereignty. Rather than as any qualitative change, terrorist attacks against the United States should be seen as no more than just another (while very important, of course) stage in terrorist fight. After all, the latter has been fought since long ago by various extremist forces and in different ways against the USA and the Western world in general.¹⁰ An important new thing, in this respect, is that 11th September occurs a turning point, in the sense that it became a direct impulse, stimulating the United States to resolute anti-terrorist action and – quite importantly in the light of further consideration – it implied changes in US relations with their European allies.

All in all, the conclusion is that in analysing Polish foreign and security policy one should take its contemporary, broad context into account, together with various and variable international conditions. In particular, the above-mentioned evident blur of differences between purely political and economic aspects of foreign policy should be reckoned with, as should changes in the way the concept of national sovereignty is conceived, as well as evolution of the notion of international security (as advocates of traditional, national and State-focused paradigm often seem to forget.)

It is also a must to take a real power arrangement on the global scale, and especially in Europe, into account. A number of different models may be used to study it, basing on either some theoretic assumptions and on actual political and military undertakings. Whilst there is no real consensus, either among

¹⁰ One could remind numerous plane hijackings or bomb attacks occurring since the Sixties in France, Great Britain, Japan *etc.* in 1980's and 1990's.

scholars or in political or military circles, as to typology of such models, generally however, three following basic models of European security system can be distinguished: (1) the Atlantic model, based upon NATO, (2) the European model, basing upon the European Union and (3) the universal security model, basing upon the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Leaving description of these models aside, it seems only fit to notice that combined they form a complex system of mutual relations, some of them having complementary, while other ones contradictory or even antagonistic nature. This may be illustrated by relatively high complementary relation between the Atlantic and European models on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their contradictory relation with respect to the OSCE-based model. The latter model (with all due appreciation to the organisation's achievements in building political and military trust in the continent) reveals no real potential or structures enabling it to operate in the military area. In fact, it is politically weak, as a result of – among other things – participation of a large number of partners, often having quite different political and military visions or interests. Considering its weaknesses, it represents no serious option to Poland's foreign and security policy.

2. The Atlantic or European model?

This leaves us with two models as valid options: the Atlantic and the European one. Their far-reaching complementary nature made a number of scholars (including the Author of the present study, some time ago) treat them as one specific whole.¹¹ It seems, however, that in an ever-changing international situation they nevertheless should be regarded as clearly differentiated – if not different – options, as even their concise description is enough to reveal.

2.1. The Atlantic model

The Atlantic option in Polish foreign policy has been based upon operation of the North Atlantic Treaty which is, quite evidently, controlled by the United States. Polish efforts to become a member of NATO were perfectly justified geopolitically and fortunately proved successful (which by no means had been a matter foregone, considering a very reserved attitude of some Western-European countries, France in particular). It should be remembered,

¹¹ See: D.Milczarek, *Jaki system bezpieczeństwa dla Polski? Uwarunkowania modelu europejsko-euroatlantyckiego* (Which Security System for Poland? Conditions Behind the Europe-Euroatlantic Model), "Studia Europejskie", no. 2/2000.

however, that from a formal and legal point of view this membership constitutes the only form of Poland's political and military alliance with the USA. This means that the United States in fact have no obligations towards us whatsoever in this area, apart from those provided for in provisions of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty stipulating for *casus foederis*. These, however, are of very general nature and really only oblige allies to give express mutual solidarity and provide consultation should one of them be attacked.

Accordingly, should a hypothetical crisis take place, Americans – contrary to any pompous declarations both partners may exchange – while being entitled to, are not at all obliged to automatically support Poland, either politically or, the less so, militarily. Leaving all rhetoric adducing to mythologised or – let's assume – even real ties of Polish-American friendship, it has to be realised that a scale of actual US support for us is only going to depend upon how Americans evaluate Poland as their partner on the global scene. Our situation in this respect depends both on geopolitical situation and on economic, political, military and other potentials, and, contrary to what many people in Poland imagine, is not high at all.

Of course, our country is reckoned with as an ally and as "Europe's most pro-American country", but in calculations of Washington-based strategists its importance is lesser than that of other countries in the region – not only the strongest ones, such as Germany, France or Russia (which is quite obvious), but than that of other neighbouring countries, such as Ukraine, too.¹² While our role, in the US diplomatic plans, may be that of a card to be played in their relations with the "old Europe" or with Russia, it is obvious that in case of a conflict the United States are perfectly free to choose whether they want to back us or not. This is easily concluded from a simple fact that Polish enthusiasts of pro-American option seem to overlook: namely, that what we have to deal with is really an ant's alliance with an elephant.

With respect to alliances within NATO it should be realised that Poland's position and role in the system of European security it forms is not fully developed yet. Apart from reasons we could control (such as our insufficient effort in consolidating our defensive potential), this also stems from reasons beyond our control, related with evolution of both global and European power arrangement. Wishful thinking aside, Poland's membership in NATO in fact failed to solve all problems regarding our security in the international scene. The fact of belonging to the world's strongest political and military alliance enabled us to get out of Central European security "grey zone", but provides

¹² Zbigniew Brzezinski describes Ukraine's position as geopolitical pivot or even regional power, whilst attributing much smaller role to Poland – see: Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York 1997.

no absolute guarantee of security. Beside the above-mentioned vague provisions of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, this situation stems from the fact that NATO itself undergoes an intense evolution as well. It first became evident during early Nineties, observing transformations in the way the very category of security was understood and shifts in the global arrangement of power. However, no clear, final effect of these changes has been visible yet.

The North Atlantic Treaty seems troubled with inner contradictions that occur on several levels. First of all, its nature and objectives need redefining: it has to be specified whether it should remain just a political and military alliance, or should its formula be extended to become politically more comprehensive and enable it to enter into closer co-operation with other actors of international relations (Russia, for example). Moreover, the issue of a new strategic doctrine hasn't been fully explained, either: its extension by including such tasks as "Petersberg missions", taken by the European Union over from the Western-European Union (*i.e.* preventing and dashing local conflicts or undertaking humanitarian actions)¹³ has been insufficient to come up with a concept that would be well-suited to what the post-Cold War era demands. This is complicated even further by a sharp controversy around the American intervention in Iraq. NATO Member States divided into two groups – parties in the dispute – not only as regards political positions taken, but specific actions as well: as we know, some of them provided armed support to Americans – contrary to positions taken by other ones, in particular France and Germany.

Despite this all, generally NATO fits well into a developing architecture of European security based upon an updated understanding of that category (as mentioned above), but the process is all but easy. Beside obvious successes, such as solving dilemmas concerning the Eastward enlargement (after that of 1999, the subsequent one followed in 2004), we are witnessing a great deal of indecision. This is well illustrated by an attitude towards Russia (whose inclusion into NATO decision-making structures may result in them being paralysed) or, especially, by intents of the European Union Member States that tend, in a more or less resolute and consistent way, to form their own, autonomous defensive potential.

All that should encourage Polish society and political circles to a thorough reconsideration of the scale of our involvement in the Atlantic option. It has to be emphasised that this is certainly not about rejecting the alliance with the United States and NATO – which would sum up to pure political rashness, if not plain madness. Instead, this is about finding suitable solutions to combine benefits from close ties with the USA and from NATO membership with

¹³ See: *Petersberg Declaration*, WEU Council of Ministers, Bonn, 19 June 1992.

adoption of the European option as the fundamental one for Polish foreign and security policy.

Such consideration is the more needed as we are witnessing a growing dissonance between the European Union and the United States as regards strategic visions of modern world. This means that, in a long run, Poland as both the EU and NATO Member State, would face a difficult choice of position in a dispute between – let's call it so – “the American paradigm” and “the European one”.¹⁴

2.2. EU-USA disputes

The essence of dispute between those paradigms, in short, boils down to different political philosophies. The European Union's actions in the global arena – all possible objections regarding inconsistency or ineffectiveness taken into account – are carried out in line with a specific canon of the EU foreign policy that includes promotion of democracy and human rights, using conciliatory and peaceful methods, renouncing military measures, *etc.* This way the EU appears in the international arena as an actor to which a concept of civilian power is most suitable. The core of that concept can be defined as follows: “*a civilian power is an entity that influences the international system using mainly economic, financial and political means, rather than military force*”.¹⁵ Other features of that type of power include, among other things, renouncing of using military pressure in favour of peaceful measures, priority of political and diplomatic actions in solving global problems and using mechanisms and structures of international organisation to achieve its goals.¹⁶

The above-mentioned principles are certainly familiar to the United States' foreign policy as well, however it's obvious that what we find in their case is not just a difference of accents put another way. It is a thoroughly

¹⁴ More on this subject – see: studies by D.Milczarek: *After the EU and NATO Eastward Enlargement – What Kind of a New European Order? Polish Point of View* in: *On the Road to the European Union. Applicant Countries' Perspective*, eds. D.Milczarek, A.Z.Nowak, Warsaw-Jacksonville 2003 and *Ewolucja instytucjonalnych aspektów bezpieczeństwa w związku z integracją Polski z Unią Europejską (The Evolution of Institutional Aspects of Security in the Context of Poland's Integration with the European Union)* in: *Polska w Unii Europejskiej. Początkowe problemy i kryzysy? (Poland in the European Union. Initial Problems and Crises)*, eds. U.Kurczewska, M.Kwiatkowska, K.Sochacka, Warszawa 2002.

¹⁵ S.Stavridis, *Why the 'Militarising' of the European Union is Strengthening the Concept of a Civilian Power Europe*, EUI Working Papers no. 2001/17, San Domenico 2001, p.3-4.

¹⁶ More on this subject – see: studies by D.Milczarek: *The International Role of the European Union As a "Civilian Power"*, “The Polish Foreign Affairs Digest”, no. 4/2003 and *Rola międzynarodowa Unii Europejskiej jako "mocarstwa niewojaskowego" (The European Union's International Role as a "Civilian Power")*, “Studia Europejskie”, no. 1/2003.

different practice, basing upon different assumptions. According to what American themselves (R.Kagan for example) declare, Washington diplomats “divide the world into good and evil; into foe and friend; whilst Europeans see things in a more light-and-shaded way. When confronting their opponent, Americans prefer coercion to persuasion, the policy of sanctions to encouraging others to behave the right way, to punish than to motivate”. Europeans, on the other hand “attempt to influence others indirectly, using more subtle methods (...) usually preferring peaceful solutions, prioritising negotiation, diplomacy and persuasion over coercion”.¹⁷ While schematic and simplified, such assessments seem to hit the point. What we see, in fact, are two very different political philosophies: a “harder” American and “softer” European one.¹⁸

Therefore, we have to deal with a situation that is qualitatively new, where fundamental doctrinal and political differences form and are revealed in the way foreign and security policy is conceived in the European Union and in the United States.¹⁹ This mainly regards a different attitude towards the key issues of the modern world. Putting things short, one can say that (according to the above-mentioned R.Kagan’s diagnosis) Americans clearly tend to divide the world into good and evil in a Manichaeian way, to give priority to firm actions basing on pressures and coercion rather than persuasion and to reach for military power with little hesitation (as we have seen a number of times).

Furthermore, another peculiarity of the U.S. foreign policy, which recently gains in importance, is its unilateralism, not only observed in political practice but reflected in official strategic concepts as well. As an example of such a unilateral attitude, determined by an intent to protect American interests and safety, the so-called Bush doctrine, announced in the autumn

¹⁷ R.Kagan, *Kowboje i barmani (Cowboys and Bartenders)*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 17-18.08.2002. See: *idem, Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York 2003.

¹⁸ These political philosophies have actually been given names in literature: the US policy, with an allusion to a famous Cold-War doctrine, has been called *economic containment*, whilst the EC’s position was given an *interdependence* label; beside, terms *asphyxiation* and *oxygen* are also in use, respectively – See: J.Zielonka, *Introduction: Eastern Europe in Transition in: After the Revolution. East-West Trade and Technology Transfer in the 1990s*, eds. G.K.Bertsch, H.Vogel, J.Zielonka, Boulder 1991 and F.L.Lavin, *Asphyxiation or Oxygen? The Sanctions Dilemma*, “Foreign Policy”, Fall 1996.

¹⁹ One should always remember, in this context, about a difference between a potential to run an effective foreign policy by a single power, such as the USA, and by the European Union which constitutes a group of sovereign States that struggles to develop its foreign policy formula, in most cases as a compromise between the interest of the Communities and those of its members.

2002 may be quoted.²⁰ According to it, the United States award themselves the right to assess situation in the world on their own (that is even in opposition to either the United Nations or their allies) and to undertake any actions them deem appropriate, including the use of military power against what they call rogue countries. Even more importantly, such actions may be of preventive nature, which makes them hardly consistent with logic of contemporary international law, the principles of which clearly provide for sanctions for its infringement *ex post* rather than *ex ante*. Unilateral undertaking of armed intervention in Iraq in 2003 became the best example of such attitude.

All this is in plain contradiction to the attitude represented by the European Union. As emphasised above but worth repeating, the EU politicians – no matter how different their positions – tend to see international problems in their complexity and subtlety and firmly prioritise persuasion and peaceful solutions using political or economic instruments. Moreover, Europeans are clearly in favour of multi-lateral actions, preferably under the patronage of the United Nations or, in any case, actions subject to consultation and agreements made on a broader forum, such as within NATO.

As an apt illustration of those differences, quite a different attitude towards one of the key problems that has become a global one by now – *i.e.* that of international terrorism – may be mentioned. Even as we take no account of the fact that the United States' sharp reaction following the events of 11th September 2002 was caused by a direct attack on their territory, it is still evident that transatlantic allies have divergent opinions on how the problem should be solved. Americans, as evidenced by their interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, mostly reach for military solutions, using political measures only to a lesser degree. Most EU Member States, instead, Germany and France in particular, are quite resolute about an inverse order of action, *i.e.* using all political possibilities first, especially involving the United Nations, and to revoke to military power only as a last resort. (As we have mentioned, the United Kingdom is an important exception, as well as several other countries, including Poland, that are constant in their support to the US option.) This really seems to mainly stem from the above-outlined different political philosophy of European politicians, rather than from the fact that the EU Member States' military potential is much weaker than that of the USA (thus making European simply short of appropriate possibilities to act).²¹

²⁰ More on this subject – see: J. Stachura, *Stany Zjednoczone w epoce postzimnowojennej (The United States in the post-Cold-War Era)*, "Sprawy Międzynarodowe", no. 2/1995.

²¹ Whilst European allies' armed troops are larger in terms of numbers, they nevertheless spend only about a half of the money the USA do for arms and their potential in the area of

This type of differences in attitudes towards the fundamental international problems seem to reach further than suggested by a simplified review that reduces them down to a “family argument” within the Western world. Catastrophic visions aside, one nevertheless has to point out that, in a long run, such disagreements may seriously undermine the transatlantic alliance. An example of this could be seen in a spectacular way in a fierce controversy about the American intervention in Iraq – not only between the EU and the USA but within NATO as well. The USA and the EU Member States have already addressed serious accusations against each other: Americans accusing Europe of passive or even cowardly behaviour in the face of global threats, while charges of political and military irresponsibility and an urge to play the role of “global gendarme” were aimed the opposite way.²² Both protagonists are partially right, although it seems that it is the American policy that gives more reasons for concern and doubts.²³

An additional argument may stem from the fact that the United States have gradually increased their distance from their European roots culturally and in terms of general civilisation, concurrently reinforcing their ties with regions from which principal streams of immigrants flow to the USA, *i.e.* with Latin America and South-Eastern Asia. It is quite likely, therefore, that America will become less and less interested in Europe. At the same time, clearly opposing trends in social and cultural areas emerge on both sides of the Atlantic, the on-going secularisation of European societies, contrasting with growing religiousness in America being one of the most evident examples. This is also reflected in the area of political attitudes – as rightly observed by some experts, American visions of “global combat between the Good and the Evil” are largely based on orthodox religious beliefs.²⁴

Generally, the present arrangement of power in the world, basing on the U.S. domination, is subject to more and more criticism (for many reasons,

abilities to intervene anywhere in the world is only at about 10-15% of the American one. More on the same subject – see: D.Milczarek, *Unia Europejska we współczesnym świecie (The European Union in the Modern World)*, op.cit., esp. p.58 and subs.

²² According to the above-quoted R.Kagan, Americans have played in the world roles of sheriffs who actively fight bandits, while Europeans not only confine themselves to the role of passive observers but sometimes seem to fear the hot-headed sheriffs more than they do the bandits.

²³ This is the so more justified that from a military point of view – not mentioning political aspects – the intervention in Iraq failed to bring success. All this undermines trust in the broadly-advertised United States’ potential in the area of effective use of their armed forces in different parts of the world.

²⁴ More on this subject: see opinions of N.Ferguson: *Kto przed kim rowy kopie... (Who’s Undermining Who...)*, “Forum”, 31.01.2005 and an interview with R.J.Rifkin: *Europa przyszłością świata! (Europe and the Future of the World)*, “Polityka”, 12.11.2005.

such as its ineffectiveness, inability to ensure global stabilisation or disregard to other parties' interests), not only on the part of the European Union.²⁵ The EU, however, is certainly its most resolute opponent, as its general vision of contemporary international relations, including, especially, methods of solving principal problems of global security, is completely different than the American one.

Once again the example of controversy about American intervention in Iraq seems fit to illustrate how those discords grow and consolidate, leading to an open political and diplomatic conflict between the EU and the USA. Leaving clashes over that matter inside the EU apart, one has to agree with opinions that positions assumed by the two driving forces of European integration – France and Germany – have been decisive in that context. From this point of view, Europe should not be judged to have declared itself against the United States as such or in defence of its own interests or hurt ambitions (even if it did, it was only a part of the truth). It seems, instead, that what really we have to deal with is a bold attempt to reconstruct a polycentric world, free from an overwhelming US dominance; the world in which Europe, along with other leading global powers, would have more to say in response to American unilateral model.

All these considerations should be taken into account while formulating options open to Polish foreign and security policy. Indeed, sober analysis of the pro-Atlantic option reveals its serious weaknesses, including, in particular, the lack of firmly binding ally's obligations on the part of the USA and NATO. Such obligations, if any, have rather been based upon general political reasoning than on real common interests resulting from our country's potential or geopolitical position as a partner which counts. Also important is the above-outlined difference between strategic concepts and visions of modern world, adopted and implemented by the United States on the one hand and the European Union on the other.

2.3. The European model

It needs firm emphasising that the European Union has presently been our principal partner, not only economic, but political as well (as Polish Eurosceptics seem to forget) and largely military, too. This is illustrated by Poland's participation as the EU Member State, in application of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, established in 1992 on the virtue of the Treaty of

²⁵ See: *Stany Zjednoczone – granice hegemonii (The United States – The Borders of Hegemony)*, "Rocznik Strategiczny 2003/2004", Warszawa 2004.

Maastricht.²⁶ Another example is our country's involvement in particular undertakings in that area – in spite of its generally cautious attitude towards far-reaching consolidation of European political and defensive integration. We have supported some specific initiatives in that field, such as formation of the so-called Battle Groups or establishment of the European Defence Agency.²⁷ This means that in fact we actually adopt certain EU's policies or concepts this way or another, including those that – as indicated above – are contradictory to American views and policy.

This leads us to a well-justified question: is Poland, all those circumstances taken into account, going to be able to maintain privileged political and military relations with the United States in the long run, restricting, at the same time, its relations with the European Union to issues mainly concerning economic integration?

A thorough analysis of the European option reveals that the potential it presents is, on a long-term scale, much bigger than that of the Atlantic one, as regards satisfaction of our country's essential interests in the area of foreign and security policy. Of course, it has its weaknesses and limitations as well, including, notably, a peculiar rebirth of national egoism manifested by several EU Member States, especially the largest ones, such as France and Germany. This is further complicated by diverging opinions about the American anti-terrorist crusade – the issue that seriously divides the EU Member States (most of whom are NATO members as well). All this sums up to an evident crisis experienced these days by the EU foreign and security policy, manifested by the lack of a common position as regards the key problems of the modern world (including, in particular, fighting international terrorism) and by difficulties encountered in building rapid reaction force or in

²⁶ Of voluminous Polish literature – see: J.Zajączkowski, *Unia Europejska w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Wymiar polityczny* (*The European Union in international relations. Political Dimension*), Warszawa 2006 and J.Starzyk, *Wspólna Polityka Zagraniczna i Bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej* (*The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy*), Warszawa 2001.

²⁷ Battle Groups have been composed of armed troops delegated by particular EU Member States, while the European Defence Agency is meant as a structure that co-ordinates and manages the development of the EU Member States' military potential – more on the subject of Polish position – see: S.Parzymies, *Wkład Polski w przygotowanie Traktatu Konstytucyjnego Unii Europejskiej* (*Poland's Contribution to Preparation of the European Union Constitutional Treaty*), "Stosunki Międzynarodowe", no. 3-4/2004 and *Uzasadnienie wniosku o udzielenie zgody na podpisanie Traktatu ustanawiającego Konstytucję dla Europy, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 26 października 2004 r.* (*Grounds for a motion for an approval to be granted for signing of the Treaty establishing the Constitution for Europe, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 October 2004*), "Studia Europejskie", no. 4/2004, esp. p.167-169.

establishment of the common European potential in the field of military industry.²⁸

Polish Eurosceptics have taken advantage of this situation to criticise the very idea of consolidating European integration in political and defensive areas. In that criticism they use political or ideological arguments, such as general prejudice to community-based or federalist concepts and restriction of true European unity just to the “Europe of homelands” model, but not only. They have also raised the issue of aggravating national egoism, especially in France and Germany, criticising those countries – quite justifiably, by the way – for manifesting a lack of solidarity the union calls for or even for plain ignoring of Polish interests. (Decision to construct a gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, across the Baltic sea floor, having vast importance for our country’s power supply safety and yet being made without consulting the interested partners, can be quoted as fitting example thereof.)

The problem, however, is that while requesting solidarity throughout the union in the area of foreign and security policy, Poland breaks fundamental rules of such solidarity, for instance making its decision, non-consulted with either French or German partners, on an unconditional support for the US intervention in Iraq. (More examples can easily be given.) In short: we request from others what we don’t practice ourselves.

Furthermore, in circles of the EU decision-makers Poland has an opinion of a partner which, if not disinclined to tighten the Foreign and Security Policy that had mainly been based on the principles of intergovernmental co-operation until recently (as all the EU Member States have agreed over that point), is nevertheless ill-disposed to extend powers of supra-national Community bodies over that field. In other words, Poland, along with such countries as the United Kingdom, Denmark or neutral countries, should be included in a group of sceptics reluctant to extend federalist solutions onto the area of foreign and security policy, or perhaps also onto other aspects of European integration.

It seems that an attitude that is proper here should reach beyond narrow, short-sighted understanding of Polish strategic interests. Firstly, it should be considered that achieving a sort of consensus between the EU’s and US foreign policies is possible. Not only is an agreement between the United

²⁸ More on the controversy around the EU foreign and security policy – see: J.Lindley-French, *W cieniu Locarno? Dlaczego europejska polityka obronna nie zdaje egzaminu* (*In the Locarno shadow? Why Has European Defence Policy Failed to Pass an Exam*), “Nowa Europa. Przegląd Natoliński”, no. 2/2005; F.Cameron, G.Quille, *ESDP: The State of Play*, EPC Working Paper no. 11, September 2004; D.Thym, *Reforming Europe’s Common and Security Policy*, “European Law Journal”, January 2004.

States and the “old Europe” conceivable, but moreover premises exist for it.²⁹ That assumed, it seems little likely that the American ally is going to pay any more attention to our interests (as well as our reservations regarding the EU) than he will to interests of Germany or France. Accordingly, to stand in opposition to those driving forces of the European integration would be politically senseless, the more so that, in the long run, Poland’s active involvement into development of the EU’s foreign and security policy seems very advisable. In fact, although we don’t seem to appreciate this, Poland’s scope of possibilities is much wider within the structures of European integration (including possibilities to act in an international arena, in particular) than it would be should we only go for the Atlantic option.

Contrary to what opponents of the European Union are anxious about, we are not at all supposed to be a “second category” member nor limited to play such a role and to have to accept conditions other dictate. Poland has ever been valid and lawful part of Europe and Polish aspirations towards full involvement in the processes taking place in the continent stem naturally from our historical growth. We may be proud of it and it is going to rank as significant contribution into the unity of Europe as the whole. After all, following the accession to the European Union, Poland belongs to the largest Member States, second to Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy and comparably to Spain.

As far as fears of being dominated by Germany are concerned, one has to remember that Germany is Europe’s most powerful country this way or another, while we can be Germany’s valuable ally and partner, enabling the EU’s political and economic “gravity centre” to move further East. This is concurrent with both Polish and German national interests. Such a concurrence of both countries’ interests – which needs underlining – is something brand new in over thousand years of a complex, troubled history of our mutual relations. The same argument explains why subsequent German governments (despite any frictions that occur in the neighbours’ mutual relations) have essentially been our advocates, supporting Polish endeavours towards integration.

²⁹ Early in 2005 both American and European State leaders and diplomats started to send more and more evident signals suggesting their eagerness to mitigate controversies and to reach a compromise both over the Iraq matter and in other issues in dispute. Such signals have been sent, among others, by Presidents G.W.Bush and J.Chirac, while a recently-appointed American Secretary of State C.Rice declared, during her first visit in Europe that “*Europe and the USA share common challenges*” and that “*fears of those who said the European unity and Transatlantic unity cannot be reconciled have been proven wrong*” (interview in: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 11.02.2005).

After all, one basic fact should be fully realised: that only within the EU is Poland going to be able to influence decisions made by the Union as the whole, including Germany and France. Taking no part in the EU decision-making structures we would end up debarred, on a permanent basis, from any involvement in deciding upon matters of our continent and, in effect, upon ourselves as well. Modern Europe is in fact a complex system of communicating vessels, where everything and everyone are dependent on each other, but also where those absent have no vote and can easily be reduced to a role of a poor, provincial suppliant. As true European Union Member State, instead, we enjoy quite a unique scope of competence we would never be able to get any other way.

A purely rhetorical question may be asked: in which another way could our country truly and effectively (void propaganda left aside) influence specific behaviours of other European countries, including, in particular, such powerful ones as Germany or France, unless as a member of the EU structures? Provisions of the Treaty of Nice, as well as those of the Constitutional Treaty (contrary to political fuss over that matter) award Poland a prominent position in the EU decision-making bodies. In fact, our position is perhaps even better, in a certain sense, than our true political and economic importance justify.³⁰ This means that it is only going to depend on our very efforts and talents whether we will succeed in taking advantage of that potential in order to acquire appropriate benefits from our EU membership. To mention one symptomatic test of our foreign policy: it was the support we have been given by the EU to our involvement, both diplomatic and social, in the “orange revolution” in Ukraine. Without that support Polish actions would obviously been much less successful, especially as regards a possibility to influence Russia’s attitude towards Ukraine.³¹

In synthesis, it can be argued that membership in the European Union (combined with that in NATO) makes it easier for Poland – and very much so – to take on challenges brought by contemporary international relations, concerning virtually any aspect: economy, politics, defence, culture and so on. Being – and this needs emphasising – a par member of the world’s most powerful integration group, comparable to the United States in many respects, we are able to secure an appropriate position for ourselves and to take proper care of our interests and safety in an international arena. On our own, instead,

³⁰ It is sufficient to point out that in the Council of the European Union, being one of the EU’s key decision-making bodies, Poland has got 27 votes, that is just two shy of much stronger countries, such as Germany or France. We have also enjoyed similarly favourable position in other EU institutions.

³¹ More on this subject – see: P. Turczyński, *Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Ukrainy* (*The European Union’s Policy Towards Ukraine*), “Sprawy Międzynarodowe”, no. 2/2002.

with no multi-faceted and mass (if not unconditional or easily obtained) support from our EU partners we wouldn't be able to solve the problems we face – neither old, nor newly-emerging ones. We have to face and handle such problems anyway (even if the European Union didn't exist at all) and within its structures our task becomes much easier.

3. Conclusions

The future of Polish foreign and security policy will largely depend on whether and how several important issues are solved. This relates, among other things, to the way the organisational and doctrinal formula of NATO will develop as this is the principal guarantor of our national security. Different scenarios are possible in this respect, from an optimistic one – that of considerable reinforcement of political and military structures, to pessimistic vision of an alliance diluted in an overgrown political co-operation with non-members (such as Russia) with an obvious threat of it becoming another OSCE-like ineffective body.

Moreover, it is quite unclear what effects can be expected from the European Union's efforts to create a truly efficient common foreign and defensive policy and, in time, a system of common defence, too. The presently binding formula of the "Petersberg Missions", while perfectly justified, is obviously insufficient, even if supported with specific actions to enhance their efficacy, such as making, in 1999, decision on the establishment of European rapid reaction force or first military interventions abroad, carried out under the EU flag (peace-keeping operations in Macedonia and Kongo in 2003).³² Here, again, different scenarios are possible – from that of building, by the EU, of an effective military potential enabling it to play the role of a true global power (or even the world's second superpower) to preservation of the EU status as non-military civilian power.

No matter how the situation unfolds, however, the shape of Polish foreign and security policy will depend on our position in the context of political and military relation between the European Union and the United States. Our country is going to belong to two security structures formed, jointly or separately, by our most important allies and partners: within NATO, in fact

³² The importance of the operation in Kongo (carried out under the cryptonym ARTEMIS) was so much larger that – for the first time – no NATO support was used and, most importantly – it was performed outside the territory of Europe. Moreover, in 2004 a special mechanism for financing such undertakings out of the EU's budget was established under the name "Athena". A new system obliges Member States to participate in permanent administrative costs as well as in the so-called common costs of operations undertaken, irrespective of whether a given country actually takes part therein or not.

subordinated to the USA as well as within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Admittedly, relations between those structures include elements of rivalry and co-operation at the same time.

To remain in such a situation – although some of our partners do it – is going to be very difficult for Poland, considering its above-discussed special ties with the United States. After all, we neither enjoy such a strong international position nor such power as, for example, the United Kingdom which is capable of playing both roles – *i.e.* that of the USA's closest ally and significant EU Member State – at the same time. Poland in similar circumstances will find it necessary to make really difficult choices, in some cases probably officially imposed, between favouring the line of foreign and security policy of either the United States, or the European Union.

The sharpness of such a choice is partly compromised by the fact that the European Communities and the United States have been involved in a very dense and complex network of all sorts of relations, whilst both parties are each other's rivals and closest allies at the same time. Apart from the fact that they are one another's largest economic partners,³³ roles they play against each other in the political area can hardly be overestimated, either. The United States, as the history reveals, have played the role of the principal guarantor of security of the integrating Europe for more than half a Century now. Europe, in turn, has been USA's natural ally of an enormous geostrategic importance. All this considered, the mutual arrangement of power between the USA and the EU should not be regarded in terms of a zero-sum game where one party either wins at a cost of another or, the less so, tends to dominate it. Accordingly, it can be expected with all likelihood that the present clashes will not break up the unity of the Transatlantic alliance, as there are too many common values and interests binding both partners together. On the other hand, some fundamental differences, both in doctrine and in political practice, in fact exist between them. We have to be aware those differences may have very serious influence upon various facets of Polish foreign and security policy.

In institutional sphere no significant changes should be expected. Our country will remain a member of NATO and will participate in preparation of

³³ This is especially evident as one evaluates economic co-operation, the global value of which is sometimes rated at USD 2.5 Billion *per annum* and which generates 14 Million jobs both sides of the Atlantic. Share of the USA and the EU in total export and import reaches 20-25%, making them each other's biggest trade partners. Data concerning direct foreign investments are even more convincing: over 60% of all DFI in the United States are made by the EU-based companies, while Americans stand behind every second foreign investment made throughout the EU see: *The Transatlantic Economy in 2020: A Partnership for the Future?*, Working Group on the Transatlantic Economy in 2020, New York-Washington 2004, p.ix.

assumptions and in implementation of the EU's foreign and defence policy. Furthermore, one can expect that as structures of European integration are extended Eastward, Poland's role and position may relatively increase, in particular in relation to smaller Central and Eastern Europe countries. At the same time, however, assuming, by Poland, of a role of a true regional power can hardly be expected. It would certainly take much bigger resources and much more active foreign policy in place (at present paralysed by bad relations with Russia) to be able to achieve such a role.

In terms of political practice, however, the dilemma of choice between Atlantic and European options may lead to emergence of serious difficulties in implementation of Polish foreign and security policy. Our country has in fact already become an object of a strong pressure (which will probably intensify in the future) from its EU partners who insist that Poland declares itself in a more consistent way in favour of the European model of foreign and security policy.

Therefore, both Polish political class and the society should understand that the EU membership is more important to Poland in political, economic, military and social terms than close, but strategically less significant ties it has with the USA or military ones with NATO. It has to be firmly stressed once more that in order to adopt such an option we don't really have to question all the direction of our foreign and security policy taken so far. What we have to do is only (or as much as) fully appreciate the real situation in contemporary Europe and the world and, drawing right conclusions therefrom, be able to take proper care our strategic national interests in a reasonable and modern way.