

WINTER 2018

“FORT TRUMP” OR BUST?

POLAND AND THE FUTURE
OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE

REPORT



This report is part of Friends of Europe's Peace, Security and Defence programme. Written by Paul Taylor, it brings together the views of scholars, policymakers and senior defence and security stakeholders.

Unless otherwise indicated, this report reflects the writer's understanding of the views expressed by the interviewees and participants of survey. The author and the participants contributed in their personal capacities, and their views do not necessarily reflect those of the institutions they represent, or of Friends of Europe and its board of trustees, members or partners. Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted, provided that full credit is given to Friends of Europe and that any such reproduction, whether in whole or in part, is not sold unless incorporated in other works.

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Paul Taylor is a Paris-based journalist who writes the "Europe at Large" column for POLITICO. He previously spent four decades working for Reuters as a foreign correspondent in Paris, Tehran, Bonn and Brussels, as bureau chief in Israel/Palestine, Berlin and Brussels, as chief correspondent in France, as diplomatic editor in London, and finally as European affairs editor.

As a Senior Fellow at Friends of Europe, Paul has also written the reports "Safer together: The United Kingdom and the future of European Security and Defence" (June 2018), "Jumping over its shadow: Germany and the future of European defence" (October 2017) and "Crunch time: France and the future of European defence" (April 2017). With our European defence cooperation series, we aim to contribute to the overall debate on international security developments and offer a country specific in-depth analysis with interesting insights and specific recommendations, relevant to high-profile and senior decision-makers as well as thought-leaders from around the world.

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PRELUDE

POLAND AND EUROPEAN DEFENCE

KEY ISSUES

Poland is the sword and shield of NATO in the defence of north-eastern Europe. Its erratic recent course has raised questions about whether its policies are appropriate to meet the threats and challenges of national and European security.

This report is intended to stimulate debate on Poland's options and those of its EU and NATO partners to optimise the defence of Europe and Warsaw's place in it. A survey of defence and security stakeholders in Poland and abroad, annexed to the report, highlights these issues.

The key questions the study explores are:

- Is Poland focusing on the right threats and the right responses?
- Does Poland's confrontation with the European Union over the rule of law weaken its international standing and pose a threat to its own and Europe's security?
- Is Poland putting too many eggs in one basket, and undermining NATO cohesion, by making the drive for a permanent US military base its top priority, and are there better alternatives?
- Has Poland's 'memory politics' damaged relations with neighbours and international partners that are crucial for its security, and how can they be repaired?
- Would Poland benefit from greater integration into EU defence initiatives and industrial cooperation?
- How can European partners and the United States encourage Warsaw to pursue less divisive objectives?

These issues are as controversial in Poland as they are in the Euro-Atlantic community.

METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the fourth in a series on the future of European defence following the publication of country studies on France and Germany in 2017, and the United Kingdom in 2018.

It was informed by nearly 50 in-depth interviews with present and past Polish, European Union, US and NATO policy officials, members of parliament, military officers, strategists, diplomats and defence industry executives. The interviews were conducted in person or by telephone between July and October 2018. The serving officials, soldiers and diplomats whom I interviewed cannot be identified because of the sensitivity of their roles. I am grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the office of the President of the Republic of Poland, as well as the Polish permanent representations to NATO and the EU, and the NATO press service for their help.

I regret that the Polish Ministry of Defence did not respond to repeated requests for interviews. I have tried to compensate for this lack of access by drawing on published documents such as the National Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, defence budget documents and the speeches and press releases on the ministry's website.

I am most grateful to the Casimir Pulaski Foundation, and particularly to Tomasz Smura, Director of the Security and Defence Programme; Wojciech Dziegiel, Chief Executive; and Patrycja Chomiczka, Coordinator of the Cybersecurity, Economy and Energy Programme, for hosting me in Warsaw and for their tremendous help in arranging interviews and a roundtable and providing documentation. The report also benefited from lively debates at the 2018 Warsaw Security Forum.

Friends of Europe and the Casimir Pulaski Foundation conducted a multiple-choice survey of security and defence experts in government, business and international organisations, NGOs and the media, both in Poland and abroad. The findings of the survey are appended to this report. (See Annex)

As a journalist for Reuters, I covered Poland's accession to NATO and the European Union. Several of the contacts I made during that period have remained friends. I would like in particular to acknowledge Jerzy Novak and Marek Grela, who were respectively Poland's permanent representatives to NATO and the EU, and who shared their insights and recollections for this report. Others are still in office and cannot be identified.

Many people in the think-tank community and the media helped me with information, analysis and perspectives. Some are named in the text. My thanks also go to Krzysztof Bobinski, Inga Czerny, Judy Dempsey, Marcin Grajewski, Adam Jasser, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Daniel Keohane, Roman Kuzniar, Witold Jurasz, Claudia Major, Justyna Pawlak, Igor Slobodnik, James Thompson, Robert Vass, Thomas Valasek, Jakub Wisniewski, Ray Wojcik and Igor Yurgens.

At Friends of Europe, I am grateful to Geert Cami, Co-Founder and Managing Director, for giving me the opportunity to write this study; to Giles Merritt, Founder and Chairman, for asking hard questions and challenging me to dig deeper; to Clotilde Sipp, Programme Manager while I was researching the report, who gave me precious encouragement and stimulation; to Alexandra Gerasimcikova for her research assistance, conduct of the stakeholder survey and great help in arranging interviews in Brussels; to Patrick Vanderwalle for his analysis of the survey; and to my new colleague Jamie Shea for brainstorming and making helpful suggestions on my first draft.

I wish to thank my POLITICO colleagues in Warsaw and Brussels, Michał Broniatowski, Jan Cienski and Matthew Kaminski for sharing generously their knowledge and contacts. And finally, I'm ever grateful my wife Catherine for her companionship, patience and support while I was working on this project.

Needless to say, the views expressed here, and any errors, are mine and not theirs.



Paul Taylor

Senior Fellow
at Friends of Europe



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A RISKY STRATEGY

Poland has never been more prosperous, stable and safer than at the start of the 21st century as a sovereign, independent state and a member of NATO and of the European Union. It is at peace with its neighbours and enjoys enviable rates of economic growth, investment and employment.

Yet the deeply polarised country is led by a reclusive politician haunted by feelings of national insecurity and historical grievance. Jarosław Kaczyński sees enemies and threats everywhere and safety, if at all, only in the tightest possible bilateral defence relationship with the United States rather than in the collective embrace of European partners and NATO allies.

The government which he controls from the shadows as Chairman of the ruling Law and Justice Party (PiS), without holding state office, has made securing a permanent US military base on Polish soil its paramount security priority, banking on political affinity with US President Donald Trump, while isolating itself within the EU, the principal source of Poland's prosperity.

Putting so many eggs in the American basket is a risky strategy, given the US leader's unpredictability, uncertain duration in office and ambiguity towards NATO and Russia. It runs counter to evidence of US public fatigue with foreign military entanglements, and to the long-term shift in Washington's strategic priorities from Europe to Asia. The Trump administration sees China, not Russia, as the main long-term strategic threat.

The risk is compounded by the fact that Warsaw is losing its closest friend in the EU - the United Kingdom - due to Brexit and has no obvious alternative supporter in Brussels. Russian President Vladimir Putin, Warsaw's nemesis, is actively nurturing and exploiting rifts in the EU.

With its politically driven purges of the judiciary, public media and the civil service, Poland is no longer the model of a successful transition to liberal market democracy that America and Europe once held up for other eastern European countries. It risks being relegated to the second division of a multi-speed EU spearheaded by the eurozone.

“Putting so many eggs in the American basket is a risky strategy”

Poland does not lack alternatives. It could repair its damaged relationship with the EU, choose partnership over mistrust with western Europe's main powers, Germany and France, and play a constructive role in NATO-compatible efforts to build common European defence capabilities, while maintaining a close defence relationship with the United States.

This study examines Poland's strategic position, defence relationships and diplomatic alliances (Chapter 1), domestic political constraints and its relationship with the EU (Chapter 2) the role and state of the armed forces and the place of its defence industries (Chapter 3). It offers

recommendations for how to optimize Poland's foreign and defence policies to best assure its own long-term security interests and those of Europe (Chapter 4).

The report draws on nearly 50 interviews with Polish, European, NATO and US policy officials, past and present military and intelligence officers, lawmakers, defence industry executives, Polish and foreign diplomats, strategists and think tank experts, as well as published sources including the Polish government's 2017 Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland.

"A COUNTRY ON WHEELS"

One of Europe's biggest powers in the 16th and 17th centuries, Poland was partitioned and wiped off the map as a sovereign state between 1795 and 1918 and again in 1939-45. The mostly flat country has no natural barriers to the east or west, making it prone to invasion. It endured foreign imperial rule under Russia, Prussia/Germany and Austria-Hungary in the 19th century; Nazi German and Soviet occupation and mass murder during World War Two; then diminished sovereignty within the Soviet bloc until 1990.

Described by the historian Norman Davies as "a country on wheels both in regard to its geographical location and also to its entries and exits on the political stage", its borders were shunted 350 km to the west in 1945 due to Soviet advances at the end of World War Two. From a multi-ethnic, multi-faith polity with large minorities of Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians and

Belarussians, it became a mono-ethnic Roman Catholic nation under communist rule.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Poles have experienced an unprecedented boom, continuously rising living standards and a transformation from communist rust-belt to advanced economy in a single generation. Yet that is too short a period to erase historical anxieties and resentments.

Moreover, economic gains were unevenly distributed under a post-communist elite that came to be perceived by many as arrogant or corrupt. Despite a massive influx of EU funds, many Poles feel left behind or colonised economically, and resentful at being treated as second-class Europeans, outside the eurozone and the inner circle of decision making. And EU transfers are set to decline from 2021 when the UK's departure will shrink the common budget.

From the early 1990s, successive Polish governments made it their strategic priority to integrate fully into NATO and the European Union. They embarked on economic shock therapy to adapt rapidly to capitalism, helped by international debt relief spearheaded by the United States and massive foreign direct investment. Polish industries became part of Germany's supply chain.

Warsaw was an eager volunteer for NATO-led and US-led military missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq, determined to demonstrate its loyalty and utility to Washington, even if that fuelled divisions

within the EU, as over the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Poles recall with bitterness being told by French President Jacques Chirac that central European countries which signed a joint letter supporting US military action had “missed a good opportunity to keep quiet”. Poland made modest contributions to French-led crisis management operations in Mali and the Central African Republic but it stayed out of the 2011 Libya campaign.

Russia’s seizure and annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine in 2014 rekindled deep-seated Polish fears of aggression by a revisionist power to its east. Moscow’s covert military action, information warfare and cyber attacks sent jitters across east central Europe. The deployment of nuclear-capable missiles in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland, as well as Russian military exercises featuring rapid mobilization and early use of nuclear weapons heightened Warsaw’s concerns.

At the same time, the eurozone crisis and the uncontrolled influx of more than one million migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa exposed fragilities in European integration and the growing dominance of Germany within the EU. That aggravated worries among some Poles about becoming overdependent on a hegemonic western neighbour. Like many European states, they preferred a distant and hitherto benign US hegemon.

“A country on wheels both in regard to its geographical location and also to its exits and entrances on the political stage”

Norman Davies,
Historian

The experience of having been abandoned by the European powers when Nazi Germany invaded in 1939 underlies Polish scepticism about EU efforts at closer defence integration, and doubts about whether NATO would agree collectively to jump to Warsaw’s defence in a timely manner in case of a possibly ambiguous hybrid Russian attack.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

After Russia’s military action in Ukraine, NATO deployed an Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in 2016, with rotating multinational battalion battle groups as a tripwire designed to reassure eastern allies. But Warsaw regards this as insufficient to deter or halt military aggression, even though the force in Poland is US-led.

By paying top dollar to buy advanced weapons systems from the United States and offering a \$2 billion incentive to encourage Washington to establish a permanent army base on Polish soil, the government believes it is buying the only dependable military insurance on the market.

There is a broad political consensus in Poland on the desirability of a US base. The previous centre-right government of Donald Tusk made the original request. While the liberal opposition faults the PiS government for wrecking ties with Europe, it has not criticized the drive for an American military base.

The US already has more than 3,000 personnel in uniform in Poland on bilateral and NATO duties, including an air force detachment and the rotating EFP battalion. Yet Polish officials believe only permanent US ‘boots on the ground’ will dissuade Putin. “Warsaw’s insurance policy is US skin in the game,” said James Townsend, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of defense for European and NATO policy in the Obama administration.

Under Trump, the United States has increased investment in deterrence in eastern Europe and sent tanks back to Europe. But his transactional approach and initial reluctance to reaffirm NATO’s Article V mutual defence pledge raised questions about the US guarantee. The president has sought better ties with Putin, even as his administration accused Moscow of interfering in US and European elections and conducting cyber attacks and information wars. He has also cast doubt on whether Americans should defend Montenegro, the latest state to join the alliance.

At a Brussels summit in July 2018, Trump harangued European allies for their inadequate defence spending and warned behind closed doors that the United States might “do (its) own thing” out of disenchantment with NATO.

The US president, cheered by crowds in Warsaw on his maiden visit to Europe in 2017, singled out Poland for praise in his September 2018 address to the United Nations General Assembly in sharp contrast to Germany, which he criticized once again.

European diplomats are concerned that hardliners in the White House are using a willing Poland as a wedge to divide and weaken the EU, with which Trump has clashed over trade, climate change, Middle East diplomacy and global governance as well as defence spending.

“Warsaw’s insurance policy is US skin in the game”

James Townsend,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and NATO policy in the Obama administration

Some see the US-backed Three Seas Initiative, grouping eastern EU states from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Adriatic, as more than a forum to boost north-south road, rail and energy infrastructure and cut dependence on Russian gas by piping liquefied natural gas to the region. They see it as an attempt to build a political caucus to resist Franco-German leadership in the EU.

PERSONNEL CHURN

Poland has enshrined in law meeting NATO’s goal of spending 2.0% of gross domestic product on defence. The government has approved long-term plans to raise that level to

2.5% by 2032. But the capacity and leadership of its armed forces have been weakened by a sweeping purge of its top ranks conducted by former defence minister Antoni Macierewicz.

Some 30 generals and 200 colonels have resigned or been forced into retirement since PiS took office in late 2015. Seasoned officers who had gained experience operating alongside US and NATO forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans, many of them trained at Western military academies, have been replaced by less experienced loyalists.

The security services have also been decapitated and their priorities shifted from gathering strategic intelligence towards fighting economic crime, according to recent insiders. While Poland has not experienced the same scale of cyber attacks and disinformation as the Baltic states or Ukraine, partly because it has no Russian-speaking minority, there are signs that Moscow has tried to stoke far-right pan-Slavic nationalism and exploit tension with Ukraine and Lithuania over historical grievances. Warsaw has begun to boost cyber resilience but has been less active than its Nordic and Baltic neighbours in NATO and EU cyber security efforts. It remains prone to information warfare.

With the exception of the signing of a major contract to buy US Patriot air defence missiles at a far higher unit cost than those purchased by Romania, arms procurement has slowed to a trickle. The PiS government's first move was to scrap plans to buy 50 Caracal helicopters from Airbus, infuriating France. Three years on,

no replacement contract has been awarded. Military modernization has been hampered by a constant churn of defence ministry officials and senior executives at PGZ, the state-owned holding company that controls most of the defence industry.

President Bronislaw Komorowski initiated a reorientation of defence policy in 2014 in light of Russian military action in Georgia and Ukraine, reassigning top priority to territorial defence after two decades in which the armed forces had been shrunk and reconfigured mostly to participate in Western expeditionary operations and U.N. peacekeeping overseas.

The PiS government issued a declassified version of its Defence Concept in 2017, criticising past security doctrines as based on incorrect, unrealistic assumptions. It made the 'Komorowski doctrine' more explicit by declaring "aggressive policy of the Russian Federation" the number one security threat, followed by instability on NATO's eastern flank, instability in NATO's southern neighbourhood, and terrorism.

The establishment of a lightly-armed Territorial Defence Force, reporting directly to the Minister of Defence outside the regular armed forces chain of command, has caused some perplexity in NATO and drawn opposition accusations, denied by the government, that the volunteers could be used as a militia in case of domestic political unrest.

The Defence Concept defines the mission of the TDF, due to number 53,000 alongside

regular armed forces of 105,000, as “to neutralise hostile activities below the threshold of an armed conflict”. Some strategists say it reflects planning for a guerrilla struggle against a hostile occupation force, modelled on the Home Army during World War Two. This would run counter to NATO’s strategy of forward defence and reinforcement, designed to stop an aggressor at or near the alliance’s eastern border.

WIDENING OPTIONS

Given its history, Poland has grounds to be wary of the notion of ‘European strategic autonomy’. In Polish eyes, the goal inscribed in the EU’s 2016 Global Strategy is a dangerous illusion if it raises the impression that EU countries could be willing or able to defend themselves against Russia without the United States in the foreseeable future. PiS is not alone in worrying that such talk could hasten rather than discourage US disengagement from Europe.

Poland joined the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation on defence only reluctantly and at the last minute in 2017, accompanying its signature with a letter insisting that PESCO should address threats on the eastern flank as well as elsewhere, that it should not deviate from NATO defence planning and that all members’ defence industries should receive a fair share of projects.

At the very least, Warsaw would be wise to hedge its security bets more widely. It would be prudent to ensure that the bloated

and largely unreformed defence industry builds partnerships with European companies to raise its technological base and links to joint EU arms procurement efforts, rather than relying on promised offsets from US contracts and a captive home market.

Poland has good reason to apprehend Russian intentions in its neighbourhood, given Moscow’s sustained breaches of international law in Ukraine, manipulation of frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, offensive military exercises and campaigns of cyber sabotage and information warfare. But the threats to Polish security and prosperity are more numerous and more subtle than a near exclusive focus on a Russian invasion would suggest.

Other risks include a state failure in Ukraine that might send hundreds of thousands of refugees into Poland, with a potential overspill of armed militias; instability in Belarus or a direct Russian takeover and expansion of military infrastructure in the former Soviet republic; a breakdown or alienation of the European Union over migration disputes and Kaczynski’s authoritarian drift; a worsening of depopulation, ageing and the brain drain; or a sudden halt to gas supplies.

To counter these dangers, Poland needs improved civilian, military and industrial cooperation with its EU partners. There are also more practical and less divisive ways to strengthen US and NATO military support than seeking a ‘Fort Trump’.

Domestic partisanship has distorted the conduct of a rational foreign and defence policy, with many professionals sidelined by ideologues or place men. This polarisation may well get worse ahead of the 2019 parliamentary and 2020 presidential elections. Former top diplomats warned in an open letter in July 2018 that the government's nationalist policies do not respond to the challenges Poland faces and undermine EU and NATO unity.

“Not excluding the possibility of conflict, for example in the form of a hybrid war, we are more fearful of the strategic isolation of Poland, combined with the growth of Russia's influence in our region,” the Conference of Ambassadors of the Republic of Poland said.

***“We are more fearful
of the strategic isolation
of Poland”***

Conference of Ambassadors
of the Republic of Poland

Warsaw would do well to reinvest in circles of influence such as the Weimar Triangle informal grouping with Germany and France, which offers it a say in European leadership, the Visegrád Group of central European countries, which it uses only episodically and mostly as a shield against pressure from Brussels, and the grouping of Nordic and Baltic countries.

Poland's Baltic neighbours - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia - joined the eurozone as soon as possible in the belief that safety resided in being

inside every European and Atlantic inner circle. The PiS administration, and to some extent its pro-European liberal predecessor, seem to believe on the contrary that Poland can maximize its interests by behaving more like Britain, staying out of economic and monetary union and trying to slow or reverse the pace of European integration.

However, after the UK's departure, the balance of power within the EU is likely to shift further towards the 19-nation eurozone, which will account for 80 percent of the bloc's GDP and two-thirds of its population. Romania and Bulgaria are itching to join, which would leave Poland and a handful of smaller central European and Nordic states outside.

Given high levels of public support for EU membership among Poles, it seems unlikely that souring relations between the Kaczynski government and Brussels will create an early risk of Poland moving to quit the Union. However, the British experience shows how politically manipulated nationalism can run out of control.

If the showdown with the EU over the rule of law and fundamental values were to escalate just as financial flows from Brussels dwindle, nationalist calls for a “Polexit” could gain traction as Poland is increasingly sidelined from the European mainstream.

That may be the biggest danger for Polish and European security.



CHAPTER 1

“A COUNTRY ON WHEELS”

POLAND’S STRATEGIC SITUATION

A GOLDEN AGE?

After centuries of being wiped off the map or shunted eastwards and westwards across the plains of central and eastern Europe, Poland finally achieved its dream of territorial stability, national independence, full sovereignty and integration into the Euro-Atlantic community at the turn of the 21st century.

The fall of Soviet-imposed communist rule in eastern Europe in 1990, in which Polish trade unionists, democracy activists and a Polish pope played a ground-breaking role, opened the way for a golden age of rapid economic development, improving living standards and accession to the NATO defence alliance in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.

Gross domestic product has more than doubled in real terms since 1990. Poles have enjoyed 27 years of continuous economic growth, thanks in large part to foreign direct investment, record inflows of EU funds and a write-off of Soviet era debt. Poland was the only EU state not to suffer a recession after

the 2008 financial crisis. It continues to enjoy the region's fastest growth rate.

Yet the combination of rising prosperity, individual liberty, freedom of movement and membership of the West's main economic, political and defence bodies has not laid to rest deep-seated anxieties about the country's security or historical grievances with its neighbours.

The largest and most populous of the central and eastern states that joined the EU after the collapse of the Soviet empire, Poland still thinks of itself as a vulnerable country sandwiched between two bigger neighbours with which it has a long history of conflict.

Russia's seizure and annexation of Crimea and military intervention and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine in 2014 reignited an acute sense of insecurity in Warsaw following a first jolt during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. The Russian move into Ukraine, after a pro-

European uprising in Kiev toppled a Russian-backed president, triggered a sea-change in Polish security policy.

Territorial defence thus became the absolute priority after two decades in which the armed forces had been shrunk and reconfigured primarily for overseas missions as part of NATO- or US-led coalitions in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The election of the conservative nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party in 2015 with an absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament brought a sharp shift in foreign and security policy from the pro-European, pro-NATO, internationalist approach of Civic Platform-led (PO) governments headed by Donald Tusk for the previous eight years.

Poland's reclusive de facto leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, who pulls the strings from the shadows as PiS chairman but holds no state office, sees threats and conspiracies almost everywhere – from Moscow to Brussels and Berlin – and safety, if at all, only in the tightest possible bilateral military embrace of the United States. The PiS government has purged the civil service, ambassadors and the armed forces, decapitated the intelligence services and placed the judiciary and public broadcasting under political control.

Kaczyński has rekindled historical disputes with Germany, Ukraine, Lithuania, Israel and the United States in what his culture minister calls "memory politics". And he has unleashed a culture war

against the European Union's embrace of secularism, multiculturalism and gay rights.

HAUNTED BY HISTORY

Poles are haunted by history. They believe they were betrayed repeatedly by European powers, notably in 1939 when France and the United Kingdom failed to make good on promises to come to their assistance by opening a western front against Germany when Hitler invaded Poland. Many also feel they were abandoned to Soviet domination in 1945, then left to fend for themselves during repeated strikes and protests against communist rule from the 1950s to the 1980s. "We haven't digested the feeling of being always abandoned and betrayed by the West, especially in 1939," said veteran diplomat Jerzy Novak, a former Polish ambassador to NATO. (1)

This makes decision-makers wary, and in some cases openly sceptical, of the reliability of the alliances they joined after the fall of communism. They are not highly confident that European NATO allies would come to their assistance in a timely manner in a crisis with Russia.

To the extent that they trust any foreign power, it is the United States, partly because it led global resistance to the Soviet Union during the Cold War and offered moral support to Polish anti-communist activists, but also because of the influence of a large Polish-American community, estimated at between 9 and 10 million Americans.

“For Poland, NATO isn’t where it’s at. No amount of reciting of the sanctity of Article V (the mutual defence clause) is adequate to overcome that historical distrust. This is why Poland wants a bilateral strategic agreement (with the United States),” said Lee Feinstein, who served as US ambassador to Poland from 2009 to 2012. (2)

The Polish government’s mantra is that Poles must rely first and foremost on themselves for their defence, followed by the United States, then NATO and, trailing far behind if mentioned at all, the European Union. That also explains Polish scepticism about EU defence initiatives.

Bordered by the Baltic Sea to the north and the Tatra Mountains to the south, Poland has no natural barriers to its east or west. It was one of Europe’s largest powers in the 16th and 17th century, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth sprawled across lands that are today part of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova and Russia.

Those borders were eroded first by war with Sweden in the mid-17th century, then by 18th century conflicts with Russia, Brandenburg-Prussia and the Habsburg Empire. Poland was partitioned among those powers in three stages between 1772 and 1795, when it ceased to exist as an independent state until the end of World War One. It declared independence in 1918.

Historian Norman Davis described Poland as “a country on wheels both in regard to its geographical location and also to its exits

“We haven’t digested the feeling of being always abandoned and betrayed by the West, especially in 1939”

Jerzy Novak,
Veteran diplomat, former Polish
ambassador to NATO

and entrances on the political stage”. But he stressed its permanence as a cultural community with deep and lasting traditions. (3)

“For the greater part of modern history, statelessness was the Poles’ normal condition. Until 1990, genuine independence was rarely much more than a pipe-dream,” he wrote.

Under Marshal Józef Piłsudski Poland fought Soviet Russia and Ukraine in 1919-21 to extend its borders to the east. Russian forces reached the east bank of the Vistula River, threatening Warsaw in summer 1920 before a Polish counter-offensive drove them back, capturing territory some 200 km to the east of the border delineated at the end of World War I, known as the Curzon Line.

Those territories remained part of Poland until Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded and carved up the country in 1939. In the 1930s, Warsaw steered a precarious and ultimately hopeless independent course between its two totalitarian neighbours, rejecting Hitler’s repeated approaches to form an alliance to attack the Soviet Union.

"The Polish state was (...) destroyed because in 1939 Hitler was angry and impatient and had no better way of approaching the Soviet border than by obliterating the country that lay between," wrote historian Timothy Snyder. Stalin was also furious that Poland had declined to become a Soviet ally against Germany and saw territorial advantage in its dismemberment.

"I remember Stalin telling me that the plains of Poland were the invasion route of Europe to Russia and always had been, and therefore he had to control Poland"

Averell Harriman

Wartime US ambassador to Moscow

Between them the Nazis and Soviets were responsible for the mass extermination of the Polish intelligentsia and officer class. The Nazis systematically annihilated Poland's more than three million Jews. Soviet forces murdered more than 100,000 Poles living in Soviet border lands in Ukraine and Belarus before the war. The Soviet NKVD secret police killed or deported some 300,000 Poles after the invasion of Poland in 1939 and there was more ethnic cleansing of Poles from Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania at the end of the war. (4)

The spectre of Russian-German collusion to harm Polish interests remains a nightmare for many Poles. Radosław Sikorski, when he

was defence minister in 2006, compared the planned Nord Stream gas pipeline under the Baltic from Russia to Germany to the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that led to the carve-up of Poland. Warsaw is now urging the United States to impose sanctions to try to halt a planned Nord Stream 2 pipeline that would double the capacity, bypassing east European transit countries such as Ukraine. (5)

Polish forces that escaped the Nazi-Soviet invasion went on to fight with distinction on the allied side, notably alongside the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain, and on land in the North Africa campaign and the liberation of Europe, as well as on the eastern front alongside the Red Army. At their peak, they numbered around 250,000 men.

Inside Poland, an underground Home Army led resistance to the Nazi occupation, climaxing in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the largest military action by any resistance movement during World War II. Glorified by Poland's present leaders, the uprising failed with massive casualties, partly due to the failure of the Soviet Union and the western allies to respond to appeals for support.

Poland lost a larger proportion of its population than any other occupied country during World War II. Its post-war borders, the object of negotiations among allied leaders at the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences at which Poland was not represented, were determined chiefly by the advance of the Red Army in 1945.

The western frontier was moved up to 350 km westwards, incorporating the historically German regions of Silesia and Pomerania from which Germans fled or were expelled. In the east, Poland lost all territory beyond the Curzon Line, including western Ukraine and southern Lithuania. A country that had been multi-ethnic and multi-faith, with minorities of Orthodox Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Muslim Tatars comprising altogether one-third of the population, became a mono-ethnic, 95% Polish Roman Catholic nation under communist rule.

Churchill, Roosevelt and later Truman were unable to persuade Stalin to incorporate the London-based Polish government in exile into the post-war administration of Poland or to allow genuine democratic elections open to all parties. They had no way of forcing his hand.

“I remember Stalin telling me that the plains of Poland were the invasion route of Europe to Russia and always had been, and therefore he had to control Poland,” wartime US ambassador to Moscow Averell Harriman told an interviewer. (6)

Many Poles fear that Russian President Vladimir Putin is bent on trying to restore that control. He has called the collapse of the Soviet Union “a major geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century” and said he would like to reverse it. (7)

Sikorski, who went on to be foreign minister from 2007 to 2014, said his greatest fear was that Putin would start a hybrid war in Poland as

he had done in Georgia and Ukraine, and that NATO would dither and Germany would fret until it was too late to reverse Russian gains. (8)

The Kremlin has never overcome its perception of NATO as a hostile organisation bent on weakening and encircling Russia, despite Western attempts to build bridges for cooperation in the new European security order. In negotiations with Moscow that secured a peaceful end to the Cold War, the United States pledged that it would not deploy nuclear weapons, build large-scale military infrastructure or permanently station substantial combat forces in former Warsaw Pact countries that joined the alliance.

Former Polish Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek recalled a conversation in 1997, the year Warsaw won approval for NATO accession, with his Russian counterpart, Yevgeny Primakov. “We know we cannot prevent you joining NATO. And you know that we know we cannot prevent you joining NATO,” Geremek quoted the veteran former Soviet diplomat as saying. “Just don’t expect us to enjoy it!” (9)

“DON’T EXPECT US TO ENJOY IT”

In an attempt to assuage Moscow’s fears, NATO concluded a Founding Act with Russia in 1997, setting a framework for future cooperation. In that document, NATO declared that “in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.” (10)

From the day it joined in 1999, Poland had to struggle to get the alliance’s military commanders to make contingency plans to defend its new eastern ally. When Andrzej Towpik, the first Polish ambassador to NATO, asked on a visit to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to see the standing defence plan for Poland, he was told: “I don’t have one.” The North Atlantic Council had never tasked the military to prepare one. At the time, NATO regarded Russia as a partner rather than an adversary. (11)

“It took two to three years until there was a first contingency plan,” Towpik’s successor, Jerzy Novak, said. “When I arrived in 2002, (NATO secretary-general) Lord Robertson asked me ‘What’s the point? Let’s drop this contingency plan. It only irritates Russia’.” Novak refused. (12)

Even today, nearly 20 years after it joined, Poland is not fully integrated into NATO’s integrated air defence system.

US and Polish officials argue that Russia’s 2014 military action in Ukraine, as well as its withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, fundamentally changed the security environment and made the NATO pledge of restraint in the Founding Act moot.

However, when NATO leaders decided at a 2016 Warsaw summit to provide military reassurance for Baltic and central European allies following Moscow’s intervention in Ukraine, they elected to respect the letter of the Founding Act by deploying small, rotating multinational forces in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland rather than establishing permanent forward bases.

The Warsaw decision created a so-called Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) consisting of four battalion battle groups led by the United Kingdom in Estonia, Canada in Latvia, Germany in Lithuania and the United States in Poland, with a total of 4,500 soldiers.

NATO officials say this is a defensive tripwire force that would ensure that any incursion by regular or irregular forces would immediately encounter allied troops, internationalising any conflict and buying time for NATO reinforcements to arrive.

Symbolically, German soldiers were sent to the most sensitive location, the so-called Suwalki Corridor. This flat strip of about 100 km along the border between southern Lithuania and northeastern Poland separates the heavily militarised Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, home to much of Moscow’s Baltic fleet, from

the territory of Belarus, which is allied with Russia. It is the only land route for NATO to reinforce the Baltic states.

A major 2017 Russian military exercise simulated defeating “terrorist” forces that, in the announced scenario, were attempting to overthrow the pro-Moscow government in Belarus and had captured pockets of territory. Western intelligence sources said the war games, on a far larger scale than officially reported, appeared to involve rehearsing to overrun the Baltic states and prevent NATO reinforcement, including by simulating the closure of the Suwalki gap.

NATO has conducted exercises in 2017 in the area and in 2018 in northern Norway simulating defending the border zone and reinforcing a region under attack such as the Baltic states.

Yet a 2016 desktop simulation run by the US army-linked RAND Corporation before the EFP was deployed concluded that Russia could seize the Baltics within 60 hours before NATO was able to send in reinforcements. (12)

Russia’s Zapad 2017 wargame heightened alarm in Warsaw both because of the short-notice mobilisation and concentration of a large armoured force close to NATO borders,



Baltiysk, Kaliningrad region, Russia: Aerial view to Russian military ship "Stereaguschy" of Baltic fleet anchored in the bay

the integration of Belarusian forces and the apparent simulation of early use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Poland has also been watching with concern an upgrading of military facilities in Kaliningrad including modernising a nuclear weapons storage bunker and the deployment of nuclear-capable road-mobile 500km-range Iskander missiles in the territory, which Moscow has characterised as a response to US plans to put elements of a missile defence system in Poland and Romania. (14)

Although Poland is not one of NATO's nuclear basing countries, alliance officials said it has sought to put itself more firmly under the collective nuclear umbrella by offering to open its airfields to allied nuclear-capable aircraft under dispersal plans in war or crisis. That would require building secure facilities for training and exercises. No decision has been taken. (15)

Beyond rational concerns about Russian military capabilities and intentions, psychological factors play a part in explaining the PIS government's fixation. Kaczyński's twin brother, Lech, who was president of Poland at the time, was among 96 senior Polish civilian and military officials killed in a military plane crash in thick fog at Smolensk airport in western Russia in 2010. They had been on their way to commemorate the 1940 massacre of some 22,000 Polish officers and intelligentsia by Soviet secret police.

Kaczyński and his supporters have continued to assert that Russia somehow had a hand

in the disaster, although international and Polish investigations both concluded that bad weather and pilot error were responsible. Antoni Macierewicz, Kaczyński's deputy who was defence minister from 2015 to 2018, has claimed it was a political assassination without producing evidence. Macierewicz startled NATO colleagues during a walk-through of the alliance's new headquarters in Brussels in 2017, when he went up to a signboard with a timeline of key NATO dates, pulled out a pen and wrote "Smolensk 2010", as if it were a milestone in allied history. (16)

AMERICA FIRST

No sooner was the NATO presence in the region strengthened than Poland began campaigning for more. Many west European governments believe they have gone as far as necessary to signal to Russia that any attack on an ally would trigger a collective response. France, Germany and Italy, among others, contend that NATO should avoid escalating deployments that could provoke an unwelcome Russian response.

Warsaw and the Baltic states, with some support from the United States and Britain, argue that the EFP was a modest first step which needs to be underpinned by viable reinforcement plans and exercises. A 2018 allied summit in Brussels adopted a European Readiness Initiative aimed at ensuring NATO countries can deploy 30 battalions, 30 warships and 30 air squadrons within 30 days by 2020.

At the same time, Poland has stepped up a long-standing campaign for a permanent U.S. military base on its soil, widely seen by Poles as the only reliable insurance. Polish President Andrzej Duda formally submitted the request to President Donald Trump during a White House visit in September 2018, offering to pay at least \$2 billion towards the cost of the facility. Playing to his host's ego, Duda suggested it could be called "Fort Trump". The US leader responded that he was "seriously considering" the proposal. (17)

Congress has required the Department of Defence to report on the feasibility of a permanent base in Poland as part of 2019 budget legislation. The White House and the State Department are seen as supportive, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Defence Secretary James Mattis are sceptical, people familiar with the administration's thinking say. They say Washington does not have an armoured brigade to spare, and that tying one down in Poland to await a hypothetical Russian attack would make US forces less flexible to respond to crises around the world.

Permanently basing a US armoured brigade in Poland has not been discussed in NATO, and allied officials believe the idea would be deeply divisive. Many European allies would see it as undermining the credibility of the existing forward presence and of alliance defence plans for Europe based on reinforcement, damaging NATO's political cohesion. "Having a full time US presence is a dream for many nations but it would be a political minefield," said one NATO

source. "I'm not sure the Poles are aware of how toxic this would be." (18)

Former US Army Europe commander Lieutenant-General Ben Hodges, said a permanent base in Poland was militarily unnecessary for NATO's deterrence and reinforcement strategy, and would be seen by many allies as unnecessarily provocative towards Russia. It would undermine allied cohesion and could be done only by expanding the US army or relocating troops from bases in Texas, Kansas or Colorado, neither of which was politically likely. Moscow might well respond by pressuring Belarus to accept a Russian army brigade based on its soil near the Polish border.

"The Poles shouldn't waste emotional energy asking for something that they're not going to achieve. The big fort idea is not really helpful. It doesn't add military capability"

Ben Hodges,
*Former US Army Europe
commander Lieutenant-General*

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko warned Poland's foreign minister that Russia and Belarus would be forced to make their own deployment in response to a US base. (19)

“The Poles shouldn’t waste emotional energy asking for something that they’re not going to achieve. The big fort idea is not really helpful. It doesn’t add military capability,” Hodges said. “What matters is a permanent commitment, a permanent presence.” (20)

A senior NATO official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was understandable that Poland might want to supplement the insurance it received from NATO, but seeking bilateral side-deals with the United States ran counter to the alliance’s common strategy. “If you start doing that, the whole system of collective defence starts to unravel,” the official said. (21)

However, other U.S. military experts at the Centre for European Policy Analysis say there is a good case for expanding permanent NATO infrastructure in Poland to maximize deterrence against an increasingly aggressive Russia and accommodate rapid U.S. reinforcements.

“Moving east of Berlin is only a start. Permanent infrastructure and forces must be considered the next step - not the last step - toward deterring Russia. In taking that step, we would send a resounding message to allies of America’s unbreakable commitment to the region,” retired colonel Ray Wojcik and Peter B. Doran wrote in a report entitled “Unfinished Business: Why and How the U.S. should establish a Permanent Military Presence on NATO’s Eastern Flank”. (22)



NATO Summit 2018, Brussels: Prime Minister of Belgium Charles Michel ; NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg; Polish President Andrzej Duda; US President Donald Trump

OTHER CHALLENGES

While the government has prioritised the threat of Russian military aggression, Poland faces a range of other security challenges that may be more likely to materialise. The 2017 Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland listed instability on NATO's eastern flank and in Europe's southern neighbourhood and terrorism among key threats. To those should be added cyber attacks, information warfare and energy insecurity. (22)

Scenarios that could pose problems include **a state failure in Ukraine**, perhaps triggered by a widening of Russian military action beyond the Donbass region, leading to a surge of refugees and members of armed militias into Poland. Moscow's violent seizure of three Ukrainian military patrol boats that tried to enter the Sea of Azov in November 2018 highlighted the risk of escalation of what is by no means a frozen conflict.

"A failure of the state in Ukraine would be a huge challenge. There are masses of small arms beyond control, militia groups that no one controls, connected to populist movements. You may have a confessional conflict," a Polish diplomat familiar with the country said. Relations between Warsaw and Kiev have soured since PiS came to power because Poland objected to Ukrainian glorification of World War II anti-communist underground fighters involved in the massacre of Poles. (23)

Another such scenario is the risk of **instability in Belarus** or heightened differences with Moscow leading to a coup in Minsk or a Russian takeover of the former Soviet republic.

Poland may not feel directly threatened by **instability in the Sahel, North Africa and the Middle East or the risk of Islamist terror attacks** on its soil. But such scenarios may draw Warsaw into NATO or EU crisis management operations or coalitions of the willing. They also have the potential to create renewed tensions with EU partners over sharing the burden of refugees. While Polish officials profess to take a 360-degree view of European security, many make clear they see a French-led focus on the south as a distraction from the main threat in the east.

"A failure of the state in Ukraine would be a huge challenge. There are masses of small arms beyond control, militia groups that no one controls, connected to populist movements"

Polish diplomat

A sudden halt in Russian energy supplies would cause disruption in Poland, which relies on Moscow for 90% of its oil and about 60% of gas. That has made Warsaw reluctant to reduce its dependence on domestically produced coal, used to generate about 80% of its electricity, despite EU pressure to reduce carbon emissions to fight climate change.

A 2006 cut-off of Russian gas supplies via Ukraine to western Europe barely affected Poland, which is connected directly through a separate spur of the Yamal pipeline that crosses Belarus. Warsaw is working to reduce reliance on Russian gas by expanding a liquified natural gas (LNG) terminal on the Baltic coast which handles LNG from Qatar, Norway and the United States. It also plans to start building a gas pipeline from Norway in 2020, due to come on stream in 2022, when its long-term supply contract with Russian monopoly Gazprom expires. (24)

Poland has not suffered **cyber attacks** on the scale launched against the Baltic states, notably a major assault attributed to Russian hackers against Estonia in 2007. However, officials report a steady increase in attacks on government services and private companies. In 2017, Defence Minister Macierewicz said cyber attacks on the defence ministry and other institutions were running at an average of one a week. He announced the creation of a "cyber army" numbering up to 1,000 soldiers capable of waging cyber warfare. (25)

The previous government published a national cyber security doctrine in 2015, but little action seems to have resulted. NATO sources say Warsaw has been slow to engage with other allies on cyber security and does not participate pro-actively in alliance initiatives.

Intelligence officials say Poland is also vulnerable to **Russian information warfare** because of its bitter internal political divisions and tense relations with neighbours. For example, social

media foment the grievances of descendants of Poles deported from western Ukraine.

"Russia is fully aware of the anti-Russian sentiment of broad swathes of Polish society, suggesting cooperation is unlikely to bear fruit, so instead it tries to support Polish nationalist forces that are very critical of NATO and the EU," said Grzegorz Małeckie, a former head of the Polish foreign intelligence service. Far-right pan-Slavic activists were given a platform on Russia's Sputnik news service and invited to be election observers in annexed Crimea. Moscow was also trying to drive a wedge between Warsaw and EU and NATO allies over human rights issues. (26)

Arguably the largest security threat to Poland's golden era lies in its deteriorating relationship with the European Union, and the main west European powers, which we shall examine in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

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- (9) Conversation with the author, 2003
- (10) https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm
- (11) NATO official interview with the author, September 2018
- (12) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (13) https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf
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- (15) Interviews with the author, September 2018
- (16) Two witnesses recounted the incident to the author
- (17) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-poland/poland-suggests-fort-trump-as-u-s-weighs-military-base-idUSKCN1LY2NJ>
- (18) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (19) <https://www.unian.info/world/10324605-belarus-leader-vows-joint-response-with-russia-to-setting-up-of-u-s-military-base-in-poland.html>
- (20) Interview with the author, October 2018; see also: <https://www.politico.eu/article/dont-put-us-bases-in-poland/>
- (21) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (22) The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, declassified version: http://en.mon.gov.pl/p/pliki/dokumenty/rozne/2017/07/korp_web_13_06_2017.pdf
- (23) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (24) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-energy-coalition/germany-reaches-deal-to-boost-renewable-energy-capacity-spd-idUSKCN1N5228>
- (25) <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/331004,Poland-targeted-by-spate-of-cyber-attacks-defence-minister>
- (26) Interview with the author, September 2018



High Representative Vice President of European Commission Federica Mogherini meets with Polish President Andrzej Duda at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, June 2, 2016

CHAPTER 2

LOSING EUROPE

THREE LEGS

For a quarter of a century after the fall of communism, Poland's security policy rested on three legs – membership of NATO and the European Union and strong bilateral relations with the United States and Germany. This was the consensus of a broad range of Polish governments from post-communists to the liberal centre-right.

While the EU was seen more as a guarantee of economic than of geopolitical security, successive governments understood that the Union was a global standard setter, an amplifier of Polish influence and a crucial player in working to stabilise its fragile eastern neighbourhood. Although Poland has stayed out of the euro, partly out of caution due to the

debt crisis that shook the currency area from 2010, its ambition was to be at the centre of EU integration.

That approach changed radically in 2015 when Jarosław Kaczyński's PiS government embarked on a confrontation course with Brussels and major European partners through bilateral slights, a barrage of hostile statements and an assault on judicial independence which the European Commission said was in breach of EU treaty provisions on the rule of law.

For the last three years, Poland has been sawing through the European leg of its security triad. This is particularly damaging to Polish interests as it comes when the EU is

negotiating on the next seven-year budget plan for the period from 2021, with fewer resources available because the United Kingdom – Warsaw's closest ally in the EU – is leaving the Union.

The new administration began by rescinding its predecessor's agreement to admit 6,200 refugees as a gesture of solidarity with EU partners, especially Germany, which had taken in more than a million mostly Muslim refugees and migrants fleeing the Syrian civil war and other Middle East and central Asian trouble spots mostly via Turkey and Greece.

Kaczyński said in a campaign speech that the refugees could be carrying "parasites and protozoa" and spread infectious diseases. Admitting asylum seekers, he later told the newspaper *Gazeta Polska Codzienna*, would mean that Poland "would have to completely change our culture and radically lower the level of safety in our country." (1)

The conservative nationalist leader said EU membership was "the shortest way for Poland to achieve parity when it comes to living standards ... but that does not mean we should repeat the mistakes of the West and become infected with social diseases that dominate there", in a coded reference to everything from multiculturalism to gay marriage and abortion. (2)

Since it joined the EU, Poland has received more in economic development funds than any other member state, including those that have been members for decades.

Yet President Andrzej Duda, a former PiS politician, has called the EU "an illusory community from which there are few results for us" and has threatened to call a referendum to entrench the primacy of the Polish constitution over EU law. That would contradict EU treaties. (3)

OFFENDING EUROPE'S POWERS

Poland's relations with Germany blossomed from the 1990s. Both Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his successor, Gerhard Schröder, were strongly supportive of Warsaw's integration into NATO and the EU and a German, Günter Verheugen, was the determined European commissioner who concluded the negotiations that led to the EU's eastward enlargement in 2004.

"The traditional Polish nightmare of being squeezed between two large neighbours, Germany and Russia, was disappearing surprisingly rapidly, perhaps due to Kohl's support," Verheugen said. "Poland knew there was no risk from Germany from the 1990s onwards. I had hoped in 2004 that Poland's obsession with the security threat from Russia would ease and become a bit more realistic. That hasn't happened." (4)

The PiS government took a series of early actions that offended Germany and France, the two leading EU powers.

In slights to Paris, it scrapped a planned purchase of 50 Airbus Caracal helicopters

and pulled Poland out of the multinational Eurocorps command. And it launched steps to prepare a claim for massive war reparations from Germany, more than 70 years after the end of World War II.

Berlin says Warsaw officially renounced such payments in 1953, and that Germany paid Poland €1.3 billion in the early 1990s when treaties on German reunification enshrined their border along the Oder and Neisse rivers.

Interviewed on an official visit to Germany in October 2018, Duda said the reparations problem had not been settled. “The damage caused during the war was never compensated for.” (5)

The Polish parliamentary analysis office concluded there was a legal basis for Warsaw to demand damages. And PiS lawmaker Arkadiusz Mularczyk, tasked with investigating the reparations question, asserted that Germany owed Poland €690 billion – equivalent to more than one year’s Polish gross domestic product.

Whether the government seriously intends to submit a formal reparations claim, or is simply using the threat to try to put Germany on the defensive and extract concessions on the future EU budget or in its stand-off with Brussels over the rule of law is unclear.

What seems certain is that PiS will keep harping on the issue to rally its nationalist supporters ahead of European and national parliamentary elections in 2019 and a presidential election in

2020, at the risk of poisoning Polish-German relations for an extended period.

The PiS government also stepped up Poland’s long-standing hostility to the planned Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea, urging the United States to impose extraterritorial sanctions on companies involved in the project. (6) Although Trump repeatedly criticised the project and warned Berlin against dependency on Russian energy supplies, the US president said that he did not plan to use sanctions against it.

“Poland knew there was no risk from Germany from the 1990s onwards”

Günter Verheugen,
former European Commissioner

Poland has had a series of clashes with France over arms procurement, European defence integration and the EU’s posted workers directive, as well as French criticism of fundamental rights under the PiS government. Relations soured to the point where Kaczyński branded President Emmanuel Macron “the celebrity candidate”, and the French leader accused Poland of treating the EU like a cash machine while defying its values.

Macron has arguably made mistakes by ostracising Poland and polarising the European debate as an existential fight between

pro-European progressives and anti-European nationalists with nothing in-between, playing to the French public’s enduring dislike of the EU enlargement. He has irked not only Poland but other central European and Nordic allies by calling for “European strategic autonomy” and a “real European army”, raising what they see as the dangerous illusion that the EU could defend itself without the United States.

The previous Polish government did make token contributions to an EU training mission in Mali and a UN mission in the Central African Republic following French interventions there. And France showed its reciprocal concern for security in the east by contributing troops to NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia, although Poland and the Baltic states would have preferred that Paris take greater responsibility as a framework nation, like Britain and Germany.

It was the challenge to European liberal values represented by the PiS government’s moves to dismantle the independence of the judiciary, turn public broadcasters into propaganda outlets and purge the civil service, allying itself with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s “illiberal democracy”, that has done most to alienate Poland’s EU partners.

The European Commission invoked Article VII of the EU treaty, which can ultimately lead to a member state losing its voting rights, for the first time over Poland’s alleged violations of the rule of law. The government refused to rescind controversial reforms, which include empowering it to remove up to 40% of Supreme

“The damage caused during the war was never compensated for”

Andrzej Duda,
President of Poland

Court judges and granting the justice minister new powers to discipline judges. The case is now before the European Court of Justice, which has issued an interim injunction halting the enforced retirement of judges and the appointment of new ones.

The battle over the rule of law could have a financial as well as a political cost. Poland would receive 11% less in EU cohesion funds in the period 2021-27 if the overall budget was reduced pro rata due to the departure of the United Kingdom, a major net contributor. However, the European Commission has proposed a 23% reduction, partly reflecting Poland’s economic progress but also signalling widespread irritation among its EU partners.

Moreover, the Commission has proposed at the instigation of Paris and Berlin tying development funds to compliance with EU standards on the rule of law, arguing that without an independent judiciary, the proper disbursement of community funds cannot be supervised. Whether or not such conditionality is embedded in the future budget, it was a warning shot.

BYE-BYE BRITAIN

For a quarter of a century, the United Kingdom was Poland's strongest advocate in the European Union. While German support for Polish EU accession may have been more influential, London's outspoken backing for EU enlargement, its Atlanticism and its preference for a looser Europe with more national sovereignty instead of ever closer union made it Warsaw's best friend in the bloc.

The UK and Poland shared a strong priority for NATO and a suspicion of EU defence initiatives, seen as risking duplication with the Atlantic Alliance and potentially weakening Europe's strategic coupling with the United States. They also shared a firm line towards Russia.

While Germany and France insisted on a seven-year transition period after accession in 2004 before allowing Poles free movement to work in the EU, the UK threw its doors open to workers from the new member states from day one. Polish job-seekers poured into the UK and nearly one million Poles (916,000 in the 2015 census) now reside in the country.

Months before Britons voted to leave the Union in 2016, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski declared the UK Poland's most important EU partner. That gives a measure of Warsaw's loss with the UK's departure in 2019.

PiS and the UK Conservative party were ideological bedfellows in the European



New NATO Headquarters Handover Ceremony and Fly-past - Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in Brussels : Andrzej Duda (President, Poland), Mark Rutte (Prime Minister, the Netherlands), Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic (President, Croatia), Donald Trump (President, United States) and Miro Cerar (Prime Minister, Slovenia)

Conservatives and Reformists group in the European Parliament, the fourth largest. The group’s influence is set to shrivel in the 2019 elections after Brexit.

“The UK leaving the EU is a serious geostrategic threat that few people realise. It weakens NATO and the EU and harms Poland,” said Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, a veteran member of the EU legislature who was involved in the accession process from the outset. (7)

To a degree, Polish officials still seem in denial. Kaczyński made one of his rare foreign visits to London after the UK had voted to leave the EU and Poland signed a bilateral defence treaty with Britain in 2017. They agreed to hold bilateral summits every two years.

“The UK leaving the EU is a serious geostrategic threat that few people realise. It weakens NATO and the EU and harms Poland”

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski,
Member of the European Parliament

Britain has 150 soldiers in Poland as part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence and plans to contribute 1,000 troops to NATO’s Very High Readiness Joint Task Force when Poland takes the rotating command in 2020. But none of this can replace the loss of Warsaw’s strongest supporter inside the EU.

MAKING EUROPE WORK FOR POLAND

An informal diplomatic grouping of Germany, France and Poland, named the Weimar Triangle after the venue of the first meeting, was established in 1991 to offer the newly democratic country a seat in the cockpit of European leadership even before it joined the EU and NATO. It has never fulfilled its potential, partly due to French reluctance. Today it resembles a diplomatic Bermuda Triangle.

Attempts to revive the format on the 25th anniversary in 2016 foundered over the new Polish government’s policies. Waszczykowski declared that the Weimar Triangle had lost its relevance for his country.

In its first decade as an EU member, Poland was often described by diplomats as “punching above its weight”. It was a player in foreign, security and neighbourhood policy. Indeed, Warsaw tried during its first presidency of the bloc in 2011 to clinch agreement on creating an EU operational headquarters to conduct military missions when NATO was not involved. Ironically, it was the UK, Warsaw’s buddy, that blocked that move.

“It’s hard work to get the EU to do Poland’s bidding, particularly when your economy is still catching up and you are the biggest net beneficiary of EU funds,” said Sikorski, who was foreign minister from 2007 to 2014. “We were managing to persuade the EU to do what

we wanted. It can't be achieved by destroying the rule of law in your own country." (8)

He cited as an example, the creation in 2009 of the Eastern Partnership, a joint Polish-Swedish initiative to bring Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine closer to the EU through trade, aid, economic development and institution-building with periodic summits.

Designed in part to balance the Union for the Mediterranean established at France's initiative with southern neighbours in 2008, the Eastern Partnership was launched after the Russia-Georgia war of 2008. NATO had sent contradictory signals at a summit in Bucharest, declaring that Ukraine and Georgia would one day join the alliance but taking no practical steps to bring them closer. The belief at the time was the Moscow would find a gradual EU rapprochement with countries in their "common neighbourhood" less threatening than NATO.

Critics such as Verheugen say launching the Eastern Partnership without involving Russia turned it into a zero-sum game in which former Soviet republics were effectively pressed to choose between being part of Brussels' or Moscow's sphere of influence. Armenia and Belarus opted to join Russia's Eurasian Economic Union. Azerbaijan sat on the fence. Ukraine paid a high price for choosing an ambitious association agreement with the EU.

Recognition of Poland's leading role came with the election of former prime minister Jerzy Buzek as president of the European Parliament

the first central European to hold a top EU post, and above all with the choice of Donald Tusk, head of the centre-right Civic Platform government, to be president of the European Council in 2014.

Ironically, Tusk's position in Brussels was one reason why the PiS government adopted such a confrontational approach when it took power. Kaczyński held Tusk partly responsible for the plane crash in which his brother died, and he sees the former premier as his most potent political rival. PiS was determined to demolish Tusk's image at home before he might attempt a possible comeback as prime minister or president.

"We were managing to persuade the EU to do what we wanted. It can't be achieved by destroying the rule of law in your own country"

Radosław Sikorski,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (2007-2014)

Marcin Zaborowski, a political scientist and former director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, said there were many signs that Poland had lost influence in the EU since 2015.

While the UK had chosen of its own accord to stay out of key European projects such as the single currency and the open-border Schengen zone, leading eventually to the Brexit vote, "The situation with Poland is now even more radical because it is not Warsaw that decides to

exclude itself from EU initiatives, but it is simply omitted and excluded by others,” he said. (9)

Although it hosts the EU border agency Frontex, Poland was not involved in a summit of 16 EU and Balkan countries on managing borders and migration in June 2018 because of its refusal to take any share of refugees arriving in the Union.

Nor was Warsaw invited, despite its strong military tradition, to join the French-led European Intervention Initiative of nine countries to develop a common strategic culture and prepare for possible actions outside Europe where NATO is not engaged. French officials cited the rule of law dispute and Poland’s general unconstructive attitude to EU integration.

Some western European officials are concerned that hardliners in the Trump administration may be using Warsaw as a wedge to weaken or even break up the EU. (10)

This may be exaggerated. Despite its bluster against Brussels, the Polish government has remained aligned with EU policies on trade, climate change, Iran, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and multilateral governance rather than siding with the Trump administration. Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz has said Poland should act as a bridge between US and European views and has urged understanding for Washington’s concerns about Iran. But diplomats say Warsaw has not raised objections to EU positions in the Foreign Affairs Council.

“Talk is cheap. They talk about European strategic autonomy but we don’t see any serious financial effort”

a Polish official

After some hesitation, Poland joined the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on defence and has signed up for six of the 17 initial projects. But Polish officials are sceptical about whether the EU effort will generate greater defence spending and increase military capabilities.

“Talk is cheap. They talk about European strategic autonomy but we don’t see any serious financial effort,” one said. “We are a little suspicious when we hear strategic autonomy invoked against the backdrop of transatlantic tensions. Let’s talk seriously: who would provide Europe’s territorial defence if not NATO, and what would NATO be without the United States?” (11)

EASTERN ALTERNATIVES

Asked who would be Poland’s best friend in the Union after Brexit, Polish officials interviewed for this study were unable to name a single major member state.

One said cooperation with Sweden would be more important after Brexit, lamenting: “We will miss the UK. It’s so stupid.” (12)

Another said the EU was an organisation with shifting coalitions depending on the issue.

Poland was close to France on agriculture, close to Germany on fiscal discipline, close to Sweden and Denmark on free trade, allied with other central and east European countries in supporting free movement of labour and a big cohesion budget, and close to Hungary on issues of national sovereignty and Christian values, the second official said. (13)

Yet another official said Poland was wielding influence with its central European partners – Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – in the Visegrád Group, a central European group which holds annual summits and promotes cooperation on issues such as economic development and defence, and more widely with central and east European countries through the US-backed Three Seas Initiative grouping 12 countries. (14)

While those circles may be useful to convince the core PiS electorate that Poland is not isolated in Europe, they carry limited weight in EU politics. Their members' interests do not always coincide, and few of those countries want to be led by a Poland that is at loggerheads with the EU over fundamental rights.

The Three Seas Initiative is officially intended to promote north-south infrastructure links such as roads, rail links and pipelines from the Baltic to the Adriatic and the Black Sea. Trump attended the first summit in Warsaw in 2017, partly because Washington hopes to sell its liquified natural gas across the region, but also because it was a political counterweight to Germany and France.

Hungary may be an ally willing to shield Poland from EU punishment over the rule of law, but it does not share Warsaw's view of Russia. Orbán has cultivated a political friendship with Putin, a fellow "illiberal democrat", and welcomed him to Budapest after the Russian annexation of Crimea. Russia's Rosatom is renovating and expanding Hungary's sole nuclear power plant with Russian finance.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia have avoided backing Warsaw over the rule of law. All three other Visegrád countries have far more important bilateral economic interests with Germany than with Poland. Slovakia is a member of the eurozone, and hence of the EU's core, as are the three Baltic states, which are closer to Nordic EU members Sweden, Finland and Denmark and also do not support Poland on the rule of law.

Bulgaria and Romania welcome Polish support for their drive for more NATO attention to Black Sea security. But both are keen to join the euro as soon as possible and stand to gain extra development funds in the next EU budget, so they are not constant allies in Brussels.

Poland has attended the so-called 16+1 summits that China holds with central and eastern EU member states plus non-EU Western Balkans countries. It is keen to attract Chinese investment, but unlike Hungary and some other southeast European states, it has not tried to block EU criticism of Chinese policies. Poland has held talks with China about investing in a planned Central Transportation Port, an airport and logistics

centre due to be built by 2027, 40 km from Warsaw. But Beijing has made no commitment and for the foreseeable future, EU funding for infrastructure in Poland and central Europe will dwarf proposed Chinese projects under Beijing’s Belt and Road initiative.

The European Union takes 80% of Poland’s exports and provides 60% of its imports. China is not among Poland’s top 10 export markets, although it is its second biggest supplier with 11% of the Polish market, after Germany with 22.8%. (15)

SLOUCHING TOWARDS POLEXIT?

All Polish governments have been sceptical about federalist visions of European integration and generally favoured a looser Europe of nations. But in the words of Wojciech Przybylski, editor-in-chief of *Visegrád Insight* and chairman of the *Res Publica Foundation* in Warsaw, “The previous government did a better job of playing the European game in the national interest, while showing themselves to be ‘good Europeans’.” Kaczyński looks at the EU as a failed project that cannot achieve its ambitions.” (16)

PiS leaders reject any suggestion that their confrontational approach to Brussels might lead eventually to Poland leaving the EU. Kaczyński and others point to polls showing public support for EU membership is among the highest in any member state.

“Kaczyński looks at the EU as a failed project that cannot achieve its ambitions.”

Wojciech Przybylski,
Editor-in-chief of Visegrád Insight and chairman of the Res Publica Foundation

“We have always been pro-European, that is, in favour of Poland remaining in the EU, and we still are. Nothing has changed,” he said in an interview with *Polsat News* in October 2018. (17)

PiS ministers stress their commitment to the Single Market as the core of European integration, accusing west European countries of protectionism. They say they just seek a reformed Union with fewer intrusive powers for the Commission and more respect for national sovereignty, culture and traditions. And they vow to block efforts by Macron to develop a two-speed Europe with the eurozone in the vanguard and Poland in the slow lane.

Yet their defiance of EU values and institutions over the rule of law and their determination to stay out of the euro could hasten the very two-speed Europe they oppose. Growing political estrangement, compounded by dwindling receipts from EU coffers, may eventually lead to a campaign by nationalist forces for Poland to leave.

Brexit shows how easily that can happen, and how hard it is to defeat such forces once they are unleashed.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) <https://www.politico.eu/article/politics-nationalism-and-religion-explain-why-poland-doesnt-want-refugees/>
- (2) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-politics/defiant-kaczynski-says-poland-must-avoid-eus-social-diseases-idUSKCN1LI0J2>
- (3) <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-andrzej-duda-rule-of-law-ups-the-ante-against-brussels/>
- (4) Interview with the author, July 2018
- (5) Duda Bild
- (6) Macierewicz sanctions Reuters
- (7) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (8) Interview with the author, July 2018
- (9) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (10) Several EU diplomats spontaneously mentioned this possibility in conversations in 2018
- (11) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (12) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (13) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (14) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (15) <http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/prices-trade/trade/foreign-trade-turnover-of-goods-in-total-and-by-countries-in-january-august-2018,1,75.html>
- (16) Interview with the author, July 2018
- (17) <https://rmx.news/content/we-are-pro-european-says-kaczynski>



CHAPTER 3

“MARCH, MARCH, DABROWSKI!”

SUPPORT FOR DEFENCE

Poland has a strong historical military tradition and enjoys widespread public support for defence and no shortage of volunteers for its armed forces. Having lost their independence repeatedly, Poles need no convincing of the importance of a strong defence.

However, the defence ministry, the armed forces and the security services have endured a massive, politically driven turnover in the last three years which has been disruptive, demoralising and caused delays in military modernisation plans.

The defence budget has been set to at least 1.95% of Gross Domestic Product by law since 2001. Poland is one of a handful of European allies that currently meet NATO's target of 2% a year. It amounted to 41.1 billion zloty (€9.6 billion) in 2018. President Andrzej Duda signed a law in 2017 setting the objective of raising military spending to 2.5% of GDP a year by 2030.

Poland also fulfils NATO's target of spending at least 20% of the defence budget on equipment. By NATO criteria, it is set to

spend 23.95% of the 2018 budget on kit. The government's own breakdown puts total spending on "capital investment" at 26.9%. Salaries and allowances account for 24.3% of the budget and pensions 19.8%. It has not made clear where it would take the \$2 billion promised towards a US base if the offer were accepted. Some of the money might come from NATO and EU infrastructure funding.

In an opinion poll taken in 2017 for the International Republican Institute, 47% of Poles agreed with the statement that "current security threats mean Poland should invest more money in defence and security, even if this means having less money available for things like pensions, healthcare, and education". Only 38% said the security situation was not serious enough to warrant extra defence spending. (1)

In the Pew Research Centre global attitudes survey the previous year, the Poles and Dutch were the only Europeans who favoured increasing military expenditure. Poles also showed the strongest support of any European nation for using armed force to defeat terrorism. (2)

DISRUPTIVE PURGE

The sweeping purge initiated by Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz after PiS took power decapitated the armed forces and the security services. An estimated 30 generals and 200 colonels were forced out, resigned or took voluntary retirement. (3)

According to the ministry's own figures, 90% of leading positions were replaced in the General Staff, responsible for strategic planning, and 82% in the General Command, which has operational control. Those fired included the heads of the General Staff, the navy, air force and the arms procurement agency as well as all the security services.

"They destroyed the objective framework for picking the best and letting go the weakest officers"

Grzegorz Małecki,
Former head of the foreign intelligence service

Officially justified as a clean-out of lingering communist influence, Polish and foreign experts agree the upheaval was overwhelmingly driven by domestic politics. Most of those removed were appointed by the previous Civic Platform government and were too young to have been officers in the communist era, 26 years earlier. Loyalty trumped professionalism.

"It was a purely political move designed to hit the former minister of defence. It destabilised the system because there were no objective criteria for who was fired and who promoted. You lost good young men aged 40 to 45. They destroyed the objective framework for picking the best and letting go the weakest officers," said Grzegorz Małecki, a former head of the foreign intelligence service. (4)

The churn also made it harder for US and NATO counterparts to work effectively with the Polish military.

"Those major personnel changes were in most cases not helpful," a former US official involved in bilateral defence relations said. "It's hard to know who to talk to get things done. The reorganisation has not had a smooth landing yet." (5)

Many of the officers replaced had trained in the United States or at NATO or European staff colleges and seen service with NATO- or US-led coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Some great guys were forced to leave early. There was a lot of human capital that did not need to be sidelined," the former US official said.

Even NATO-affiliated installations were hit by the purge. Military police staged a night-time raid on a joint Polish-Slovakian Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence, described by NATO as "the primary hub of NATO expertise in military counter-intelligence", removing key staff and sealing the premises. (6)

HOME ARMY REDUX?

Antoni Macierewicz, the most ideological nationalist in the government, was eventually replaced as part of a reshuffle that removed some of the most confrontational figures from positions involved in international relations.

His main legacy was to establish the Territorial Defence Force (TDF), a lightly armed home guard of part-time soldiers, due to number 53,000 by 2019 and intended to counter Russian hybrid warfare operations, slow down enemy advances in wartime and guard strategic infrastructure. More than 15,000 volunteers had signed up by late 2018 and some had begun to receive basic training, though infrastructure and trainers were in short supply.

Poland ended conscription in 2008 and the regular armed forces had shrunk to 105,000. In the Cold War, the Polish military was earmarked to operate against Denmark and the Netherlands in case of an armed conflict. They were never trained or configured for territorial defence and most of their bases are in western Poland.

“The best solution was to create volunteer forces that would raise the manpower of the army and perform two main tasks – in eastern Poland, to postpone, delay and slow down a Russian invasion, threaten enemy communication and supply lines; in western Poland, to protect infrastructure for military support, guard storage, bridges, airports, ports, railheads,” said Professor Przemysław

Żurawski vel Grajewski, one of the intellectual fathers of the concept. He compared it to the long-standing territorial defence strategy of countries such as Finland and Switzerland. (7)

Ideologically, the TDF fits in with the tradition of the Home Army which conducted underground resistance against the Nazis during the World War II occupation culminating in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, which PiS has glorified as embodying Polish patriotism and fighting spirit, even though the armed revolt was crushed with appalling casualties and destruction.

Controversially, the TDF is not integrated into the armed forces chain of command but answers directly to the minister of defence. It is also not declared to NATO as part of Poland’s available forces. This has caused some perplexity at NATO headquarters and prompted accusations from the opposition, denied by the government, that PiS was creating a militia-type force that might be used in case of domestic political unrest.

A recently retired colonel said war games had shown that the TDF would be swept away within two days unless it was supported by attack helicopters. But Poland’s Soviet-era helicopters are obsolete and it has not begun to procure modern ones. Financial resources were being diverted from operational units needed in case of war to pay for the TDF, the ex-officer said. (8)

Some strategists say the priority given to the TDF suggests planning for a long guerrilla struggle against a hostile occupation force,

modelled on the Home Army. This would run counter to NATO’s strategy of forward defence and rapid reinforcement, designed to stop an aggressor at or near the alliance’s eastern border.

However, supporters of the concept say a light infantry reserve force armed with anti-tank weapons and small arms could act as a “porcupine” force in support of the regular army to slow down and complicate an enemy advance. “It’s cheaper than two more tank divisions that Poland can’t afford,” one Western military attaché said. (9)

“TIER ONE ALLY”

The regular armed forces have undergone a slow transformation since the end of the Cold War with the emphasis until 2014 on providing effective but small expeditionary warfare capabilities for alliance operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan and the US-led coalition in Iraq. NATO and US partners give the Poles high marks, both for political support and military competence.



The NATO flag is raised during the Opening Ceremony for Ex STEADFAST JAZZ at the Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, on Nov. 3, 2013

Since 1991, Poland has sought to position itself as a “tier one ally” of the United States within its limited means. It began by providing special operation forces in Haiti in 1994, then helping capture Bosnian Serb war criminals in the Balkans.

“They’ve always been first to respond. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the Poles were among the first boots on the ground with the US, British and Australians,” a former US officer who worked closely with Polish forces recalls. “In Iraq, Poland volunteered a significant role when we needed a western nation to provide a multinational division capability. They served for five years with 33 nations under their umbrella.” (10)

In Afghanistan, Poland participated in the US-led coalition that invaded the country to overthrow the Taliban government in 2002 and Polish forces stayed in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force until 2014, losing 43 soldiers and two civilian army employees. (11)

The Poles won high marks from the allies for the way they took responsibility for running security in Ghazni province for five years from 2008 to 2013. In total more than 28,000 Polish soldiers and army personnel served in Afghanistan.

After the Russian military action in Ukraine in 2014, Warsaw decided to pull back from major overseas commitments and focus on territorial defence. In 2016, Poland sent four F16 fighters never previously deployed abroad to join the international coalition against Islamic State fighters in Iraq.

“In Afghanistan and Iraq, the Poles were among the first boots on the ground with the US, British and Australians”

a former US officer

Poland also provided covert support for the United States by making available a restricted military area as a secret CIA “black site” where prisoners captured in Afghanistan, including Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected Al-Qaeda mastermind of the 2001 9/11 attacks on the United States, were held and interrogated after being transferred under the “extraordinary rendition” programme. Former president Aleksander Kwaśniewski confirmed in 2014 that he had agreed to host the “black site” but denied having known that prisoners were tortured there. (12)

MODERNISATION ZIG-ZAG

Like many European militaries, the Polish armed forces are struggling to keep elderly or obsolete kit working while modernising their equipment within tight budget constraints. Two-thirds of the services’ inventory is still Soviet-era materiel, including T-72 tanks, MiG-29 and Su-22 combat aircraft, Mi-24 attack helicopters and air defence missiles.

The government adopted a 10-year technical modernisation plan in 2013 designed to pump 91.5 billion zloty (€21.3 billion) into defence

equipment and armaments by 2022. However, the long-term commitment to upgrading helicopters, navy vessels, air and missile defence systems, drones and tanks has been only partially implemented and several tenders have been cancelled or put on hold since the change of government.

Priorities keep changing, to the frustration of companies and foreign governments bidding to supply the armed forces and sometimes to the embarrassment of Poland's own leaders. President Duda and his defence minister had embarked on an official visit to Australia in August 2018 when the government back home decided to pull out of a letter of intent to buy two used Adelaide-class frigates as a stopgap until Poland builds a next generation of warships, if it ever does. (13)

One of Macierewicz's first moves in 2016 was to end negotiations with Airbus for the purchase of 50 Caracal multi-role military transport helicopters worth about €2.5 billion, which would have been manufactured in Poland with significant technology transfers. Macierewicz initially said Warsaw would buy eight US Black Hawk helicopters off the shelf. That deal failed to materialise. Then the ministry sought to buy two lots of helicopters, eight for combat search and rescue, and eight for navy anti-submarine tasks. But it withdrew the invitation to submit final offers in June 2018.

Defence Minister Mariusz Błaszczak said the helicopter acquisition would be reprioritised against other purchases. The 2017 defence concept put more emphasis on the need

for modern anti-tank attack helicopters, but despite repeated statements no tender has been issued.

The ministry gave top priority to upgrading air defences. The one major order of new equipment that went ahead was the \$4.75 billion purchase of US Patriot missiles in 2018. The initial order was for two batteries of four firing units for delivery in 2022, with a second phase order expected before the end of the year. Defence analyst Tomasz Smura of the Casimir Pulaski Foundation said Poland was paying a high price to get the state-of-the-art system as it enters service with US forces. Romania bought seven firing units off the shelf for half the price, he noted. "Probably the price was due to our demands for advanced technical specifications and industrial offsets." (14)

The Polish air force is the best equipped of the services, with 48 U.S. F-16 C/D fighters ordered as soon as Poland had completed its EU accession negotiations and delivered in 2006-7. The 2017 defence concept envisaged the purchase of fifth generation fighters around 2025. Polish officials have said they may buy the US F-35 fighter rather than European rivals to replace its aging Soviet Su-22 and MiG-29 warplanes.

The Polish army boasts more tanks than the German Bundeswehr. Nearly 250 were acquired from German stocks after the end of the Cold War. Warsaw signed a contract with Germany's Rheinmetall in 2016 to upgrade 128 Leopard 2 tanks in conjunction

with state-owned defence company PGZ. In October 2018, Poland sent a letter of request to buy the Lockheed-Martin HIMARS multiple launch rocket system off the shelf from the US government with Foreign Military Sales credits rather than share production.

Sikorski and other politicians acknowledged that buying US equipment was partly an attempt to lock the United States into Poland's defence, as well as gaining interoperability and training with the West's most potent military power.

"I see the 82nd Airborne Division landing in Poland for exercises. I don't see the French foreign legion landing here," a Polish official said of the Caracal helicopter cancellation. (15)

But officials point to the tank modernisation deal as evidence that Warsaw's acquisition policy is not just "America first" and that it is willing to participate in European armaments cooperation provided its own defence industry obtains a fair work share. They note that Poland has also manufactured a version of Finnish Patria armoured vehicles and would like to join a Franco-German consortium working on a future European land combat system.

The navy is in the worst situation. It was never considered a priority even in Soviet times and much of its equipment obsolete. Its two hand-me-down US frigates are nearing the end of life, as are its four Norwegian surplus submarines and its amphibious landing ships.

The modernisation programme was meant to change that by providing three new submarines, three modern corvettes and three patrol ships with mine countermeasure functions. The submarine tender, reported to be worth about \$2.7 billion, is the most advanced with French, German and Swedish companies bidding for the work. But experts say there is no funding available for any of these projects and the process was slowed down after yet more personnel changes in the defence ministry's procurement arm.

"I see the 82nd Airborne Division landing in Poland for exercises. I don't see the French foreign legion landing here"

a Polish official

Some Polish officials are not convinced the country needs significant naval forces, given the changing nature of warfare with the growth of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) weapons. They note that the navy played no role when Poland was invaded in 1939, although three destroyers escaped to the UK and took part in later naval campaigns. These officials suggest Poland would do better to develop its own A2/AD capability and coastal defence.

Ian Brzezinski, a defence consultant and former US Department of Defence official dealing with NATO and central and eastern Europe, suggested Poland should team up militarily with non-NATO member Sweden, which has

increasingly close cooperation with the alliance, to counter Russian power in the Baltic Sea.

“Why are we all worried about a Russian A2/AD zone in the Baltic when the whole Baltic is almost a Western lake? Sweden has a great navy and Poland has a great air force. They could combine their air, surface and submarine operations to basically shut down the Baltic Sea if needed,” Brzezinski said, noting that both countries were acquiring US Patriot air defence missiles. (16)

“Sweden has a great navy and Poland has a great air force. They could combine their air, surface and submarine operations to basically shut down the Baltic Sea if needed”

*Ian Brzezinski,
former US defence department consultant*

Diplomats said a NATO-Sweden host nation support agreement signed in 2016 provides for allied forces to operate from Sweden’s Gotland Island in the Baltic in crisis or wartime. Stockholm stationed troops on Gotland for the first time in decades in 2016 in response to the perceived increased threat from Russia. (17)

LOST IN CYBERSPACE?

While Polish policymakers tend to focus on the “heavy metal” end of hard security, they may be getting behind the curve on the emerging threats of cyber and information warfare. Several actors have a role in cybersecurity including the foreign, defence and digital affairs ministries, the armed forces and the intelligence services.

The division of responsibilities among those bodies is unclear, leading to occasional clashes of competence and inaction where institutions pass the buck to each other. While the National Security Bureau in the president’s office has developed and published a Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of Poland for 2017-22, a non-binding document setting an overall direction rather than implementing any specific actions.

The main improvements in cybersecurity are due to the implementation of EU legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the Security of Network and Information Systems directive, and cooperation with Computer Emergency Response Teams of the EU institutions and other member states.

Meanwhile, Poland is lagging in other aspects of cyber security such as information warfare used by Russia, which may have consequences for the three major elections due in 2019 and 2020, for the European Parliament, the Polish parliament and the presidency.

INDUSTRIAL MONSTER

No Polish government since the end of the Cold War has come to terms with overhauling the country's inefficient defence industry and making it more competitive. Successive administrations have bowed to pressure from trade unions and political forces to preserve jobs and hand contracts on a non-competitive basis to what is now the state-controlled conglomerate PGZ.

This giant holding company groups 60 firms with 17,500 direct employees and another 30,000 working for sub-contractors. It manufactures a range of weaponry for the Polish armed forces and has some joint ventures with foreign suppliers, but exports very little and is seen as a den of political patronage, bureaucracy and inefficiency. The PiS government transferred control of PGZ from the treasury to the ministry of defence, placing the only significant defence contractor directly under the management of its main client.

“This has merged the roles of buyer and seller, killing off whatever competitive instruments remained in the system,” Marcin Zaborowski wrote in an analysis for the European Council on Foreign Relations. “As a result, the MoD now has a direct interest in ensuring that PGZ has enough orders to occupy its workforce and maintain its operations. Armed with this knowledge, the group no longer has to fear competition or invest in research and development.” (18)

“Some people in the European Parliament say we are creating European defence to be independent of the United States. But without the American contribution, the security of our continent would be in danger”

Anna Fotyga,
*Chair of the European Parliament
Subcommittee on Security and Defence and
former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs*

PGZ has changed chief executive four times since PiS took power. With an annual turnover of 4.5 billion zloty (€1.05 billion) it reported exports of just under 800 million zloty (€187 million) in 2017. It made a book loss and is poorly capitalised.

A defence industry insider said PGZ relied on three revenue streams, none of which was competitively earned – domestic contracts from the defence ministry with no questions asked; soft export markets in developing African and Asian countries where quality, schedule and price are less competitive; and offset income from Poland's big defence deals. This explained why the government and PGZ fiercely resisted any attempt to enforce a 2009 EU defence procurement directive, designed to open up procurement markets to competition. (19)



Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meets with Polish Minister of Defense Mariusz Blaszczak following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Military Committee Conference in Warsaw, Poland Sept. 29, 2018

A few PGZ companies are technologically competitive, such as artillery and vehicle maker HSZ and military electronics manufacturer WZE, but much of the conglomerate was not run on a commercial basis, the insider said. There are also a few impressive private defence companies such as WB Electronics, which produces drones and communications systems. But the sector is dominated by the lumbering, unreformed state behemoth.

“PGZ is a monster. It’s big, cumbersome and inefficient. The previous government tried to break it up and privatise it. This government is very statist and it’s becoming more bureaucratic,” said Brzezinski. “No one wants to be responsible for laying off people in a pre-election year.”

West European defence companies are keen to gain a foothold in Poland and have made attractive industrial co-production offers for missiles, submarines and helicopters, offering both technology and work share.

But the PiS government is determined to maintain a national defence industry under the umbrella of the ministry of defence as a matter of national pride. Polish officials acknowledge that their hopes of gaining in competitiveness lie more in small and medium-sized private defence firms which could team up with west European prime contractors in projects co-financed by the planned European Defence Fund.

“The fact that the regulations require at least three companies from at least three countries gives our industry a chance,” one Polish official said. (20)

Poland provides about half of a 3,700-strong central European Visegrád battlegroup which is available on rotation to the EU for possible missions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Poles supply the main manoeuvre combat forces, while the Czechs provide logistics, helicopters and electronic warfare, the Hungarians engineers and civilian-military staff and the Slovaks a nuclear-biological-chemical protection unit. There is also a token Ukrainian presence in the battlegroup, which will next be on call in the second half of 2019.

However, Warsaw went along only reluctantly and at the last minute with PESCO, which many PiS politicians regard with suspicion as a potential rival to NATO rather than a complement.

“Personally, I was rather reluctant about PESCO,” said Anna Fotyga, a former foreign minister who is now a PiS member of the European Parliament, where she chairs the defence and security sub-committee. “I still think there is a certain threat of duplication and of going too far in strategic autonomy. Some people in the European Parliament say we are creating European defence to be independent of the United States. But without the American contribution, the security of our continent would be in danger.” (21)

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Survey conducted on behalf of the Center for Insights in Survey Research by Ipsos: https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/poland_2017_final_edits.pdf
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- (11) <http://en.mon.gov.pl/news/article/latest-news/2014-12-05-we-finish-participation-in-isaf-mission/>
- (12) <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-usa-cia-torture-poland-idUKKBN0JO1GB20141210>
- (13) <https://polandin.com/38553689/poland-wont-buy-used-australian-warships-reports>
- (14) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (15) Interview with the author, July 2018
- (16) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (17) Interviews with the author, July/September 2018
- (18) https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Poland_and_European_defence_integration.pdf
- (19) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (20) Interview with the author, September 2018
- (21) Interview with the author, September 2018



CHAPTER 4

NOT YET LOST

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STOP DIGGING

The standard advice to a person or a country in a hole is to stop digging. This presupposes that the individual or government concerned recognises they are in a hole. In Poland's case, that awareness is obscured by the toxic atmosphere of domestic politics, which vitiates discussion of foreign, security and defence policy.

It is possible for PiS supporters to believe that Jarosław Kaczyński is winning, that America loves Poland even if Brussels doesn't, and that if Warsaw only buys enough US defence equipment and flatters President Trump enough, the United States will agree to garrison a permanent military base on Polish soil – "Fort Trump" – to shield it from Russia.

They have some grounds to feel that the balance of power in the EU is shifting in Kaczyński's direction – away from closer

integration and towards a looser 'Europe of nations'. Nationalist forces are gaining ground in many countries well beyond central Europe, from Italy to Austria. Eurosceptics and populists may become the second largest force in the next European Parliament, although they are likely to be split among two or three different political groups depending on their degree of radicalism.

Illiberalism may continue to advance and erode the EU, but central Europe could also fracture or eventually see a "central European spring" revolt by frustrated pro-European young people. (1)

PiS supporters also have some reason to be sceptical of EU defence initiatives based on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the embryonic European Defence Fund, given the reluctance of key western European

allies, especially Germany, to increase spending substantially or adopt a more robust approach to military operations.

"The political narratives about European 'strategic autonomy' and the US's alleged 'withdrawal from Europe' have been confronted with the glaring deficiencies in European military capabilities and the increase of the US military presence on the continent," said Justyna Gotkowska, coordinator of the Security and Defence project at the government-funded Centre for Eastern Studies. "Talk about strengthening European defence has become a substitute for action." (2)

Moreover, it is not irrational for Kaczyński to calculate that keeping disputes bubbling with the EU on the rule of law, migration and defence is politically rewarding at home, provided they do not get out of hand. They energise PiS's base behind his narrative of a heroic Poland as the victim of perfidious foreign European powers. And they help frame domestic politics as a struggle between a pious, patriotic, provincial ruling party and a godless, globalised, urban Civic Platform.

It was striking that when PiS angered the United States and Israel with "memory politics" with its remembrance law making it a crime to say that the Polish nation had any role in the Holocaust, Kaczyński backed down within weeks and had parliament change the legislation. Diplomats said the State Department had told Warsaw that the US government would have no high-level dealings with Poland until the matter was fixed. (3)

The government has taken longer to change course on the rule of law dispute with the EU but there are now first signs of a climbdown. An amendment to the Supreme Court law was rushed through parliament reversing the forced retirement of sitting judges to comply with an interim order by the European Court of Justice. But other aspects of political interference with the justice system remain to be corrected. (4)

There has been no such climbdown in the rule of law dispute with the EU. Ministers have given conflicting signals as to whether or not they would obey any final ruling by the European Court of Justice against the Supreme Court law, although Warsaw has complied with an interim ECJ order suspending the law by refraining from appointing new judges to replace those forced to retire.

The issue is more central to Kaczyński's agenda than they largely symbolic memorial law because it involves control over the judiciary and the constitutional court, which can overturn legislation. The Supreme Court also has oversight over the conduct of elections

ADJUSTING COURSE

Yet Poland is not yet lost, in the words of the national anthem. It needs both EU and NATO support as well as bilateral US defence assistance to be truly secure.

Warsaw can achieve its aims of strengthening its own security and binding the United States more tightly into the defence of Europe by

adjusting course, widening its support in Washington and working more patiently through NATO and more cooperatively with its EU partners.

“The Poles need to realise that it’s ultimately a mistake to put their faith in only one US political option,” said Dan Fried, who was ambassador to Poland under Democratic president Bill Clinton in 1997-2000 and assistant secretary of state for European affairs under Republican president George W. Bush.

“They need to work across the political spectrum. Putting all their chips on Trumpism is risky. Ask [former Georgian president Mikheil] Saakashvili how it worked out to put all his faith in George W. Bush.” (4)

The United States did not intervene to support Georgia when Saakashvili triggered a war with Russia in 2008 over the Russian-backed breakaway region of South Ossetia. The Georgian leader fell out of favour in Washington after Democratic president Barack Obama was elected later that year and set out to pursue a “reset” with Moscow.

Support for Poland has long been a bipartisan cause in the United States. Yet some of Warsaw’s best friends say PiS has weakened its standing in Congress and with the administration by drifting away from its long-time position as the model of post-Communist transition to a liberal market democracy.

While Trump may not care, Kaczyński’s assault on judicial independence and media pluralism

has upset Republicans and Democrats anxious about the wider lurch towards illiberalism in Europe.

“An area where Poland was of real benefit to the United States was as a proponent of democracy, an open society and an exemplar of the power of pursuing those policies to transform society,” said Lee Feinstein, who was US ambassador to Poland during Democratic President Barack Obama’s first term in 2009-2012. “This had a lot of power, particularly in the ‘near abroad’,” he said, referring to former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia.

The Democrats’ capture of the House of Representatives in November 2018 should convince Warsaw to pursue objectives that can command a broader consensus in Washington. Pinning all its hopes on “Fort Trump” may not pay off.

“The Poles need to realise that it’s ultimately a mistake to put their faith in only one US political option”

Dan Fried,
ambassador to Poland under Democratic president Bill Clinton in 1997-2000 and assistant secretary of state for European affairs under Republican president George W. Bush.

OUT OF STEP

A Friends of Europe survey of about 200 stakeholders in security and defence in Poland, across Europe and beyond found that a possible disintegration of Europe was seen as the single biggest threat to Poland's security, followed by instability in its eastern neighbourhood and cyber attacks. The risk of direct Russian aggression was seen as less likely. (See Annex)

There was a big divide between Poles and non-Poles as to whether a US military base would strengthen Poland's security and European stability. Some 60.7% of Polish respondents said it would make Poland safer, while only 35.1% of non-Polish stakeholders agreed.

A plurality of non-Poles said a US base in Poland would make Europe less stable (34.0%) or make no change to stability (24.5%), while fewer than one-third thought it would enhance stability (30.9%). Among Poles, on the other hand, 49.4% said it would make Europe more stable, 7.9% less stable and 29.2% unchanged.

More than four-fifths of both Polish and non-Polish respondents said that Warsaw was losing international influence because of its rule-of-law dispute with the European Union.

Another striking finding is that only 36% of Polish stakeholders trust EU allies to come to their defence if Poland were attacked, whereas 77% of non-Polish respondents believe that



Jarosław Kaczyński, co-founder and current leader of the Law and Justice party (PiS)

they would. Curiously, more non-Poles (53.5%) than Poles (40.5%) believe the United States would come to Poland's assistance in such a situation.

A small majority of both Polish and non-Polish stakeholders said they were not very confident or not confident at all that the United States would remain committed to protecting Europe in the long term.

These are the views of policy elites rather than of the general public, but they offer stark evidence of how Polish policies appear out of step with perceptions of strategic reality among defence and security stakeholders at home and in the Euro-Atlantic community. Above all they point to the need for Poland to widen its options and hedge its bets.

THIRD WAY

Fried, Feinstein and Brzezinski all argued that Poland would do better to seek a bigger NATO presence on its territory rather than a bilateral US base.

"My advice to Poland is to make sure this is NATO-friendly, NATO-compatible only, not bilateral. Do it in a way that Germany is comfortable with," Fried said.

Brzezinski, a Republican, set out a series of criteria that would have to be met for a permanent military presence in Poland, and suggested that to stimulate transatlantic burden-sharing it would be better to have other

European powers such as Britain, France and Germany alongside US forces in a "Fort NATO" rather than a "Fort Trump".

"I fear there are elements in Washington and in Warsaw who want to use this to spite Germany," he said. (5)

A permanent presence would have to reinforce both the United States and NATO cohesion and deter Russia. It would need to conform with US Defence Secretary James Mattis' doctrine of dynamic force deployment and operational flexibility by allowing US forces to move out of Poland very fast if they were needed elsewhere. It would have to ensure that US forces could not be easily pinned down in their base. And training and exercising would have to be up to the level of forces stationed in the United States.

Military experts such as Hodges, the former US army commander in Europe, suggest a third way would be preferable, focusing on enablers such as advance planning staff, pre-positioned equipment and dual-capable civilian-military infrastructure to facilitate rapid and more massive reinforcement of eastern Poland without tying down a scarce armoured brigade.

One US expert called the idea "base minus" – less sexy than "Fort Trump" but more practical, and without the costs for schools, housing and post exchange that go with a permanent base.

A skeleton divisional staff structure in Poland would manage command and control for US deployed forces across NATO's eastern flank, with army pre-positioned stocks, reception areas and training grounds. This could be built out of a mission command element already in place in Poznan, west of Warsaw, increasing it from 85 personnel to perhaps 400, the expert suggested.

The Centre for European Policy Analysis has suggested additional steps to secure the Suwalki corridor, including adding US mobile air defence units around the Baltic states to make it harder for Russia to avoid NATO tripwires. Response time could be shortened by giving NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and the North Atlantic Council of ambassadors the power to get forces moving even under apparent peacetime conditions. (6)

BUILDING BRIDGES

Stronger NATO support for Poland depends in turn on Warsaw turning away from confrontation in the EU and rebuilding bridges with its main European allies.

Both Poland and its European partners need to make efforts to rebuild a damaged relationship. The first step must come from Warsaw, which sparked the conflict with its ill-judged justice reforms. It must amend them to conform to EU law. Other corrections must follow the recent first step on the Supreme Court.

While only Kaczyński and the government he controls can take the decision to change track, friends of Poland such as Sweden (in the EU but not in NATO), Norway (in NATO but not in the EU) and Slovakia (in the Visegrád group but also in the eurozone) could perhaps help coax it out of the hole.

Brussels, Berlin and Paris should stand ready to respond positively to a genuine course correction on the Polish side that goes beyond cosmetic change.

In particular, France and Germany should move to inject new life and substance into the Weimar Triangle format for regular consultation and cooperation with Poland. Among defence projects, they could invite Poland to join in Franco-German work on a future European land combat system.

Bringing Poland into the eurozone, for which it meets the fiscal criteria, would be a major step towards bridging the east-west divide in the EU. The PiS government has halted technical preparations for adopting the euro, which would require a constitutional amendment by a two-thirds majority in parliament. A narrow majority of Poles say they are against joining, but support is increasing. (7)

If Warsaw wishes to avoid being consigned to the second division in a two-speed EU, it will need to be in the currency area. That won't happen soon, but it should be on the horizon. As Britain learned to its frustration, the eurozone is increasingly where economic power resides in Europe.

EU partners need to make the prospect of euro membership more attractive to Poles, notably by strengthening the currency framework by completing the banking union, rather than trying to build a “core Europe” excluding them, which Macron gives the impression of wanting.

The French leader should offer Poland, a country that clearly meets the Paris criteria for “willing and able” partners, a seat in the European Intervention Initiative. He would also be well advised to drop rhetoric about “European strategic autonomy” which to Polish ears sounds like the dangerous notion that the EU could defend itself against Russian aggression without the United States, coupled with a “buy French” arms sales campaign.

Until PiS came to power, German-Polish relations were better than at any time in the last 1,000 years. They still function relatively smoothly, not least because Berlin is sensitive in its handling of Warsaw and does not respond to provocations, notably concerning war reparations.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has sought to build a relationship of trust with Kaczyński, visiting him in Warsaw and inviting him to her official country residence at Meseberg, although he holds no state office. Berlin has let the European Commission take the lead on the rule of law procedure and mostly refrained from public criticism for historical reasons. When the issue came to the EU Council of Ministers, it let France express a joint Franco-German position supporting Brussels. However, Germany proposed in 2017 making EU cohesion funds

conditional on respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights in the future community budget. (8)

It is hard to imagine the main disputes between Poland and Germany could be settled by a trade-off. Even if Warsaw dropped reparations demands, Berlin is unlikely to withdraw support for Nord Stream 2, which it sees as a commercial energy project on which construction has already begun.

EU membership offers Poland other benefits for national and regional security.

Given its frontline location, the country should be a major beneficiary of the military mobility initiative adopted in the first wave of PESCO projects, and which the Netherlands is leading. The plan, in coordination with NATO, is to facilitate faster movement of military reinforcements and equipment by removing bureaucratic hurdles such as passport checks and notice requirements, and to build, repair, strengthen or widen roads, tunnels, bridges, rail lines and airstrips so they can transport heavy equipment. It would be financed partly with EU cohesion funds and soft loans from the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

Warsaw could also boost its relatively low research and development spending by encouraging its defence companies to team up with partners from other EU countries and apply for R&D grants for military projects from the European Defence Fund.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Settle the rule of law dispute with the EU**, in conformity with ECJ jurisprudence and the Polish constitution, amending Polish law as required to guarantee the independence of the judiciary. This dispute is the biggest obstacle to better cooperation between Poland and its EU partners which is vital for the country's economic development and long-term national security.
- Pursue ways to **strengthen the US military presence and capability to rapidly reinforce Poland and NATO's eastern flank below the threshold of a permanent army base**, in consultation with NATO allies. Staking everything on a bilateral "Fort Trump" outside NATO structures would divide the alliance and undermine the credibility (and hence the deterrent value) of the current Enhanced Forward Presence.
- Make the case within NATO for **giving SACEUR pre-delegated authority to set in motion initial crisis response measures** such as moving forces, alerting the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and starting reinforcement procedures under peacetime conditions pending political decisions by the North Atlantic Council.
- **Develop robust military mobility projects**, in consultation with NATO, maximising available EU structural funds and Juncker Fund soft loans to build or modernise dual-use road, rail, bridges, airstrips and pipeline infrastructure and improve the reinforcement capacity on NATO's eastern flank, focused in particular on the so-called Suwalki Corridor on the Polish-Lithuanian border. The Central Transportation Hub airport, road and rail project could be one major focus of military mobility funding.

- **Pursue dialogue with Russia** bilaterally or in the Kaliningrad Triangle format with Germany on diplomatic, economic, cultural and people-to-people issues while maintaining EU sanctions until Moscow implements commitments under the Minsk accords to withdraw forces and heavy equipment from Ukraine and allow OSCE monitoring of the border.
- **Revive Weimar triangle dialogue at senior political level with France and Germany** and use it as a forum to discuss issues on the future of EU integration. If Poland wishes to take its full place in the EU and avoid gradual relegation into a second division, it needs to make a renewed effort to improve political relations with the two main west European powers.
- **Drop the issue of reparations with Germany** and look instead at how to leverage a more constructive relationship with Berlin to Poland's economic and strategic advantage, notably by ensuring that Warsaw is not left behind in a two-speed or multi-speed Europe.
- **Offer to join France's European Intervention Initiative (E2I)** in return for France playing a bigger role in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in East-Central Europe.
- **Actively seek a role in major European arms cooperation projects** such as future main battle tank, helicopters and tactical communications, taking advantage of the European Defence Fund.
- **Diversify energy supplies** by building both an LNG pipeline with central European partners and gas and electricity interconnectors with Germany and Baltic neighbours.
- Poland should **be careful not to fall behind in cyber security** and should take more advantage of EU and NATO efforts to build resilience, particularly around critical infrastructure.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) For an incisive analysis of alternative paths for the region, see “Central European Futures, Five Scenarios for 2025” by Wojciech Przybylski and Joerg Forbrig, *Visegrád Insight* special edition 1(12) 2018. <https://cefutures.Visegrádinsight.eu/>
- (2) Interview with the author, September 2018. See also Gotkowska’s critique of EU defence policy: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_69_pesco_ang_net.pdf
- (3) Interviews with the author, September 2018
- (4) Interview with the author, August 2018
- (5) Brzezinski remarks in panel discussion at Warsaw Security Forum, October 2018
- (6) <https://www.cepa.org/securing-the-suwalki-corridor>
- (7) A Eurobarometer poll conducted in March 2018 found 50 percent of Poles against euro entry and 48 percent in favour. The survey showed a clear plurality want to join as late as possible, if ever, and 78 percent think their country is not ready. However, 56 percent of Poles think the euro has been positive for the countries that use it, and support for adopting the currency is rising. Asked when they expect the euro to be introduced in Poland, 19 percent said within five years and another 37 percent within 10 years. Some 37 percent said never. <http://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/82943>
- (8) <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/eu-rechtsstaatlichkeit-101.html>

ANNEX: WHAT OTHERS THINK

SURVEY ON POLAND'S ROLE AS A REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY ACTOR

OVERVIEW

As part of this report on Poland and the future of European defence, Friends of Europe conducted a survey exploring how security and defence stakeholders in Poland, Europe and beyond perceive Poland's position in regional and global security. The results of the survey complement findings from in-depth interviews, providing analysis and concrete recommendations for the Polish and EU leadership.

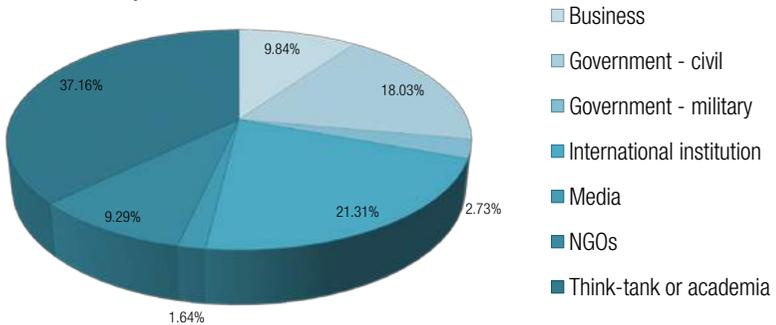
This survey consisted of 15 questions on topics including major priorities for Poland's security and defence cooperation frameworks; relations with the US and the EU; Poland's strategic orientation; and future military and security cooperation scenarios. The survey was anonymous, requiring participants to indicate the sector they work in (government, business, non-governmental organisation, international institution, media, business, or other), country of origin and country.

ANALYSIS - I. PARTICIPANT PARAMETERS:

Which sector do you work in?

Over a third of survey participants worked for a think tank or in academia (37.16%), whilst about a fifth worked in government: 18.03% in civilian functions, and 2.73% in the military. Furthermore, 21.31% worked in international institutions, and 9.84% in the private sector. The remainder worked for NGOs (9.29%) or the media (1.64%) (see Figure 1).

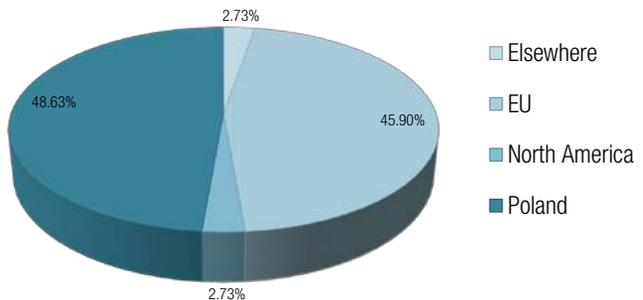
Figure 1: In which sector do you work?



What is your country of origin?

Respondents came from 33 countries, which can be put into the following four categories (see Figure 2):

Figure 2: What is your country of origin?

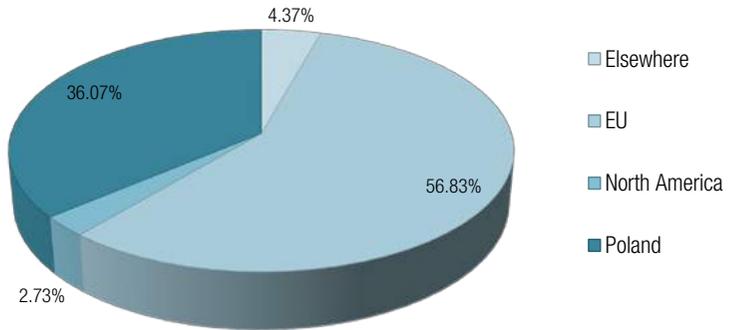


What is your country of residence?

Respondents lived in 22 countries, with the largest chunk residing in Belgium (37.16%) and Poland (36.07%). We put the respondents into the same four categories as in the previous question (see Figure 3):

- 36.07% in Poland
- 56.83% in the European Union (excluding Poland)
- 2.73% in North America (Canada and the US)
- 4.37% elsewhere (Tunisia and non-EU European countries such as Norway, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia)

Figure 3: What is your country of residence?



ANALYSIS - II. RESPONSES:

1. What are the main threats facing Poland?

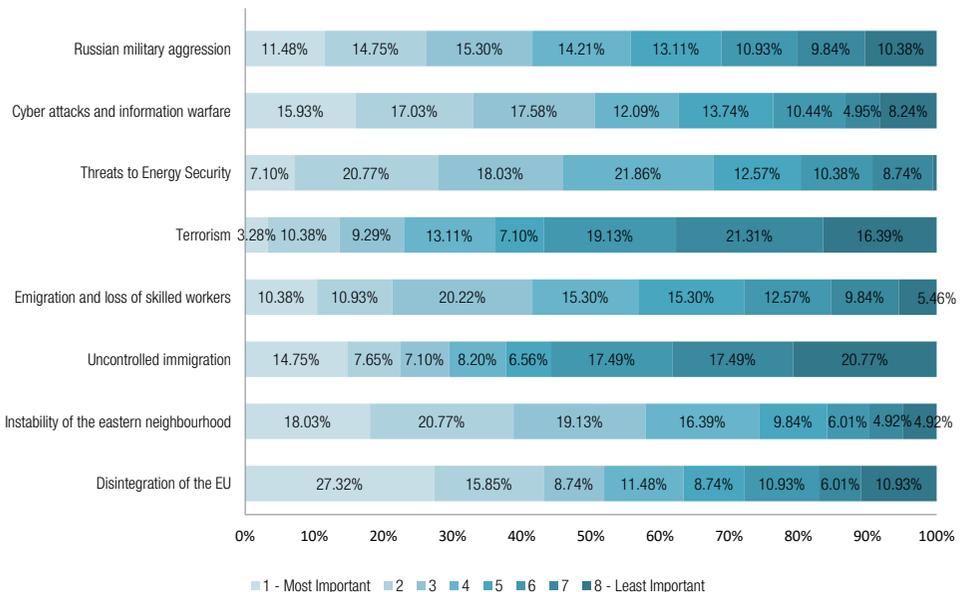
Participants were asked to rank in order of importance (where 1 means ‘the most important’ and 8 means ‘the least important’) the following threats Poland faces: Russian military aggression; cyberattacks and information warfare; threats to energy security; terrorism; emigration and loss of skilled workers; uncontrolled immigration; instability of the eastern neighbourhood; and disintegration of the EU (see figure 4).

The greatest number of responses (27.32%) concluded that the disintegration of the EU is one of the most important threats for Poland. It is however important to note that overall three fourths of the responses identified the instability of the eastern neighbourhood as a major or big threat facing Poland (74.32%; sum of responses 1-4). A similar assessment was made regarding the threats to energy security (67.76%; sum of responses 1-4). A smaller percentage of respondents thought that uncontrolled immigration (14.75%) and cyber-attacks and information warfare (15.93%) are the main threat for Poland.

Results linked to the threats of Russian military aggressions and the emigration and loss of skilled workers were more ambiguous. 11.48% thought that Russian military aggression is a very important threat, whilst 10.38% thought that it is the least important. A similar number (10.83%) believed that the emigration and loss of skilled workers is most important, whereas 5.46% rated it as least important.

Threats linked to uncontrolled immigration (20.77%) and terrorism (16.39%) are considered to be the least important threats facing Poland. In general, both categories were assessed as being least important: more than half of the respondents thought that terrorism is rather less important (63.93%; sum of responses 5-8) while a similar amount (62.31%; sum of responses 6-8) indicated that uncontrolled immigration is rather less important for Poland.

Figure 4: What are the main threats facing Poland?



2. Are Poland's current policies well-suited to deal with these threats?

The next question asked participants to rate if Poland's current policies are well-suited to deal with the aforementioned threats (where 1 means 'not at all' and 5 'absolutely') (see figure 5). Almost one third of the respondents were rather sceptical (28.83%) or thought that Poland's current policies are not at all well-suited to deal with these threats (9.15%), whereas, on the contrary, approximately one fourth concluded that current policies are well-suited (24.25%). The greatest number of respondents took a more neutral stance (37.76%) in this regard.

Among **Polish responses**, almost a third had positive views about current Polish policies, with 13.64% rating them as well-suited and 14.55% as rather well-suited. The majority of Polish responses rated the current policies neither as appropriate nor as inappropriate (39.55%). Almost one fourth of the responses identified them as rather not well-suited (22.73%), whilst 9.55% think that the policies are not good at all.

Non-Polish responses tended to be less polarised. Only 8.76% thought the current policies were not at all suited to tackle the threats facing the country, and none of them rated them as absolutely well-suited. More than one third of the respondents indicated that the policies are rather unsuitable (35.02%). A similar number of respondents were undecided about the policies' expediency (35.94%). 20.28% of non-Polish responses rated them as rather suitable (see figure 6).

Figure 5: Are Poland's current policies well-suited to deal with these threats?

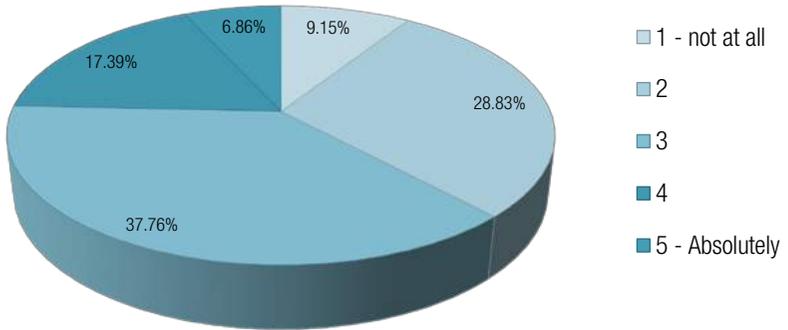
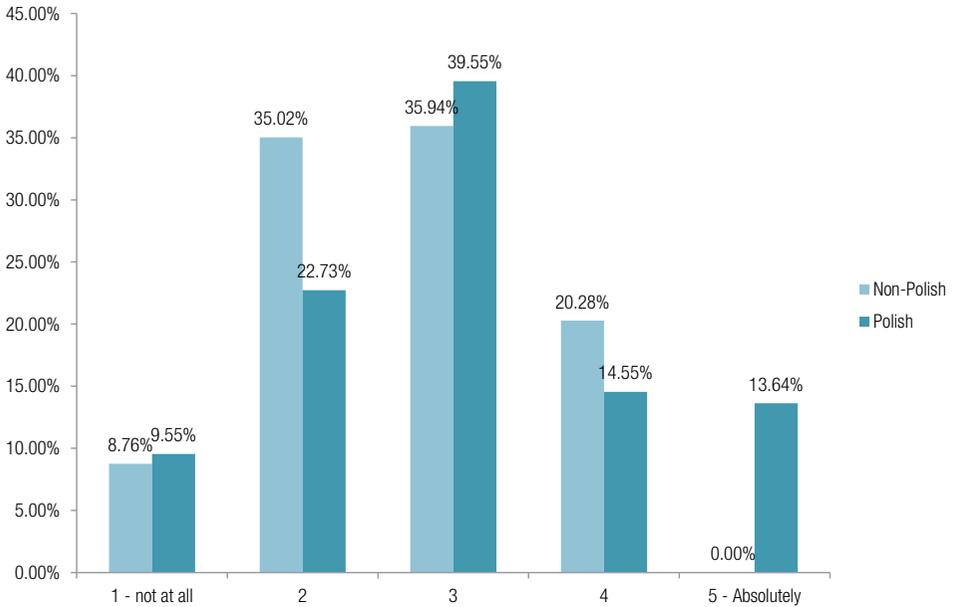


Figure 6: Are Poland's current policies well-suited to deal with these threats?



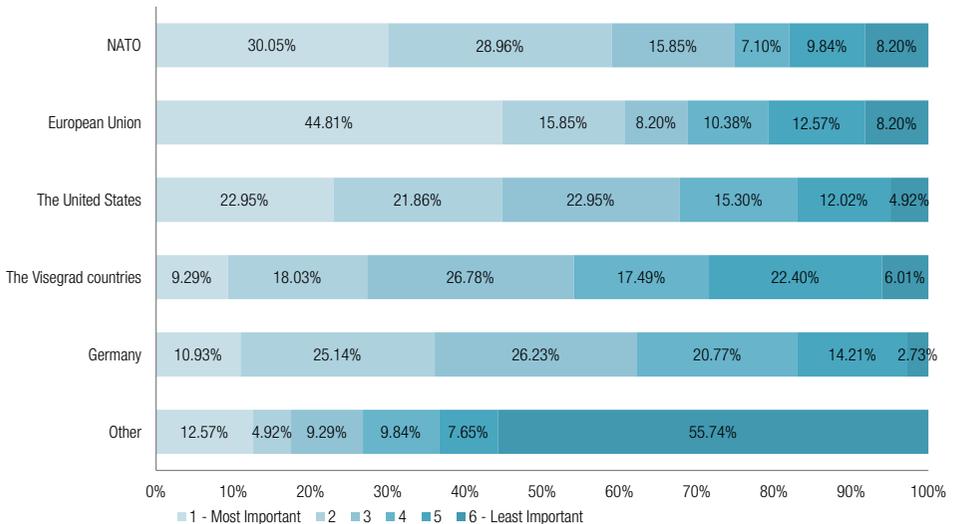
3. Who are Poland’s most important allies?

The greatest number of respondents (44.81%) concluded that the EU is Poland’s most important ally, whilst only 8.20% took the opposite stance. A somewhat smaller percentage of respondents listed NATO (30.05%) and the United States (22.95%) as most important ally. It is however important to note that a vast majority identified those three allies as rather/very important for Poland: NATO (74.86%; sum of category 1-3), European Union (68.86%; sum of category 1-3) and the United States (67.76%; sum of category 1-3).

Results linked to the importance of the Visegrád countries and Germany are more ambiguous. 10.93% of the respondents think that Germany is Poland’s most important ally. Whilst only 2.73% indicated that Germany is the least important ally, more than one third of the respondents considered it as rather less important (39.89%; sum of category 4-5). 9.29% of the respondents rated the Visegrád countries as most important, whereas 6.01% saw them as the least important allies. Almost half of the respondents thought that the Visegrád countries are rather/more important, whereas the other half identified them as less important.

A majority of 55.74% believed that “other” allies are the least important, although 12.57% of the respondents concluded that other actors are most important.

Figure 7: Who are Poland’s most important allies?



4. Do you think that Poland is losing international influence because of its current disputes with the European Union over the rule of law?

The following question asked participants to rate whether Poland is losing international influence because of its current disputes with the European Union over the rule of law (where 1 meant ‘not at all’ and 5 ‘absolutely’). More than two third of the respondents believed that Poland was absolutely losing international influence because of the disputes (67.88%) and almost one fourth indicated that they had had a rather negative impact (21.51%). Only a minority of respondents believed that Poland is not (2.28%) or rather not (3.49%) losing international influence (see figure 8).

Among **Polish responses**, the vast majority agreed that Poland is losing international influence because of the disputes with the EU (70%) whereas only 4% thought that they had not influenced Poland’s international position at all. Almost one fifth of the respondents believed that the disputes have affected Poland’s international influence rather negatively (19.43%). 4.29% of the respondents thought that the disputes have slightly affected Poland’s international standing, whilst 2.29% thought that the disputes have had almost no effect on Poland’s international position.

Among **non-Polish responses**, a similar amount of respondents identified a loss of international influence due to the disputes with the EU (65.99%). Almost one fourth of the responses indicated that they have led to a rather significant loss of Polish influence (23.35%), whilst only a very small group of respondents concluded that the disputes have had no (0.76%) or rather no (4.57%) impact on Poland’s international influence (see figure 9).

Figure 8: Do you think that Poland is losing international influence because of its current disputes with the European Union over the rule of law?

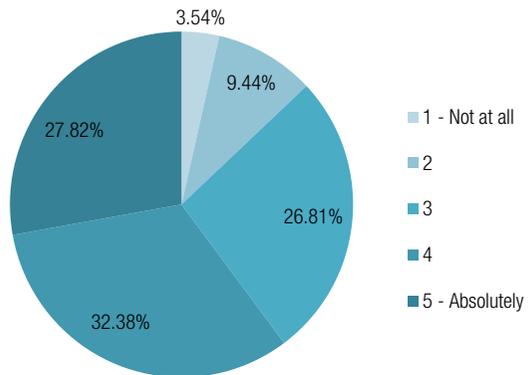
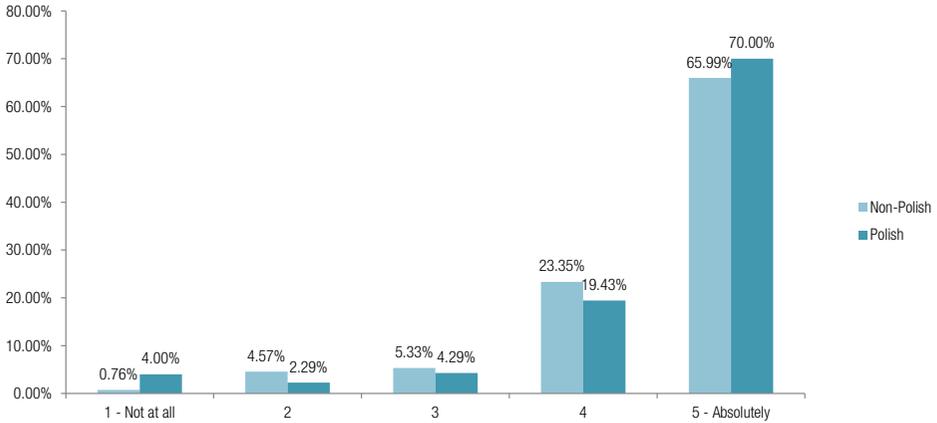


Figure 9: Do you think that Poland is losing international influence because of its current disputes with the European Union over the rule of law?



5. If the US established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil, do you think Poland would be...

The following question asked participants their opinion on the establishment of a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil. Almost half of the respondents concluded that a permanent armoured US base would increase Poland’s security (47.54%). In contrast, only 16.39% of the respondents believed that Poland would be less safe with a permanent armoured base. More than one fourth of the respondents believed that Poland’s security situation would remain unchanged (21.31%), whilst the rest were not sure about its effects (14.75%) (see figure 10).

Among **Polish respondents**, the vast majority believed that Poland would be safer with a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil (60.67%), whereas only 7.87% held the opposite view. A similar number of respondents was not sure about the impact of a permanent base on Polish soil (14.61%) or thought that Polish security would remain unchanged (16.85%).

Among **non-Polish respondents**, results are more ambiguous. A slight majority indicated that they believed Poland would be safer with a permanent armoured US base (35.11%), whilst half of the respondents believed that it either would lead to a less safe situation (24.47%) or that the situation would remain unchanged (25.53%). 14.89% of the respondents were not sure about the effects of a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil (see figure 11).

Figure 10: If the US established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil, do you think Poland would be...

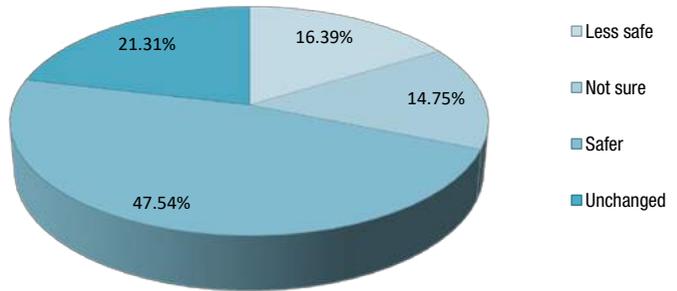
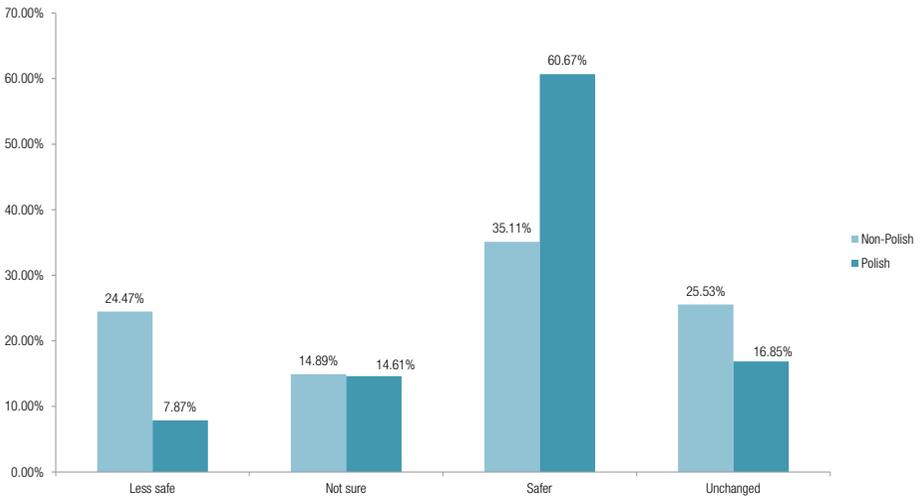


Figure 11: If the US established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil, do you think Poland would be...



6. Would Europe be more or less stable if the United States established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil?

In the same context, participants were asked if they thought a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil would affect Europe's stability. More than a third of respondents agreed that the establishment of such a base would increase Europe's safety (39.89%), whilst one fifth of respondents estimated a negative impact on Europe's stability (21.31%). One fourth of the respondents thought that a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil would not change Europe's current stability level (26.78%). 10.38% were not sure about the concomitant effects. A very small number of respondents linked the effects on Europe's stability to different conditions. They indicated that it would depend on actions of other EU member states (0.55%) or on whether the US would use the establishment of a base to demand excessive loyalty from Poland, most notably vis à vis EU partners (0.55%) (see figure 12).

Among **Polish responses**, almost half of the respondents believed that Europe would end up being more stable with a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil (49.44%) and only 7.87% thought it would lead to less stability. Almost a third of respondents indicated that the situation would remain unchanged (29.21%), 11.24% were not sure and only a small number of respondents thought that it would depend on whether the US would use that to demand excessive loyalty from Poland (1.12%). Interestingly, a similar number of respondents feared that such a US base would antagonise Russia (1.12%), whilst none of them thought that it would depend on actions of other EU member states.

Responses from **non-Polish respondents** varied significantly from Polish ones. A majority concluded that Europe would be less stable with a permanent armoured US base on Polish soil (34.04%), whilst a slightly smaller number of respondents expected the opposite (30.85%). None of the non-Polish respondents believed that a permanent US base in Poland would antagonise Russia, or that it would depend on whether the US would use it to demand excessive loyalty from Poland. In contrast to Polish respondents, a small number of non-Polish respondents thought that it would depend on the actions of other EU member states (1.06%). 24.47% of respondents believed that Europe's stability would remain unchanged and 9.57% were not sure about the implications (see figure 13).

Figure 12: Would Europe be more or less stable if the United States established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil?

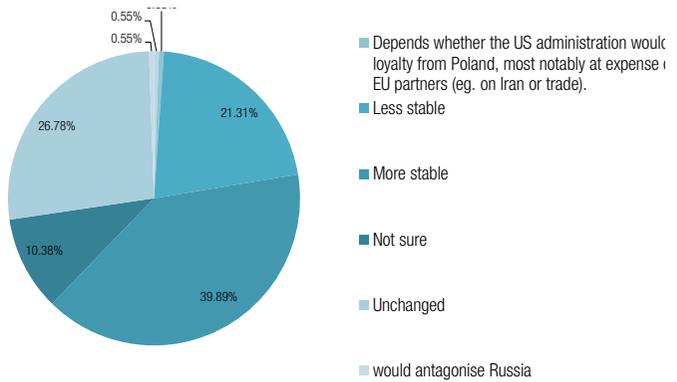
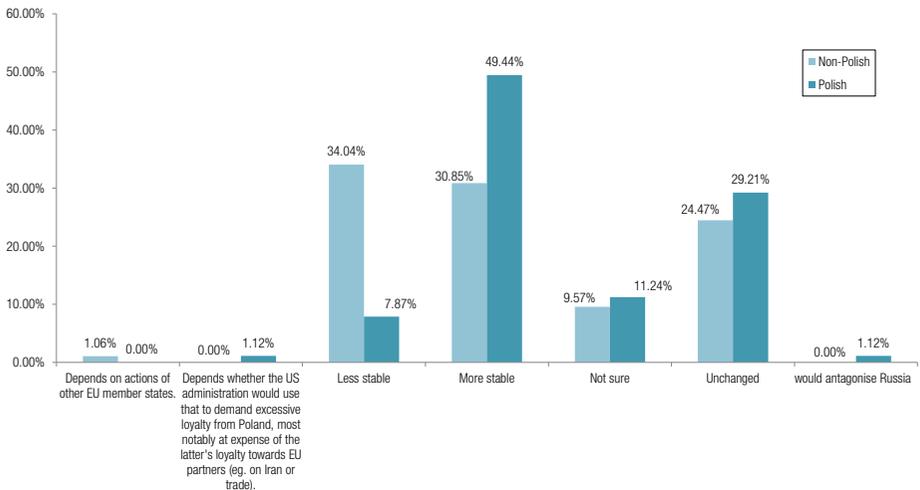


Figure 13: Would Europe be more or less stable if the United States established a permanent armoured base on Polish soil?



7. Do you think that Poland is damaging relations with the US because of the dispute over the Holocaust law?

The following question asked participants to assess whether Poland was damaging relations with the US because of the dispute over the Holocaust law (where 1 means 'not at all' and 5 'absolutely'). More than half of the respondents believed that Poland was damaging its relations with the US, of which 27.82% indicated that it was absolutely damaging and 32.38% indicated that it was rather damaging. About one fourth of respondents took a neutral stance on the issue (26.81%), whereas 9.44% believed that it was rather not damaging and 3.54% believed that it was not at all damaging to US-Poland relations (see figure 13).

Among **Polish responses**, the vast majority indicated that the dispute over the Holocaust law was absolutely damaging (30.47%) or rather damaging (34.41%) relations with the US. Only a small number of respondents thought that the dispute was not at all damaging (5.02%) or rather not damaging (12.90%). 17.20% took a neutral position towards the impact of the dispute on Poland's relations with the US.

Among **non-Polish responses**, more than a third of the respondents concluded that it had neither a very negative nor a very positive impact on Poland-US relations (35.35%). Like the Polish respondents, a majority of the non-Polish respondents believed that the dispute over the Holocaust laws was absolutely damaging (25.48%) or rather damaging (30.57%) to Polish relations with the US. Only a small number of respondents concluded that the dispute did not (2.23%) or rather did not (6.37%) damage Poland's relations with the US (see figure 14).

Figure 14: Do you think that Poland is damaging relations with the US because of the dispute over the Holocaust law?

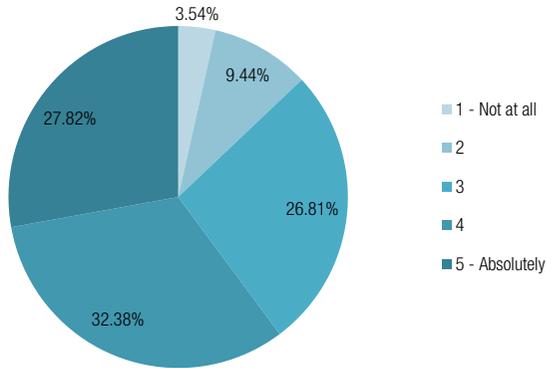
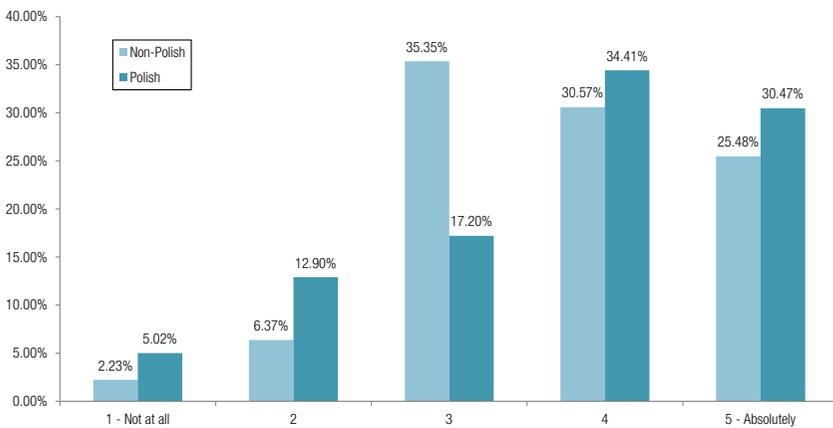


Figure 15: Do you think that Poland is damaging relations with the US because of the dispute over the Holocaust law?



8. Should Poland deploy a US missile shield on its soil?

On the question of whether Poland should deploy a US missile shield on its soil, responses were quite ambiguous. While more than half of the respondents were in favour of such a deployment (62%), a difference related to terms and conditions could be identified: more than a quarter of respondents would only endorse the deployment of a US missile shield if other European NATO allies did so too (28%), one fifth would welcome it to deter Russia (20%), 13% would see it as support to prevent foreign attacks (terrorist or state-led) and 1% argued that things should be arranged within NATO and by consulting EU partners, rather than bilaterally. Among opponents of a US missile shield on Polish soil (31%), 17% thought that current deterrence levels are adequate and that a missile shield would antagonise Russia, whilst 14% preferred to avoid depending on the US. 7% of the respondents were not sure (see figure 16).

Among **Polish responses**, a vast majority would welcome the deployment of a US missile shield on Polish soil (74.16%). Within the group of respondents almost a third would only endorse the deployment of a US missile shield if other European NATO allies did so too (30.34%), more than a quarter would welcome it to further deter Russia (26.97%), 14.61% agreed that it would help prevent foreign attacks and 1.12% argued that things should be arranged within NATO and by consulting EU partners, rather than bilaterally. The same number of respondents (1.12%) believed that it would strengthen the country's security, its international position and deter any political aggressors. Avoiding Polish dependence on the US was indicated by 11.24% of respondents as the reason to reject the deployment of a US missile shield. Other respondents opposed it, saying that current deterrence levels are adequate and that it would antagonise Russia (7.87%). 6.74% of respondents were unsure.

Among **non-Polish responses**, respondents were more critical of the deployment of a US missile shield in Poland. A high number of respondents believed that current deterrence levels are adequate, that it would antagonise Russia (26.60%) and that Poland should avoid depending on the US (17.02%). In contrast, half of the respondents were in favour of it (50%), because it would deter Russia (12.77%) and would help prevent foreign attacks (10.64%). A quarter of respondents argued that things should be arranged within NATO and by consulting EU partners, rather than bilaterally (25.53%), while a small number (1.06%) would only accept it if it was a NATO shield rather than a US shield on NATO allies' soil (see figure 17).

Figure 16: Should Poland deploy a US missile shield on its soil?

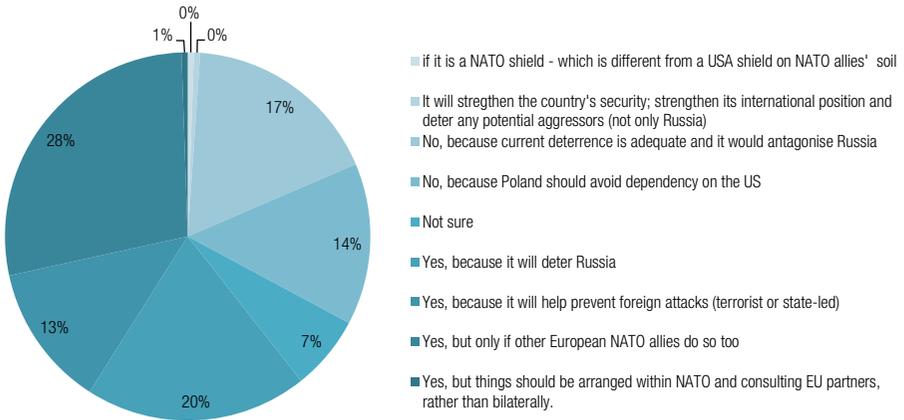
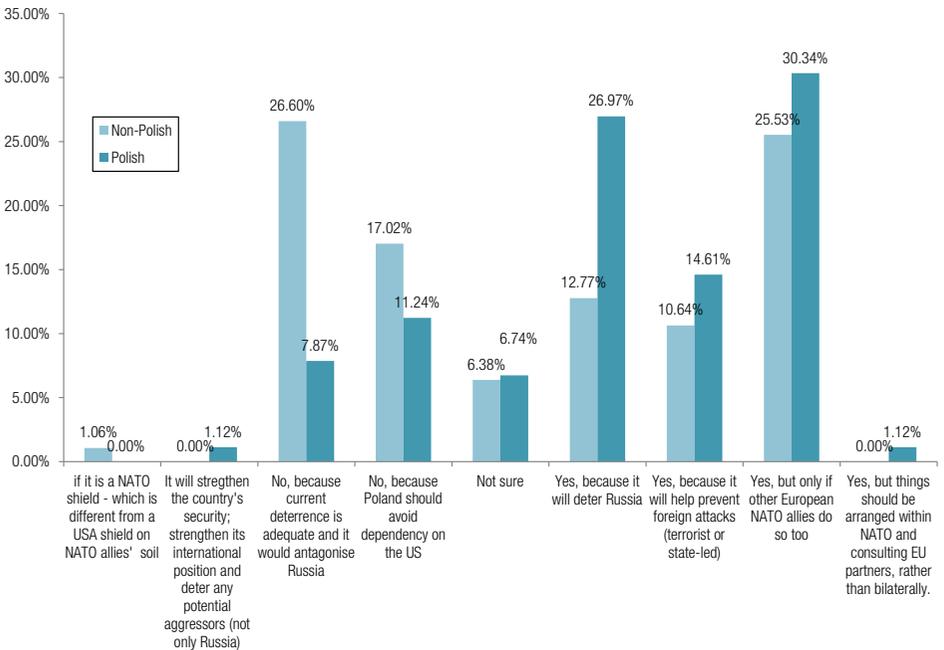


Figure 17: Should Poland deploy a US missile shield on its soil?



9. What should be the mission of the Polish armed forces?

On the question of what the mission of the Polish armed forces should be, the overall majority (77.60%) agreed that it should be territorial defence and external NATO and EU operations. Among the rest, most of the respondents indicated that the Polish armed forces' mission should be territorial defence only, done within NATO (9.84%), whilst 8.20% thought it should be territorial defence but with external NATO (but not EU) operations. A minority of respondents preferred a focus on territorial defence and joint operations with a US-led 'coalition of the willing' (4.37%) (see figure 18).

Of the **Polish responses**, the majority agreed that it should be territorial defence and external NATO and EU operations (70.79%). Territorial defence only, within NATO, was picked by the second highest number of respondents (15.73%) regarding what the mission of the Polish armed forces should be. The remainder thought that it should be territorial defence and external NATO operations (8.99%) or territorial defence and joint operations with a US-led 'coalition of the willing' (4.49%).

A similar result can be identified among **non-Polish responses**, although a somewhat higher number- perhaps unsurprisingly- argued for territorial defence and external NATO and EU operations (84.04%). 7.45% thought that it should be territorial defence and external NATO operations. The lowest number of respondents preferred territorial defence and joint operations with a US-led 'coalition of the willing' (4.26%) or territorial defence only within NATO (4.26%) (see figure 19).

Figure 18: What should be the mission of the Polish armed forces?

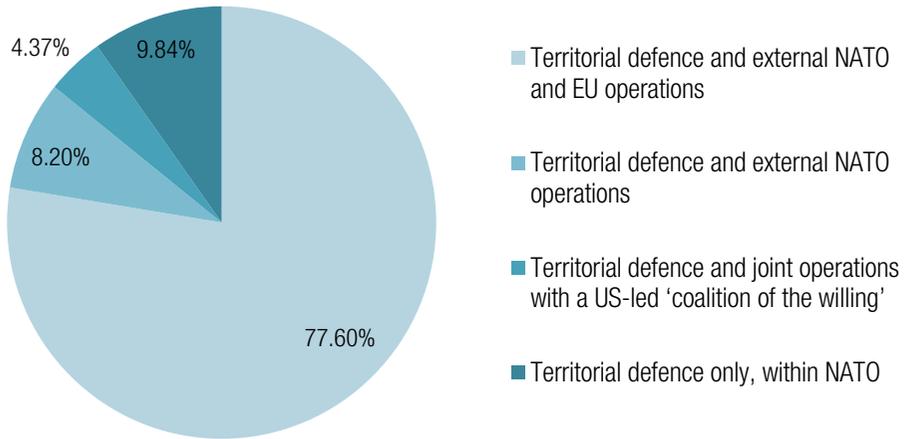
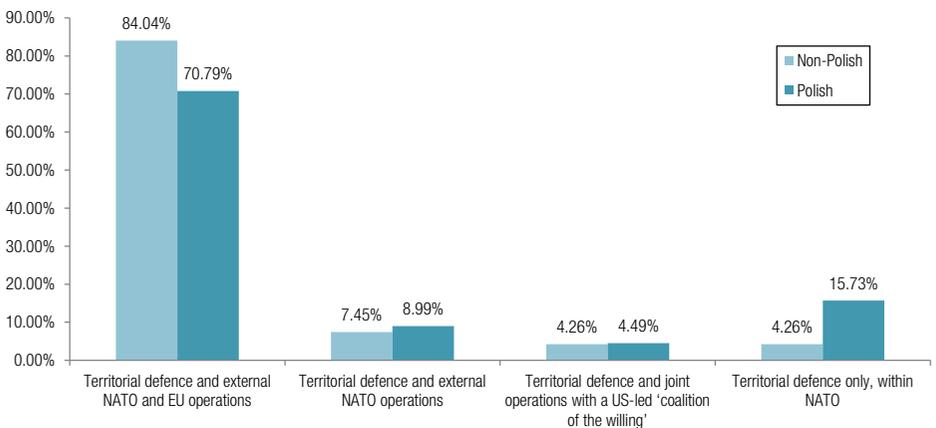


Figure 19: What should be the mission of the Polish armed forces?



10. The EU has recently taken a series of steps to increase defence cooperation among member states (launching PESCO, establishing a European Defence Fund to promote joint R&D and arms procurement, creating a coordinated annual EU review of defence capabilities, etc.). Would you say these steps are...

This question asked participants to rate the recently taken steps to increase defence cooperation among EU member states (launching PESCO, establishing a European Defence Fund to promote joint R&D and arms procurement, creating a coordinated annual EU review of defence capabilities, etc.). A majority of more than three fourths of respondents concluded that these steps are positive for Poland (77.05%), whereas only 1.64% said that it would be negative for Poland. 13.11% indicated these developments to be neither positive nor negative, and 8.20% of respondents were not sure (see figure 20).

Of the **Polish responses**, the majority agreed that the steps were positive for Poland (70.79%). The second highest number of respondents believed that it was neither positive nor negative (16/85%), while only 2.25% said that the steps were negative for Poland. 10.11% were not sure.

A similar result can be identified among **non-Polish responses**, although they had a more positive stance than Polish respondents, with 82.98% seeing those developments as positive and only 1.06% as negative for Poland. 9.57% thought that the steps were neither positive nor negative, whilst 6.38% were not sure (see figure 21).

Figure 20: The EU has recently taken a series of steps to increase defence cooperation among member states (launching PESCO, establishing a European Defence Fund to promote joint R&D and arms procurement, creating a coordinated annual EU review of defence capabilities, etc.). Would you say these steps are...

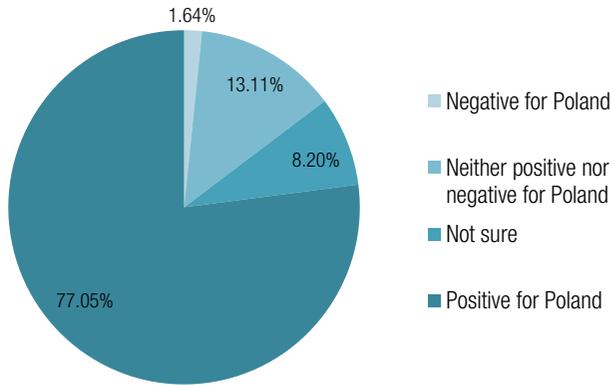
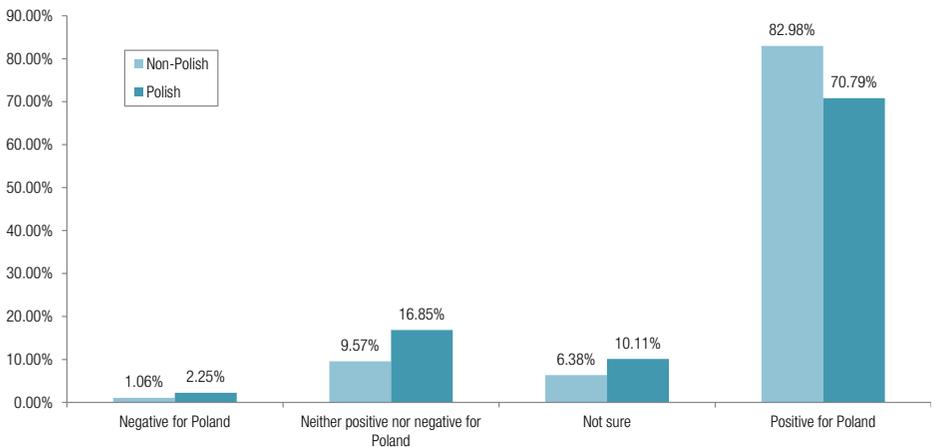


Figure 21: The EU has recently taken a series of steps to increase defence cooperation among member states (launching PESCO, establishing a European Defence Fund to promote joint R&D and arms procurement, creating a coordinated annual EU review of defence capabilities, etc.). Would you say these steps are...



11. Should Poland join the European Intervention Initiative recently launched by France and eight other European nations to develop a common strategic culture and prepare for possible joint external crisis operations?

Three thirds of respondents (75.41%) agreed that Poland should join the European Intervention Initiative (EII) recently launched by France and eight other European nations to develop a common strategic culture and prepare for possible joint external crisis operations. Only 9.4% were opposed to Poland joining the EII, whilst 14.75% were not sure about it (see figure 22).

Among **Polish responses**, the majority was in favour of Poland joining the EII (71.91%) with only 11.24% against it. The remainder of the Polish respondents were not sure (16.85%).

Among **non-Polish responses**, an even higher number of respondents is in favour of it (78.72%). The number of respondents against Poland joining the European Intervention Initiative was lower than the one of Polish respondents (8.51%). 12.77% were not sure if Poland should join the EII (see figure 23).

Figure 22: Should Poland join the European Intervention Initiative recently launched by France and eight other European nations to develop a common strategic culture and prepare for possible joint external crisis operations?

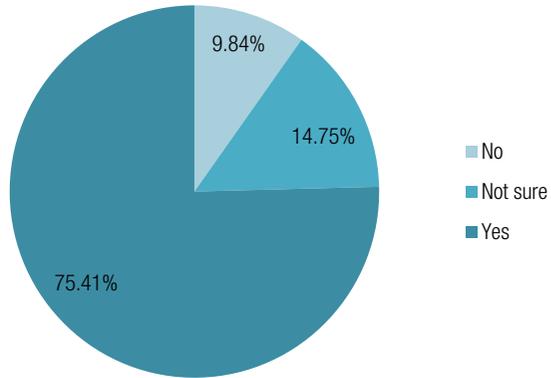
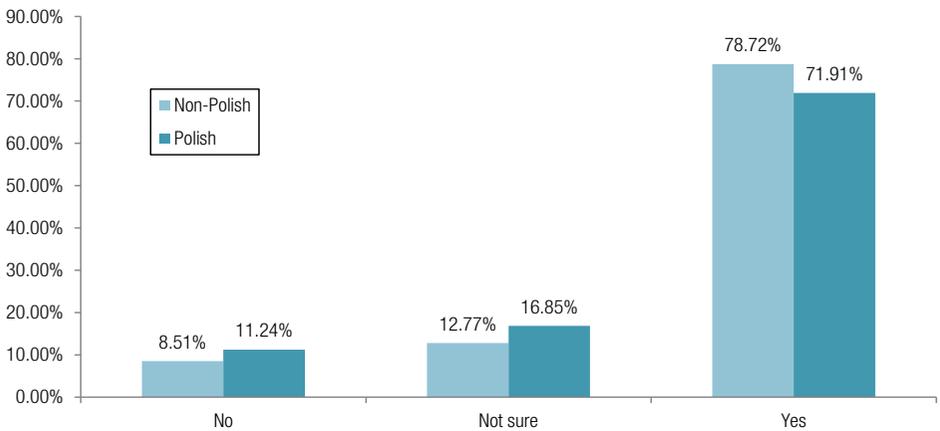


Figure 23: Should Poland join the European Intervention Initiative recently launched by France and eight other European nations to develop a common strategic culture and prepare for possible joint external crisis operations?



12. How should Poland obtain its defence equipment?

When asked how Poland should obtain its defence equipment, a majority of 59.56% concluded that Poland should procure it jointly through European armaments cooperation wherever possible, to integrate Poland’s defence sector into a pan-European defence industrial base. The second highest number of respondents preferred to buy it off-the-shelf, nationally or internationally, through transparent tenders to get the best value for its defence budget (24.04%). 12.02% thought that Poland should buy its defence equipment from the Polish defence industry wherever possible to protect jobs and retain a military industrial capacity, whilst (perhaps surprisingly) only 3.83% were in favour of buying mostly from the US to maximise the security partnership and try to secure offsets for Polish companies (3.83%). Overall only a minority thought that Poland should obtain its equipment through European arms cooperation wherever possible to help build up the European defence industry (0.55%) (see figure 24).

Among **Polish responses** almost half of the respondents agreed that Poland should procure jointly through European armaments cooperation wherever possible, to integrate Poland’s defence sector into a pan-European defence industrial base (48.31%). More than a fourth thought that Poland should buy it off-the-shelf, nationally or internationally, through transparent tenders to get the best value for its defence budget (28.09%). It is remarkable that none of the respondents said that Poland should obtain its defence equipment through European arms cooperation wherever possible to help build up the European defence industry, whereas almost one fifth preferred Poland buy its equipment from the Polish defence industry wherever possible to protect jobs and retain its military industrial capacity (19.10%). The remainder was in favour of buying mostly from the US to maximise the security partnership and try to secure offsets for Polish industry (4.49%).

In contrast, a very high number of **non-Polish responses** indicated that Poland should procure jointly through European armaments cooperation wherever possible, to integrate Poland’s defence sector into a pan-European defence industrial base (70.21%). Only a small number of respondents believed that Poland should buy its equipment from the Polish defence industry wherever possible to protect jobs and retain its military industrial capacity (5.32%) or from the US to maximise the security partnership and try to secure offsets for Polish industry (3.19%). Among non-Polish responses the second highest number of respondents also agreed that Poland should buy its defence equipment off-the-shelf, nationally or internationally, through transparent tenders to get the best value for its defence budget (20.21%) and, unlike the Polish respondents, at least some of the non-Polish respondents concluded that Poland should obtain its equipment through European arms cooperation wherever possible to help build up the European defence industry (1.06%) (see figure 25).

Figure 24: How should Poland obtain its defence equipment?

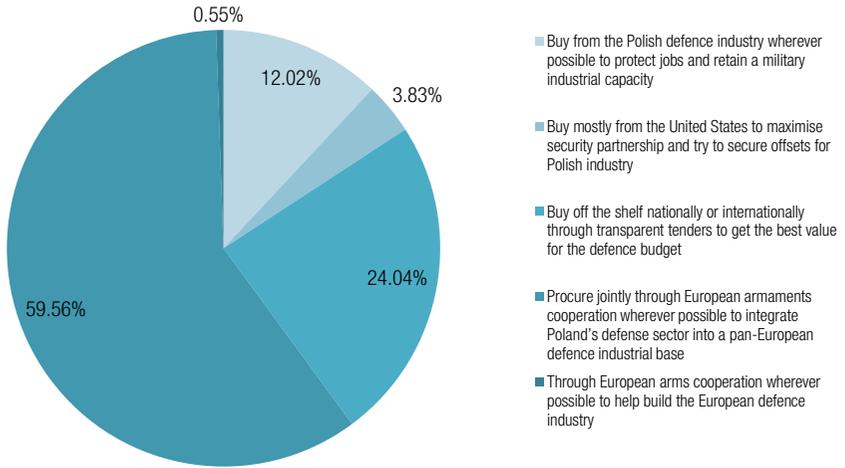
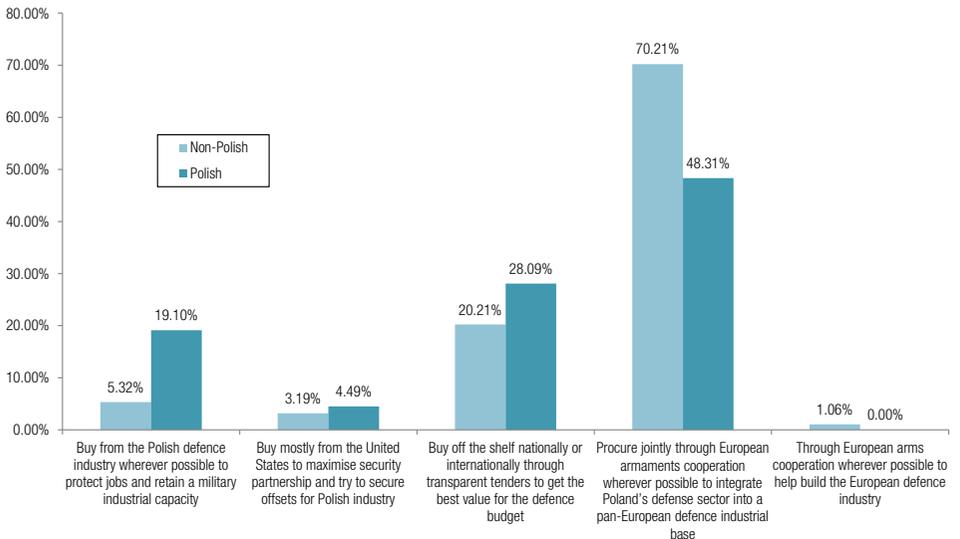


Figure 25: How should Poland obtain its defence equipment?



13. Do you believe European allies would come to Poland’s defence if it were attacked?

Over half of respondents believed that European allies would come to Poland’s defence if it were attacked (56.25%). 11.93% believed that they would not come to Poland’s defence. A notably high number of respondents were not sure about it (31.82%) (see figure 26).

Among Polish responses only a bit more than a third believed that European allies would come to Poland’s defence if it were attacked (35.96%), whereas the majority of respondents were not sure about the commitment of European allies to Poland’s defence (44.94%). The remainder of Polish respondents thought that European allies would not come to Poland’s defence (19.10%).

Among non-Polish responses, the overall opinion was more positive. A vast majority of 77.01% believed that European allies would come to Poland’s defence if it were attacked, whereas only 4.60% doubted it. 18.39% of non-Polish respondents were not sure about it (see figure 27).

Figure 26: Do you believe European allies would come to Poland’s defence if it were attacked?

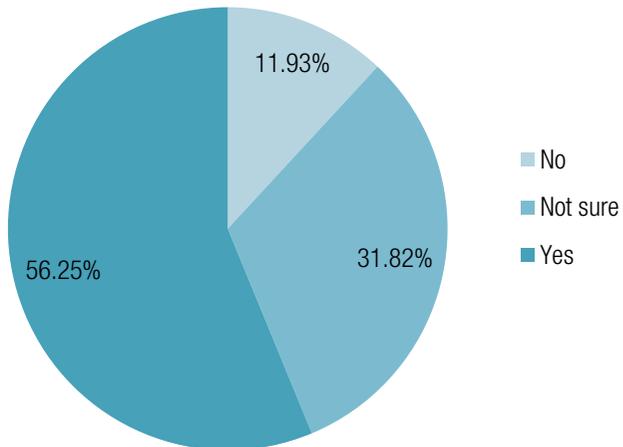
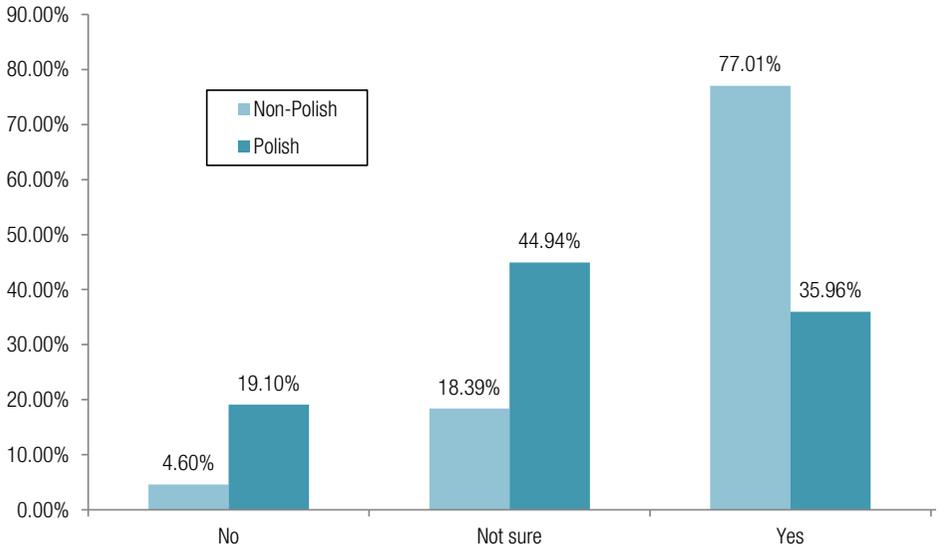


Figure 27: Do you believe European allies would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked?



14. Do you believe the United States would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked?

In the same context, participants were asked to indicate if they believed the United States would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked. 46.86% of respondents believed that the US would defend Poland in case of an attack, whilst 13.14% thought it would not. 40% were unsure of the US response (see figure 28).

Among **Polish responses**, 40.45% of respondents were convinced that the US would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked, whereas the majority was more sceptical (46.07%). 13.48% of Polish respondents did not believe that the US would come to Poland's defence.

Among **non-Polish responses**, the overall opinion was again more positive. A majority of 53.49% believed that the US would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked- although that is notably fewer than those who thought European allies would come to Poland's rescue (see figure 27). Approximately one third of respondents were not sure (33.72%), while the remaining 12.79% did not believe that the US would come to Poland's defence (see figure 29).

Figure 28: Do you believe the United States would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked?

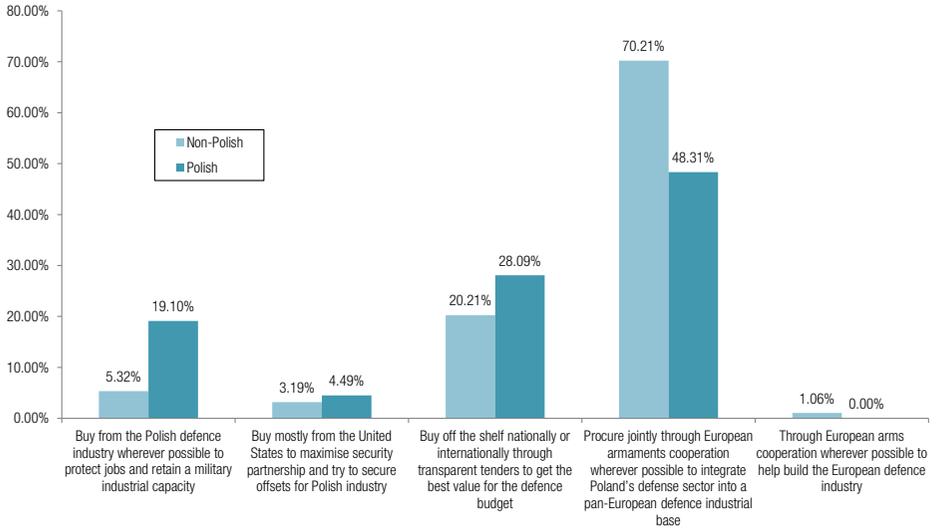
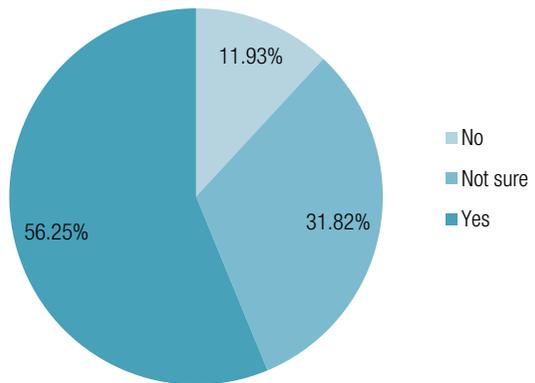


Figure 29: Do you believe the United States would come to Poland's defence if it were attacked?



15. How confident are you that the United States will remain committed to protecting Europe in the longer term?

With regard to Trump's critical stance towards NATO and his withdrawal from international agreements and treaties, the last question asked participants to rate how confident they are of the continued long-term commitment of the US to protect Europe. The majority of respondents were not very confident about a long-term US commitment (42.86%), whilst 34.29% were quite confident about it. Only a small number of respondents were very confident (6.86%), whereas a somewhat higher number were not confident at all (10.86%) (see figure 30).

Among **Polish responses**, a bit more than half of respondents were not confident that the US would remain committed to protecting Europe in the longer term, with 43.82% being not very confident and 7.87% being not confident at all. However, 40.45% of the respondents were quite confident and a small number were very confident (3.37%).

Among **non-Polish responses**, respondents were overall less confident than Polish respondents. Although compared to Polish responses, a higher number of non-Polish respondents indicated that they were very confident (10.47%), and only a quarter were quite confident (27.91%). The majority of respondents were not very confident (41.86%) and 13.95% were not confident at all that the US would remain committed to protecting Europe in the long haul (see figure 31).

Figure 30: How confident are you that the United States will remain committed to protecting Europe in the longer term?

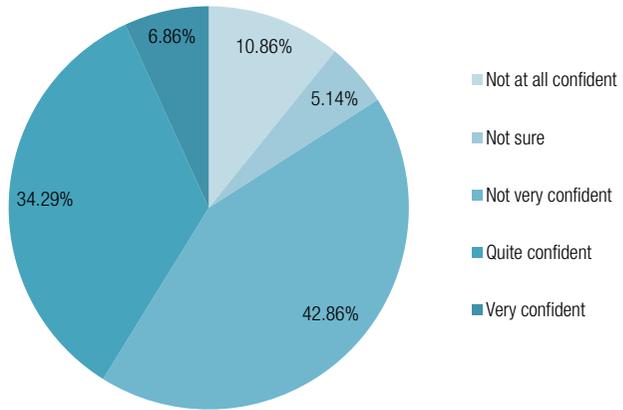


Figure 31: How confident are you that the United States will remain committed to protecting Europe in the longer term?

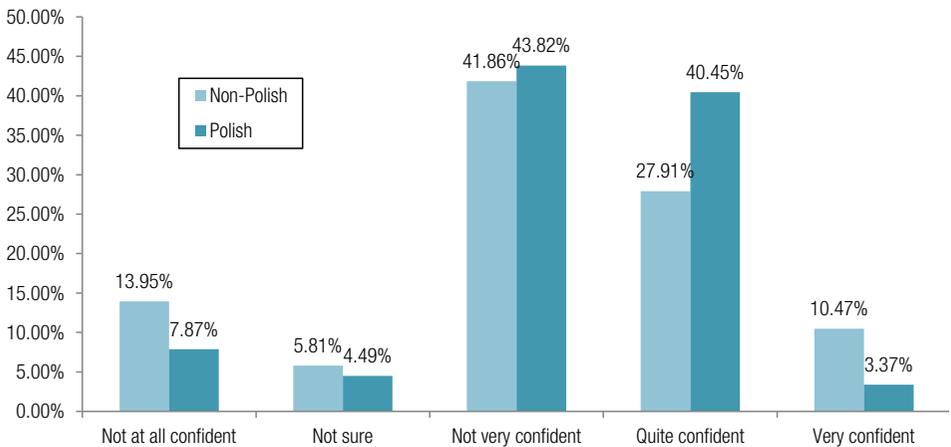


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