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PRO-AMERICANISM IN POLISH SECURITY POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Proamerykanizm w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa w XXI wieku

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Abstract

The paper concerns pro-Americanism in Polish security policy in the first two decades of the 21st century. Such tendencies are noticeable in almost all countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but in Poland they are particularly pronounced, and take the form of offensive bandwagoning. Pro-Americanism in Poland has a varied background, but the most important motivation is perceiving the United States as the main external guarantor of state security. Pro-Americanism in Polish security policy was particularly evident in the periods of the US republican administrations, whose international policy was criticized in Western Europe. It manifested itself mainly in Poland's strong commitment to US-led military operations, striving for the location of American bases in Poland and purchases of US military equipment. Due to the strong pro-Americanism in Polish security policy, Poland is perceived as the most zealous ally of the US in CEE. In the literature, it is referred to, *inter alia*, as the client state implementing a bandwagoning policy towards the US. In practice, the pro-American security policy does not bring Poland significant benefits beyond standard security guarantees. Moreover, it complicates Poland's relations with Western European allies, and therefore adversely affects Poland's security interests..

Keywords: Polish security policy, pro-Americanism, offensive bandwagoning, Polish-American relations, Polish-American alliance.

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy proamerykanizmu w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa w pierwszych dwóch dekadach XXI wieku. Takie tendencje są widoczne niemal we wszystkich państwach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, jednak w Polsce są szczególnie wyraźne i przybierają formę bandwagoningu ofensywnego. Proamerykanizm w Polsce ma zróżnicowane tło, ale najważniejszą motywacją jest postrzeganie Stanów Zjednoczonych jako głównego zewnętrznego gwaranta bezpieczeństwa państwa. Proamerykanizm w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa był szczególnie widoczny w okresie rządów amerykańskich administracji republikańskich, których polityka międzynarodowa była krytykowana w Europie Zachodniej. Przejawiał się on przede wszystkim silnym zaangażowaniem Polski w operacje wojskowe prowadzone przez USA, dążeniami do lokalizacji amerykańskich baz w Polsce oraz zakupami amerykańskiego sprzętu wojskowego. Ze względu na silny proamerykanizm w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa, Polska jest postrzegana jako najbardziej gorliwy so-

juszniak USA w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. W literaturze określana jest m.in. jako państwo-klient realizujące politykę bandwagoningu wobec USA. W praktyce proamerykańska polityka bezpieczeństwa nie przynosi Polsce znaczących korzyści wykraczających poza standardowe gwarancje bezpieczeństwa. Ponadto komplikuje stosunki Polski z zachodnioeuropejskimi sojusznikami, a tym samym niekorzystnie wpływa na polskie interesy bezpieczeństwa.

Słowa kluczowe: polska polityka bezpieczeństwa, proamerykanizm, ofensywne bandwagoning, stosunki polsko-amerykańskie, sojusz polsko-amerykański.

Introduction

Pro-Americanism is a psychological tendency to favor or support the United States of America, its values, culture, and society (Collins Dictionary, n.d.). Pro-Americanism is therefore an attitude that results mainly from sympathy and trust. Anti-Americanism is defined as a psychological tendency to hold negative views of the USA and of American society in general. Anti-Americanism is therefore an attitude resulting mainly from distrust, and bias (Keohane, 2007). An extreme manifestation of pro-Americanism is described as Americanophilia, that is, great adoration and admiration for the US. On the other hand, an extreme manifestation of anti-Americanism is Americanophobia, manifesting itself in hatred of the US. American society is made up of immigrants and settlers from all over the world, so American culture and American values span a broad spectrum. The US is full of internal tensions and contradictions, for example between religiosity and secularism, unilateralism and multilateralism, statism and anti-statism. As a result, the US and Americans are perceived differently in the world (Stivachtis, 2007).

Most of the theories about pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism have been developed in regions where there is a strong aversion to American policy (Duncan et al., 2015). For this reason, these theories may not be adequate for regions with high support for the US, including Central and Eastern Europe. Pro-Americanism stems primarily from support for liberal values globally promoted by the United States, including democracy, the rule of law and human rights. For this reason, the US is seen as the leader of the free world. American economic freedom is also of great importance, and it was modeled on by countries in various parts of the world, including CEE. Pro-Americanism can also be based on the belief that the political and moral goals of the US-led military coalitions are legitimate, including exporting or building democracy, defending human rights, protecting minorities, providing humanitarian aid and so on.

In the 21st century, researchers mainly develop the theory of anti-Americanism. Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane (2006) identified three main sources of anti-Americanism after the Cold War. The first is the overwhelming domination of the United States and the lack of restraint and subtlety in exercising power. The hegemon's failure to take into account the position of other powers and states offends them. The second explanation is the 'globalization backlash', which is a reaction to the global development of capitalism identified with the United States. The heartlessness of global

financial institutions and corporations, breaking local social ties, leads to hostility towards the US. A third argument ascribes anti-Americanism to ‘conflicting identities’. This applies to the US promoting cultural values through global media that contradict those cultivated elsewhere. Katzenstein and Keohane (2006) identified the types of anti-Americanism: liberal; social; sovereign-nationalist; radical; elitist; and legacy.

The purpose of the paper is to analyze and evaluate pro-Americanism in Polish security policy in the 21st century. The main research problem is the question whether/why Polish security policy in the 21st century has been clearly pro-American and what are the consequences for Poland? The research is conducted in the context of actions, motivations, and benefits. The detailed questions are: In what periods was pro-Americanism the strongest in Polish security policy? Which actions are the main manifestations of pro-Americanism in Polish security policy? What are the main motivations for pro-Americanism in Poland? Which of the motivations is the most important from the point of view of pro-American tendencies in Polish security policy? Does pro-Americanism in security policy bring Poland tangible benefits? What are the implications of the pro-American tendencies in Poland’s security policy? Based on literature and public opinion polls, analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and abstraction allows for the discussion of the results in terms of the actions, motivations, and benefits of pro-Americanism in Polish security policy and indication of implications. Content analysis allows to study the content of the National Security Strategies (NSS) of Poland and the United States as well as bilateral security agreements.

Analytical framework: Actions, motivations, and benefits

One of the mechanisms for forming alliances and implementing security policy is the concept of bandwagoning, which was promoted by Kenneth Waltz (1979) and developed by Steven M. Walt (1987). In this concept, the weaker states join the dominant power. The greater the potential and offensive capabilities of a dominant power, the greater the likelihood that weaker countries will join it. According to Walt, a state can join a dominant power for two main reasons: because of fear of it (defensive bandwagoning); or to share in the spoils of victory (offensive bandwagoning; Snyder, 1997). The concept of bandwagoning has been evolving and now mainly means supporting a stronger and allied state, including the bloc leader (Zięba, 2018). Andrzej Dybczyński calls offensive bandwagoning a ‘hyena’s strategy’, because the weaker country counts on the benefits of successes of the dominant power in the international arena. Despite the fact that due to limited capabilities the support of the weaker state is relatively small, the profits should exceed it (Dybczyński, 2014). Bandwagoning may entail a number of negative consequences for a weaker country, including dependence on the dominant power, no influence on its actions, and deterioration of relations with other countries (Kuźniar, 2012). There is also the risk that the dominant power may not reward the

zealous ally in the way it desires. This is because the fundamental interests of the dominant power have priority.

The political elite of the Third Republic of Poland, from the left to the right, took decisive steps to strengthen the alliance with the United States, both multilateral within NATO and bilateral. They determined Poland's participation in controversial initiatives, such as the military intervention in Iraq which was the most expressive manifestation of offensive bandwagoning. Poland prioritized the United States in purchasing military equipment and in other military spheres. It was slightly less visible in the years 2007–2015, but even in this period there was no change in orientation, but only the distribution of accents. For this reason, a hypothesis was put forward in the field of actions:

Hypothesis 1. In the 21st century, Polish security policy has been clearly dominated by pro-American tendencies. The strongest pro-American tendencies in Poland appeared during the times when the Republicans held power in the US. Even during the less pro-American government of the Civic Platform in Poland, the US played a key role in Polish security policy and there were no clear symptoms of anti-Americanism. Polish pro-Americanism manifested itself mainly in the political-military and technical-military areas.

Difficult relations with European powers in the 20th century meant that Polish democratic political elites and society created the image of the United States as a country with model values. Poland could not always count on the help of the United States, nevertheless, in August 2021, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of Poles had a positive attitude towards the United States, and more than half (57 percent) believed that “special ties” between states had been built after 1989. In turn, 62 percent of Poles believed that the US would use its armed forces to defend Poland in the event of a real threat (Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2022). In line with the concept of offensive bandwagoning, Poland counts on benefits, mainly in terms of security, from unambiguous support for the actions of the allied power. This allows for a hypothesis regarding the motivation of the Polish authorities:

Hypothesis 2. The motivations of the Polish authorities to implement the pro-American security policy result from both pragmatic and emotional premises. The main motivation is the rational premise of ensuring Poland's security through a close alliance with the United States, but it is also shrouded in myths and wishful thinking.

The American authorities have often expressed their gratitude to Poland for supporting US activities in the international arena. They emphasized the importance of brotherhood in arms and Poles' tireless struggle for common values. However, symbolic gestures were usually not followed by any significant benefits for Poland, what can happen with bandwagoning. The United States gives priority to its own strategic and economic interests, and Poland does not have enough leverage and the right negotiation approach to convince the Americans to meet its expectations. In July 2019, as many as

39 percent of Poles believed that mainly Americans benefited from Polish-American relations, 43 percent that they were equally beneficial for both countries, and only 3 percent believed that Poland was the main beneficiary (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2019). Moreover, the particularly pro-American policy of Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) has been implemented at the expense of proper relations with the European Union and its powers, which can also be a negative consequence of implementing bandwagoning. In terms of benefits, the following hypothesis was made:

Hypothesis 3. The pro-American security policy has not brought Poland significant benefits beyond standard security guarantees. The tightening of the bilateral alliance between Poland and the USA took place mainly in a symbolic dimension and was over-interpreted by the Polish authorities. Furthermore, implementing zealous pro-Americanism at the expense of relations with European allies was detrimental to Polish interests.

Review of the literature on pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism

In the literature of the 21st century, there are positions that analyze the manifestations of both pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism, with the latter being dominant. In a study edited by Virginia Dominguez and Jane C. Desmond (2017), these phenomena were analyzed on the basis of examples of individual regions and countries, indicating their international and domestic reasons. In the case of Europe, in literature we can see a clear division in the approach to the United States between the countries of Western Europe, the so-called ‘Old Europe’, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the so-called ‘New Europe’. There is a much more favorable attitude towards the US in the CEE. It is particularly high in Poland, where in the first two decades of the 21st century it fluctuated between 61 percent (2007) and 86 percent (2000). At the end of this period, in 2019, the support was 79 percent, which placed Poland as the most pro-American country in Europe and third in the world, after Israel (83 percent) and the Philippines (80 percent; Pew Research Center, n.d.). The clearly positive attitude of the public towards the US was conducive to the pro-American policy of the Polish authorities.

As early as 1964, the New York Times published an article showing Pro-Americanism in Poland, which was then under the yoke of communism (Pro-Americanism in Poland, 1964). Kate Delaney and Andrzej Antoszek (2017) showed the special path of Poland, compared to other European countries, in the form of Poles willingly accepting the achievements of American culture. David Sylvan and Stephen Majeski (2009) pointed out that after the Cold War, Poland was the only country in Central and Eastern Europe to become a ‘client state’ for the United States. This was due to the closeness of cooperation, mainly in the military field, the specific form of communication and the agreements characteristic of the relationship between the patron and the client. Ryszard

Zięba (2013) described the policy of both left-wing and right-wing governments in Poland as a practical implementation of the concept of ‘bandwagoning’ towards the US, with clear manifestations of ‘clientelism’ and even ‘self-valedisation’. In turn, David H. Dunn (2002) described Poland as ‘America’s New Model Ally’, and Marcin Zaborowski and Kerry Longhurst (2003) called it American ‘Protégé in the East’. During the rule of the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO) in 2007-2015, Poland’s foreign and security policy was reevaluated from a Washington-centric towards greater involvement in cooperation with the European Union. Despite this, Poland remained one of the most pro-American countries in the world, and domestic researchers, including Aleksander Smolar, Bohdan Szklarski, and Marcin Zaborowski, agreed that the periodic cooling of moods was not a sign of anti-Americanism (Lyman, 2014).

We can also find works on other most pro-American CEE countries. Cristian Preda (2004) presented the uncritical support of the Romanian authorities and national media for the United States on the example of the attitude towards the US military intervention in Iraq in 2003, which drove a wedge between European countries. The author described zealous pro-Americanism as a treason and defamation towards the European Union and its Western European powers. An even more glaring example of pro-Americanism is Kosovo, in which there is a kind of cult of the United States. First of all, this is a consequence of the US military actions against the Serbs and support of Kosovars in their pursuit of independence (Sullivan, n.d.). The literature also mentions clear pro-Americanism in other countries in the region, including Albania, Croatia, Georgia and the Baltic states (Bobrow, 2008).

Anti-Americanism was analyzed mainly from the perspective of Western Europe (Beyer & Liebe, 2014; Markovits, n.d.). There has even been a juxtaposition of Europeanism with anti-Americanism as a manifestation of fears of global socio-cultural and economic modernization, which is often perceived as Americanization (Rensmann, 2006). In the literature, we can find an analysis of anti-Americanism on the example of individual countries in Western Europe, including France, which is particularly skeptical of the US (Meunier, 2005). On the other hand, in Eastern Europe, Russia is a characteristic example of the shift from pro-American tendencies to anti-American ones (Vartanova et al., 2018).

There is also literature on pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism elsewhere in the world. Felicity Duncan, Devra C. Moehler and Laura R. Silver (2015) pointed out that despite the decline in support for the global role of the United States, sub-Saharan Africa still maintains strong pro-American sentiment and relatively high support for the US. The authors indicated three main reasons for the kindness of Africans towards the US – personal contacts with US citizens, support for international engagement, and admiration of the American model. Arlene B. Tickner, Carolina M. Cepeda and José Luis Bernal (2015) researched the reasons for both support for and dislike of the United States in Latin America. Despite the low support in the region for American politics,

they stated that the states of the region cannot be unequivocally assigned a pro-American or anti-American identity, on the contrary, they show both tendencies. Covadonga Meseguer, Pascal Jaupart, and Javier Aparicio (2017) analyzed the influence of economic and financial factors in bilateral relations on the perception of the US in Latin America on the example of Mexico. Ming-Chang Tsai (2021) pointed out that in Asia support for the United States and the development model it proposes are decreasing. He noticed that the level of sympathy of the Asian population for the US correlated with the growing acceptance of China's development model and its growing position on the continent. Nevertheless, for Asians, the most popular choice of development model is neither the United States, nor China, but Japan. Anyway, the literature confirms that the greatest degree of anti-Americanism exists in the Middle East, where it even manifests itself in the form of outright hatred (Rubin, 2002).

The attitude towards the United States in the world may evolve depending on their current policy, the way it is presented by international and national media, and its reception by the authorities of individual countries. There may be a significant shift in portraying the US role in the world, from positive to negative and vice versa. Ivan Krastev (2004) stated that due to the global war on terror there has been a transition from the 20th century being "the American century" to the 21st century which could be called "the anti-American century". At that time, the media of many countries around the world began to negatively portray the international policy of the United States, describing it as 'aggressive', 'barbaric', 'peace destructor', 'biased', 'deceitful' and 'hypocrite' (Ashfaq & Hussein, 2014). As a consequence of this policy and its presentation, support for US world leadership has decreased. This was particularly evident in the context of the controversial invasion of Iraq, as reflected in the literature (Chiozza, 2009). However, there were exceptions, and in the Republic of Korea, for example, support for the US increased by 33 percent between 2003 and 2010. This was due to a number of internal and international factors, mainly in the field of security, making South Korea one of the most pro-American countries in the world (Fisher, 2013).

The perception of the United States in the world is especially influenced by media. Lydia Lazar argued that the media image of the United States, conveyed by television shows, commercial culture and other questionable exports, distorts the image of the real United States. The way to get to know the real America and Americans is to stay in the US, including studying there. In this way, people can learn about the cultural and legal foundations on which the political, social, and economic development of the United States is based (Lazar, 2005).

It is worth mentioning that the literature also noted a difference between women and men in support of US international policy. In individual countries, it ranges from a few to even over a dozen percent. This may be due to the fact that United States is associated with muscular foreign policy. Women are less accepting of force and are generally less interested in foreign and security policy (Applebaum, 2005).

Pro-American actions in Polish security policy

After Poland joined NATO, Polish governments, both left and right, strove for a very close allied relationship with the United States. One of the main actions was engaging in US-led military missions. The first manifestation of this policy was the strong support of the US military policy towards Kosovo and involvement in the Kosovo Force stabilization mission (Zdravkovski, 2019). The attitude of the Polish authorities towards Kosovo was much more pro-American than that of most traditional US allies in NATO. The global war on terror initiated by the administration of President George W. Bush opened the next stage of support for military missions under the American leadership. Within its framework, Poland supported the military efforts of the Americans in parts of the world where it had no obvious interests. The Polish authorities openly admitted that the military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted primarily from the need to deepen the alliance with the US and strengthen transatlantic solidarity. The need to promote democracy of the Greater Middle East was of secondary importance (Haglund, 2009). At times, the thoughtless support for the actions of the United States in the international arena was against the Polish *raison d'état*.

The support of the military intervention in Iraq in 2003 by the Polish left-wing authorities was particularly controversial and was the most expressive manifestation of offensive bandwagoning. It took place despite the fact that just before the outbreak of the war, 66 percent of Poles were against it (26 percent supported it), and 75 percent opposed the participation of Polish soldiers (19 percent supported it; Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2003). The Prime Minister of Poland, Leszek Miller of the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD), together with the heads of governments of Denmark, Great Britain, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Czech Republic and Hungary, issued an official letter of support for American war plans against Iraq, praising America's past "bravery, generosity, and farsightedness" and stressing the need to strengthen transatlantic cohesion (Toje, 2008). A small, 200-person Polish Military Contingent, along with American, British and Australian forces, participated in the war against the regime of Saddam Hussein. The military intervention was not authorized by the UN Security Council, opposed, among others, by Russia, China and France. No Arab or Muslim state took part in the war against Iraq (Holsti, 2006). It is worth emphasizing that the majority of Polish society was also against this intervention. In justifying the decision, Prime Minister Miller pointed to the need to reduce the threat posed by the Iraqi regime and contribute to the stabilization of the Middle East. He also stressed the need to reaffirm the importance of the alliance with the US and transatlantic solidarity, which in practice was of particular importance (Orzelska-Stączek, 2011). Poland became even more decisive in stabilizing post-war Iraq, taking command of a multinational division and taking responsibility for one of the country's four zones of

occupation. Poland was also measurably involved in the stabilization mission in Afghanistan. While in its first years Poland focused on Iraq, in 2008 it significantly increased the stabilization effort in Afghanistan, taking responsibility for the Ghazni province.

As part of the global war on terror, the Polish authorities also gave consent to the creation of a secret CIA prison on its territory for the so-called ‘unlawful combatants’. Other countries in the region – Lithuania and Romania – have also done so. In this type of camps, people suspected of terrorist activity were illegally detained and interrogated. It was particularly reprehensible that in some of these installations, torture was used to extract confessions (McCrisken & Phythian, 2009). Although Poland participated in this program, subsequent investigations did not reveal that the Polish government agreed to torture as an anti-terrorist tool or deemed such solutions appropriate. However, the consent to locate this type of facility in Poland has aroused criticism from numerous international entities, including European Union institutions (Aslam, 2013). This action undermined Poland’s reputation as a country that complies with the international law.

President Bush’s 2007 proposal to place elements of the American anti-missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic also aroused considerable international controversy. The strongest opposition came from Russia, which threatened to transfer nuclear ballistic missiles to the Kaliningrad Oblast in the vicinity of Poland (Steff, 2016). Western European powers, including Germany and France, fearing the deterioration of NATO’s relations with Russia also showed a clear aversion to the project. This proposal was also opposed by the majority of Polish society (Bandeira, 2017). Despite this, the Polish right-wing authorities from the PiS accepted the American proposal with enthusiasm and submission (Shor, 2010). As a consequence of this decision, in August 2008, the Polish-American alliance formally entered a new dimension by signing *the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland* (U.S. Department of State, 2008). However, this document was primarily of a declarative nature and did not translate into a significant strengthening of Polish-American relations. Moreover, the controversial circumstances meant that the Polish authorities risked substantial political capital (Renshon, 2010). This was confirmed by the later ambivalent attitude of President Barack Obama towards the European phase of the Ballistic Missile Defence project.

Another manifestation of pro-Americanism is the determined effort by the Polish authorities to increase the number of American soldiers stationed in Poland. Efforts in this area became particularly intense after the crisis in Ukraine. Since 2017, in Poland, the Armored Brigade Combat Team and NATO enhanced Forward Presence battle group, whose framework nation is the United States, has been stationed in Poland. In May 2018, the Polish authorities proposed to the US to locate a division-sized permanent base for the US Armed Forces in Poland (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Poland, 2018). They offered \$ 2 billion to build the base and to call it ‘Fort Trump’,

which was calculated on President Trump's transactional approach and narcissistic personality. Despite the Polish authorities treating this issue as a priority, the American administration decided to meet their expectations only to a small extent. Ultimately on the basis of *the Joint Declaration on Defense Cooperation Regarding the United States Force Posture in the Republic of Poland* (President of Poland, 2019) of June 12, 2019 and *the Defense Cooperation Agreement Between the United States of America and Poland* (U.S. Department of State, 2020) of August 15, 2020, an additional 2,000 US troops are to join to 4,500 soldiers currently stationed in Poland. These troops are to be stationed on an enduring rotation basis.

Poland decided to support many other initiatives that aroused international controversy. An interesting example from recent years was the international conference on peace and stability in the Middle East organized in February 2019 in Warsaw. The conference was clearly anti-Iranian, and the representatives of Tehran were not even invited. Contrary to expectations, Poland did not contribute to the debate on the security of the region, but was only used to endorse the position of President Donald Trump's administration. During his presidency, the submission of the Polish authorities to the American administration appeared many times. Other examples include the attitude to the possibility of supplying 5G technology by Chinese telecommunications companies, or the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – IPN) in the field of research on the Holocaust. Under the pressure of the US, in the first case, Poland excluded cooperation with Huawei (Kancelaria Premiera Rady Ministrów, 2019), and in the second, it gave up introducing regulations intended to defend “the good name of the Polish nation” from the period of World War II (Hackmann, 2018).

Another clear manifestation of the pro-Americanism of the Polish authorities is the purchase of American military equipment and weapons. The willingness to cooperate with the most technologically advanced defense industry in the world does not raise any objections. However, it is problematic that the Polish authorities prioritize American defense concerns over Western European ones. The largest contracts were signed with companies from the US, which, for example, concerned the purchase of multirole fighter aircraft of two subsequent generations – F-16 Fighting Falcon and F-35 Lightning II. In the first case, European companies lost the fight for the tender amid great international controversy. In the second case, the tendering procedure was completely abandoned in favor of the direct procurement in the US. Some US offers, such as most advanced missile systems, had no competition in Europe. However, many times, given the competitive offers of Western European allies, the final choice of the American supplier was determined by a political factor.

Poland also chose the United States as its main partner on the way to achieving energy security and meeting the requirements for reducing emissions. In recent years, it has signed a number of contracts for the supply of liquid natural gas from the US, which

is to make it independent of gas imports from Russia (Michalik, 2019). This happened despite the fact that Poland could use a number of alternative suppliers from different parts of the world, including Norway and Qatar. The program of building nuclear power plants aroused even more serious controversy. It is also to be carried out in cooperation with American concerns, despite the fact that France has expressed such readiness. Like American companies, *Électricité de France* has great experience in the construction of reactors and has an extensive ecosystem around nuclear energy.

In Poland, but also in several other CEE countries, the American presidents who were criticized in Western Europe, ie George W. Bush and Donald Trump, were greeted with great sympathy. The so-called 'new Europe' was much closer to them than the 'old Europe' and they felt much better in these countries (Moens, 2016). The Polish authorities welcomed them with the highest honors, emphasized their contribution to the security of the region, and their readiness to face international problems, including with the use of military force. The elements of foreign and security policy of Bush and Trump, which met with strong opposition and criticism on the international stage, were usually supported by Poland, and even if the Polish authorities did not support them, at least they did not criticize them.

Main motivations of pro-Americanism in Poland and Polish security policy

Motivations in the area of national security

Poland has difficult historical experiences with powerful neighbors, i.e. Russia and Germany, therefore it is natural that it looks at the United States as a guarantor of national security (Lieber, 2006). The Polish authorities have been striving to deepen the alliance with the United States in order to ensure the country's survival in the difficult geopolitical situation. By eagerly supporting the superpower in the 21st century, the Polish authorities want to both increase the security of the state, but also raise its rank on the international arena and obtain a number of other benefits resulting from this support. Such approach is characteristic of the concept of offensive bandwagoning. In addition to the justified sense of threat from Moscow, the right-wing political elite harbor considerable distrust towards Berlin, Paris and Brussels (Goh & Sahashi, 2020). After the Cold War, the Polish authorities began to perceive the United States as the only entity that has the appropriate capabilities and potentially shows the will to defend Poland (Reeves, 2019). After an initial ambivalent approach to NATO's eastern enlargement, the United States quickly became its spokesman. This showed that the US wants to be at the center of any emerging security architecture in Europe (Hallams, 2010). New members of NATO, which prioritize a 'classical' (i.e. state-based) threat perception, including Poland and the Baltic states, show much more devotion to the alliance and the

United States than others (Dunay, 2013). The importance of the alliance with the United States as the dominant power in NATO was emphasized in every NSS of Poland. As a result of the mistakes of the US-led global war on terror, international public opinion expects a greater role in the international environment of other entities, including the European Union and China, at the expense of the US's dominant position. However, this does not apply to Poland, especially under the rule of PiS, which advocates a unipolar world in which the United States maintains military primacy (Lanoszka, 2020). Also in Polish society, despite criticism of certain US actions in the international arena, mainly the war in Iraq, no clear anti-American tendencies appeared. In the following years, usually more Poles assessed the US influence on the world positively than negatively (December 2006 – 37:24, July 2008 – 25:35, May 2011 – 33:20, November 2012 – 28:16; Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, 2012).

In the 21st century, Russia has modernized its military forces and has demonstrated its readiness to use them, both in Georgia and in Ukraine. Especially after the annexation of Crimea and military engagement in eastern Ukraine, Poland felt seriously concerned about its security. During the NATO summits in Newport (2014) and Warsaw (2016), Poland asked its allies, mainly the US, to secure its territory and the entire eastern flank of NATO, which was met with a positive response (Larsen, 2017). Despite the strategic pivot to Asia of the administration of President Barack Obama, the United States remained committed to maintaining the security of European allies. In response to the crisis in Ukraine, they increased military presence and activity in the countries of NATO's eastern flank, mainly in Poland. Moreover, despite the reduction in the size of the US military contingent in Germany, the Donald Trump administration pledged to further expand its military presence in Poland.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, the United States additionally supported the activities of Poland and Central and Eastern Europe to reduce energy dependence on Russia. Among other things, they began to export natural gas to Poland on a large scale, and imposed sanctions on companies building the Nord Stream II gas pipeline, through which Russian gas is to be exported to Germany and other European countries (Jančoškova, 2017). The US also supported the Three Seas Initiative proposed by Poland and Croatia, which aims to strengthen security and cooperation in CEE.

Historical motivations

The United States has for centuries occupied a special place in the collective memory of Poles. In the historical context, pro-Americanism in Poland results from gratitude to the United States for help in various periods of history and a sense of historical ties between nations. The friendship between states and nations cultivated in Poland and the brotherhood of the fight for freedom are personified with the figures of the generals who fought hand in hand for the independence of the United States – Tadeusz Kościuszko,

Kazimierz Pułaski and George Washington. In the following centuries, Poland counted on the support of the United States in the fight for the rebirth of statehood after its partitions by the neighboring powers – Prussia, Russia and Austria. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Polish immigrants, eminent personalities, and members of Polish associations spread in the US the idea of independent Poland (Blejwas, 2010). At the end of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson, in his historic fourteen-point address to the Congress, called for the restoration of Polish statehood, and the United States was one of the first to enter into diplomatic relations with the new state. In the following years, the US led the anti-Nazi coalition that eradicated this criminal ideology from Europe. Unfortunately, the political conditions of that time meant that Central and Eastern Europe was surrendered to Soviet domination. This confirms that the United States favored Poland's independence and sovereignty. However, the strategic interests of the United States and its relations with other world powers were of paramount importance. For this reason, Poland could not always count on tangible support from the United States.

Polish society, harnessed by the burden of communism, did not lose faith that their friend from across the Atlantic would ultimately bring the desired freedom. The visits of American presidents to Poland – Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter – poured hope into Poles, hearts that America remembers them. However, the symbolic gestures were not followed by help in the fight against the Soviet oppressor, as the United States cared more for stability in Europe. In the early 1980s, President Ronald Reagan shook up a sleepy consensus behind *détente*, calling the Soviet Union an 'evil empire', challenging it in the arms race and providing help to the Solidarity movement in Poland (Moens, 2016). Poles' aspirations for independence were in line with the strategic interest of the United States of defeating the Soviet Union. During the martial law in Poland, the United States determinedly imposed sanctions on the Polish and Soviet communist regimes, with the intention of weakening them. This happened despite the fact that America's Western European allies advocated a more restrained approach (Cameron, 2005). The US also made efforts to provide financial and expert support to Solidarity, which was to lead to the building of a political opposition in Poland (Domber, 2008). Nowadays, the greatest support for the US is among the generation of Poles who were most directly experienced by the events of martial law and the struggle for independence. This mainly applies to people who were in their youth at that time and remember American support for the Polish Solidarity movement, of which they were often activists (Applebaum, 2005). This support, however, was a consequence of rivalry between the superpowers.

The global victory of the US over the USSR created the conditions for Poland to regain the longed-for freedom. After the Cold War, the United States greatly supported the systemic transition and transformation of Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. It began in 1989 with the enactment by the Congress of the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act and the authorization of \$ 300 million for

the creation of Enterprise Funds to promote democracy and economic liberalization in Poland and Hungary (Bouchet, 2015). In the following years, the United States continued its support for Poland and other CEE countries. In the 1990s, the democratization and stabilization of CEE was a priority strategic goal of the United States. This was to allow the US to expand its political influence and enter new markets.

Ideological and cultural motivations

For decades, the United States has been perceived by Poles as a country of model values. The myth of a wonderful America was especially intensified during the Cold War, when Poland was shackled by communism (Kiwerska, 2014). The United States was identified in Poland with freedom, democracy, human rights, openness and tolerance. Rags-to-riches stories motivated Poles to go to America in search of a better quality of life. Communist propaganda highlighted social pathologies in the United States, including racial discrimination, poverty and drug addiction. However, these actions were not able to disturb the Poles' idealized vision of America, which especially concerns the older generation of Poles. In 2021, 61 percent of Poles saw the United States as a country that could set the standards of democracy in the world.

The gray of the unified culture of socialist realism in Poland was contrasted with the modernist American culture, in which there was room for trends and influences from all over the world. Manifestations of American culture were readily received by Polish society both during and after the Cold War. This mainly concerned music, film, literature, sports and popular culture (Delaney & Antoszek, 2017). Coca-Cola, Levi's jeans or McDonald's have grown into symbols in Poland, which ignited the desire for a better, simpler and much more joyful life. Both young and old Poles followed the stars of American music, cinema and sport with great commitment. Poles believed in the 'American dream'. TV shows such as *Dynasty* revealed to the poor Polish society a completely unknown world and the lifestyle they wanted to experience. Over the years, a visa to the US had been the desire of hundreds of thousands of Poles who wanted to fly overseas, the vast majority of them for work purposes (Stola, 2020).

The systemic reforms started in 1989 in Poland were modeled on the solutions of mature democracies, including the United States. The political system introduced in Poland was based on Western values, including the tripartite division of power, multi-partyism, free elections, media diversification and a wide catalog of human and civil rights. The economic transformation in Poland was also based on American solutions. The radical plan of the Minister of Finance Leszek Balcerowicz to move from a centrally planned economy to a capitalist economy was modeled on the concept of the American economist Jeffrey D. Sachs. The plan, commonly known as 'shock therapy', quickly led to macroeconomic stabilization, but at a significant social cost. The impoverished broad sections of society were in contrast with the great fortunes that were rising

and the developing middle class. Poles could finally experience a bit of American consumerism, but only a few could afford to live in splendor and extravagance. Along with the opening of European borders, which allowed Poles to taste the Western way of life, admiration for the United States has partially diminished. Western Europe has offered a combination of modernity with an impressive cultural heritage.

The Polish right-wing, which has dominated the political scene in recent years, drew attention to American conservative values. The Catholic-national authorities in Poland are opposed to the socio-cultural position of the European Union, including secularization, multiculturalism, LGBT rights, and abortion. On the other hand, EU institutions accuse Poland of violating the fundamental principles of democracy and the rule of law, including limiting the independence of the judiciary and freedom of the media (Raś, 2017). At a time when liberal democracy in Poland was gradually weakening, some of its foundations were also undermined in the United States (Nyysönen, 2018), including the electoral process. Polish authorities and President Donald Trump's administration have been brought closer to their dislike of the leaders of Western European powers and the values they promote (Sperling & Webber, 2019). At that time, both anti-Americanism and anti-Polonism grew in the political elite of Germany and France. The conflict between conservative-right-wing and liberal-left-wing values is, however, equally strongly both among Poles and Americans. Due to the increased emphasis on the principles of the democratic state of law by the Joe Biden administration, the Polish authorities are to some extent distancing themselves from the new American authorities, waiting for the Republicans to return to power.

Benefits of pro-Americanism in Polish security policy

By implementing the pro-American security policy, the Polish authorities have desired to strengthen the alliance with the United States. The close alliance with the superpower is primarily to ensure Poland's security against Russia. This was mainly due to participation in US-led military missions and increasing military capabilities (Doeser, 2018). Poland was used by the United States several times to legitimize its activities on the international arena, which was particularly important in the face of opposition from Western European allies. American gratitude for Poland's support was primarily symbolic, and the US did not meet most of Poland's expectations, which is one of the risks of bandwagoning. Poland's benefits were usually limited to the military area, including increasing the number of US troops stationed in Poland and the number of joint military exercises. This, however, was primarily a consequence of the international situation, mainly of Russia's military policy in the region. The United States was delivering on its NATO obligations to defend its Allies because its international credibility depended on it. Poland's bandwagoning policy was of secondary importance. This is confirmed by the fact that the offer of aid was addressed to the countries of the entire eastern flank of

NATO. The location of the main US forces on the territory of Poland resulted mainly from the state's potential and strategic factors. In the meantime, however, the number of American troops stationed in Europe had been reduced, which undermined Poland's security. Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022 has changed this trend.

Through the pro-American security policy, Poland wanted to increase its position in NATO. The Hobbesian and realistic approach of the Polish authorities, including the excessive tendency to support the US-led military missions, caused that "Poland has grown into its own – occasionally with overhasty and deluded eagerness – as an important military power in Europe" (Lagadec, 2012). In practice, this did not significantly translate into increasing Poland's position in NATO. This is shown, among others, by the unsuccessful efforts by Poles to achieve the highest posts in NATO, including the Secretary General by Radosław Sikorski, or the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee by General Rajmund Andrzejczak. Poland's involvement in controversial military ventures, including the war in Iraq, was carried out without proper consultation with Western European allies. Even with American support, Poland is usually unable to build effective coalitions within NATO. Without it, they could not really influence the superpower's decisions, which is one of the risks of bandwagoning.

The focus on military cooperation with the United States has often come at the expense of relations with Western European allies. The Polish authorities prioritized the purchase of American military equipment, which frustrated European partners. Poland was reluctant to most of the initiatives implemented under the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), including initiated in 2017 Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Given Poland's geopolitical location, its reluctance to strengthen European military cooperation was inconsistent with its security interests. Moreover, the PiS authorities came into conflict on many levels with the institutions of the European Union. The antidote that was supposed to maintain Poland's international credibility was to tighten relations with the US (Schnepf, 2019). However, during the presidency of Donald Trump, the credibility of the United States as the main promoter of democratic values also declined. Moreover, the change of government in the US has shown that this approach was short-sighted. Currently, Poland cannot count on the support of the American administration in the face of international criticism.

Based on cooperation with the United States, Poland wanted to strengthen its leadership position in Central and Eastern Europe and build a geopolitical counterbalance not only to Russia, but also to Western Europe. The key project was the Three Seas Initiative, which received support from the President Trump administration. The TSI was in the interest of the United States, which wanted to increase political influence and tighten trade cooperation with CEE. However, we are currently seeing a reduction in the Joe Biden administration's support for regional initiatives and the transfer of leadership to Germany, seen by Democrats as Europe's leader. This raises a serious problem for the Polish government, which has been building Polish security policy based on the US and in opposition

to Western European powers. Poland's position in the region has not increased, and the deterioration of relations with Western allies creates a risk that the most important decisions regarding the region may be taken without Poland's participation.

Recommendations for Polish authorities

Polish authorities need to start interpreting properly the place of the state in US foreign and security policy. Symbolism used by American administrations, mainly republican ones, in Poland is perceived too optimistically and literally. This is despite the fact that there are hardly any direct references to Poland in the US NSS. Polish authorities are not always fully aware of the US using Poland and other CEE countries in the diplomatic game with Western Europe. For this reason, some of the basic assumptions of Polish security policy are incorrect, based on myths and wishful thinking. Expectations that with the support of the United States Poland will build regional structures that will be able to balance the power of Russia and Western Europe are unrealistic. The countries of CEE do not have sufficient potential and their interests, including in terms of security, are diversified. The United States, in turn, is primarily driven by its own strategic and economic interests. Only if the expectations of Poland and other CEE countries go hand in hand with them, American administrations attach more importance to cooperation with the region. The US, however, realizes that, first of all, it must take into account the most powerful centers of power, i.e. the European powers and the European Union.

In order for Poland's interests, including those in the area of security, to be properly taken into account, Poland cannot pursue pro-American security at the expense of good relations with Western Europe. The right-wing authorities must overcome their phobias towards the European Union and Germany and understand the specificity of sovereignty in the 21st century. Poland's strong embedding in the structures of the EU, including the ability to create and participate in coalitions pushing for its interests, will make Poland a credible and serious partner for the United States. Moreover, it will be a guarantee that regardless of who is in power in the US, decisions concerning Poland and CEE will not be settled between superpowers without its participation. It is harmful for Polish security interests to fall into conflict with the EU institutions. Particularly dangerous is undermining by Polish authorities the principles of democracy and the rule of law, which are fundamental to both the EU and the US. Currently for PiS the most important thing is to maintain power and continue reforms in line with its ideology, so it is possible to temporarily cool down relations with the US as long as they remain critical of the Polish authorities. The worst possible scenario would be a conflict with Western Europe and the United States due to the persistent implementation of the undemocratic agenda by the Polish government. This may lead to Poland's isolation in the international arena and seriously harm its security interests.

The Polish authorities should not attach significant importance in interstate relations, including with the United States, to emotional premises. It is also a mistake to base relations with the US on ideological factors at the expense of a strategic considerations. Poland should clearly articulate and negotiate its interests, before supporting individual US international initiatives. This includes participation in US-led military missions in remote areas. In addition, Poland must consult these issues with European allies in order to deepen solidarity and mutual trust. Poland's security policy must therefore be assertive when it comes to fundamental issues, but also open to compromise and avoiding confrontation with allies and partners. First of all, Poland must strive in NATO to increase security guarantees for CEE. This cannot be done in opposition to Western Europe, because it can only weaken transatlantic solidarity, and thus Poland's security. Western cohesion is essential in the context of the development of authoritarianism and totalitarianism in the world. Therefore, the implementation of the policy of bandwagoning by Poland towards the USA, especially in opposition to Western Europe, is unjustified. A strong Poland, in a strong united Europe, will be the most valuable partner for the USA.

Conclusions

This paper has argued that in the first two decades of the 21st century Polish security policy was clearly dominated by pro-American tendencies in many respects that fit into the concept of offensive bandwagoning. The provisions of strategic documents and the actions of the Polish authorities definitely confirm this assumption. The most serious manifestation of pro-Americanism in Polish security policy was the zealous support for the international military policy of the United States. Above all, Polish authorities decided to participate in US-led military missions, even in regions where Poland has no significant interests. Another important manifestation of pro-Americanism were multi-billion dollar contracts for the purchase of American arms and military equipment for the Polish army. The clearest manifestations of the pro-Americanism of the Polish authorities were seen during the times when the republican administrations ruled the United States. This was due to the interest of Presidents Bush and Trump in closer cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. All Polish governments in the 21st century have been pro-American, but in the case of the Civic Platform government, the approach to the US was more balanced with the approach to the European Union.

The paper has argued that there are many motivations for pro-Americanism in Poland, including historical, ideological and cultural, but the most important are in the area of security. Although some of these motivations are pragmatic, they are all saturated with emotional factors, which is a serious shortcoming. The most important motivation is to ensure Poland's security. The United States plays a key role in Polish security policy because it is seen as the main external guarantor of the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Difficult historical experiences of Poland resulting

from the neighborhood with Russia and Germany cause great distrust towards European partners and allies, especially among conservative and nationalist governments. For this reason, the Polish political elite naturally turns to the United States, which is the most powerful country in the world and is seen as the main promoter of freedom and democracy. In recent years, we have noticed a retreat in Poland from the liberal values that were traditionally identified with the United States, but during the Trump presidency these values were also not as exposed as before. The Polish and American authorities brought closer their attachment to conservative values, which are deeply rooted in both Polish and American society and right-wing political elites. However, this has changed with the seizure of power in the US by the Democrats.

It has been argued that despite the zeal to support American policy, Poland rarely drew tangible benefits from it, going beyond standard allied guarantees. The United States was primarily driven by its own interests and did not reward its most faithful allies in the way they expected. In practice, the main consequence of the pro-Americanism of the Polish authorities was the deepening of the alliance in a symbolic dimension. The United States has been fulfilling its basic allied commitment towards Poland, which is to support state security in the face of the growing threat from Russia. However, the United States has offered this support to all countries of NATO's eastern flank, including those that do not pursue a clearly pro-American security policy. This was due to the strategic interest of the United States of maintaining credibility as the leader of the West. What was problematic, the Polish authorities often disregarded Western European allies, including during tenders for equipment for the Polish army. Poland also supported and engaged in American political and military initiatives, that faced strong criticism in the international arena, including among European allies. This weakened the trust and unity of allies within NATO and the EU, which is negative for Polish security interests.

Poland's security policy towards the USA must be more pragmatic and de-ideologized. This requires a realistic interpretation of Poland's place in the US security policy, and real opportunities to strengthen this position. Supporting American activities in the international arena must be preceded by professional negotiations aimed at securing the interests of Poland. Moreover, Poland should strengthen its alliance with the US within NATO, and not try to build alternative alliance formulas in opposition to Western Europe. The importance of Poland in the US security policy depends primarily on its position in NATO and the EU. For these reasons, it is necessary for the Polish authorities to abandon the overzealous pro-Americanism that manifests itself in the policy of bandwagoning. The war in Ukraine of 2022 creates an opportunity for Poland to increase its importance in NATO, and thus in its relations with the US.

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