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Civic Platform's Views on the Security of Poland in the Context of the War in Ukraine

Poglądy Platformy Obywatelskiej na bezpieczeństwo Polski w kontekście wojny w Ukrainie

• Abstract •

This study is concerned with one of Poland's major political parties – Civic Platform (CP). Formed in 2001, it represents the liberal strain of Polish political thought. The Civic Platform was the ruling party between 2007 and 2015. For the ninth term of the Polish Parliament, it formed the Civic Coalition parliamentary group together with Modern, the Polish Initiative, and the Greens. This study explores the question of CP politicians' perceptions of the security of Poland in the context of the war in Ukraine. It takes a closer look at Polish liberals' assessment of the international situation and their diagnosis of the threats faced by Poland. Their outlook on political and military security is discussed as well, as is their attitude towards the steps taken by the Polish authorities after February 24, 2022. State security – defined as a condition obtained through effectively implemented defence and protection measures against a variety of military and non-military threats – was the main research category. State security may be considered a critical component of the *raison d'état*. It is also a key challenge for those in power.

Keywords: Civic Platform; state security; war in Ukraine; political thought

• Abstrakt •

Podmiotem badań jest jedna z sił politycznych w Polsce, Platforma Obywatelska (PO), powstała w 2001 roku i reprezentująca liberalny nurt polskiej myśli politycznej. Platforma Obywatelska rządziła w Polsce w latach 2007–2015, w Sejmie IX kadencji funkcjonowała w ramach Klubu Parlamentarnego Koalicja Obywatelska wraz z Nowoczesną, Inicjatywą Polską i Zielonymi. Celem poznawczym artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie: w jaki sposób politycy Platformy Obywatelskiej postrzegali bezpieczeństwo Polski w świetle wojny w Ukrainie? W tym celu przybliżono dokonywane przez liberałów oceny środowiska międzynarodowego i diagnozy zagrożeń Polski, a także ich poglądy na bezpieczeństwo polityczne i militarne oraz stosunek do działań władz RP po 24 lutego 2022 r. Główną kategorią badawczą było bezpieczeństwo państwa, czyli stan uzyskany w rezultacie odpowiednio zorganizowanej obrony i ochrony przed różnorodnymi zagrożeniami militarnymi i niemilitarnymi. Bezpieczeństwo państwa można traktować jako podstawowy wyznacznik racji stanu, a jednocześnie kluczowe wyzwanie dla rządzących.

Słowa kluczowe: Platforma Obywatelska; bezpieczeństwo państwa; wojna w Ukrainie; myśl polityczna

Preliminary remarks

The world is currently experiencing events, conflicts and processes that herald a shift in the geopolitical and international security systems. Amid these transformative challenges, there is ample discussion and controversy between researchers and politicians over the international order in its existing, transitional phase, and its future shape, as well as around the issue of European and international security. In the context of the war in Ukraine, territorial integrity and political autonomy seem to be critical, as they are prerequisites for preserving the state as a political community of citizens. The primary task of the state, and of the political class as a whole, is to identify and counter threats against these core values.

This study is concerned with one of Poland's major political parties – Civic Platform (CP). Formed in 2001, it represents the liberal strain of Polish political thought. The Civic Platform was the ruling party between 2007 and 2015. For the ninth term of the Polish Parliament, it formed the Civic Coalition parliamentary group together with Modern, the Polish Initiative, and the Greens. Since CP politicians have the ambition to take over the rule of Poland, it is important to know the party's stance on key matters of state security – for research as well as for applicative purposes.

The paper focuses on the 21st century, which saw the international order undergo some profound changes as the Russian Federation challenged the post-Cold War framework. Consequently, Central and Eastern Europe faced new security risks, and Poland had to address new challenges (especially after Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine). This was coupled with the weakened political will of Western European politicians – in fact, dating back to Russia's attack against Georgia in 2008, when EU leaders took a “soft” stance. These dynamics warrant a reorientation in how we think about state security and upcoming policy priorities in this area.

This study explores the question of CP politicians' perceptions of the security of Poland in the context of the war in Ukraine. It takes a closer look at Polish liberals' assessment of the international situation and their diagnosis of the threats faced by Poland. Their outlook on political and military security is discussed as well, as is their attitude towards the steps taken by the Polish authorities after February 24, 2022. State security – defined as a condition obtained through effectively implemented defence and protection measures against a variety of military and non-military threats – was the main research category. State security may be considered a critical component of the *raison d'état*. It is also a key challenge for those in power.

To meet the research aim, this paper uses systems analysis. Accordingly, Polish liberals' political thought – understood as any form of reflection about the political

reality – is seen here as a complex system composed of four dimensions: theoretical, ideological, doctrinal-conceptual, and programme-related. The study employed the analysis of testimonies and traces of political thought as its main research technique. Furthermore, it relied on desk research (including the qualitative analysis of written sources). This involved the collection, verification, compilation, analysis and processing of data and information from existing sources. The material was then used to form conclusions on the research problem.

Preferred international order and assessment of Poland's security threats

It is evident that CP politicians based their outlook on both liberal and realist theories of international security. From the liberal perspective, they defined the state's power as primarily stemming from relational unevenness rather than from military potential. This transpired from the views of CP politicians – they had a collaborative attitude towards state relations, advocated for foreign policy economisation, favoured using the “opponent” instead of the “enemy” category in the international community, and preferred soft power for foreign policy purposes. Realist elements included seeing NATO as the guarantee of Poland's security and the United States of America as a strategic ally with the actual capabilities to help Poland.

In political debates, liberals used the term ‘international order’ instead of ‘international system’. Hence, their emphasis was on international regulations (norms and rules) governing the actions of states and international organisations. Liberals are distinctly of the view that international order is shaped (not imposed) by states through mutual arrangements on the rules of what is and what is not permitted.

The CP argued that Poland's contributions to the international security environment should involve three aspects: (1) a pro-active foreign policy that is a purposeful and conscious effort, embedded in the *raison d'état*, to counter any attempts at harmful activities in the international environment that pose a threat to national security; (2) the capacity to form coalitions, i.e., to cooperate with other states in alliances or under other organisational frameworks of international cooperation, resulting in the ability to gain support for joint efforts to counter threats; and (3) competence and authority of government officials responsible for representing the state in the international arena.

Multilateralisation was seen as critical to preventing the anarchisation of the international order. It was based on three pillars: (1) multi-state cooperation on equal terms; (2) the conviction that all states ultimately benefit the most from

mutual cooperation; and (3) universal values shared by the states belonging to the democratic community. In line with the liberal paradigm, CP politicians considered international institutions to be the key driver of international cooperation (the external factor). The global system of international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was established to safeguard norms of international law and guarantee peace. Each state that ignored or breached international norms would be marginalised in international relations and could expect a backlash from the international community in the form of sanctions.

Therefore, liberals were proponents of a multipolar (multilateral) international order – an international environment in which there are several core organisations that shape the international order on partnership terms. NATO and the European Union were considered particularly important parts of this multipolar system. CP believed that Poland had been permanently incorporated “into the architecture of the democratic world” (Sikorski, 2011).

Neoliberals stressed that the true power of a state in the contemporary world comes from the asymmetry of interdependence. Among the liberal concepts of international security, two are particularly noteworthy: the democratic peace theory and the concept of collective security. The former – ontologically positivist – posits that only a democratic state system could eliminate the use of force in international politics. However, this could be achieved only between democratic partners. Hence, the EU would be referred to as the democratic federation of states and the liberal peace zone.

The concept of collective security aimed to overcome the Cold War logic of the balance of power. According to its proponents, it was this balance that had sparked controversies and conflicts in international relations. Collective security essentially assumes that when a member of the system is attacked, the other members will take steps to restore security and end the conflict. However, there is an important distinction into concepts of collective security, when the threat is internal (UN), and collective defence, when the threat is external (NATO). Liberals from the CP were proponents of the cooperative security concept (cooperation with the EU and NATO) (Konwiński, 2022; Budka, 2023).

In their perception, the growing anarchy in international relations was one of the main threats to the international order. In the years 2016–2022, the symptoms of this trend included: (1) US President Donald Trump’s voluntaristic policies and their endorsement by many state leaders; (2) Brexit; (3) Vladimir Putin’s neoimperial policies; (4) the erosion of democratic values and institutions (Viktor Orbán’s “neoliberal democracy”); and (5) the gradual move away from multilateralism towards

a uniquely understood polycentrism. In essence, such polycentrism would involve legitimising “spheres of privileged interest” created by global superpowers – in other words, the revival of the 19th-century concept of “spheres of influence”. This anachronistic mindset was espoused by authoritarian-state leaders – Russia’s Vladimir Putin, China’s Xi Jinping, and Turkey’s Recep Erdoğan. Therefore, CP’s notion of the international order relied on the dichotomy between the “good” world – the community of democratic states – versus the “bad” world of “dictatorships” (Tusk, 2022a). Other global-scale “turbulences” included the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and terrorism. The international order was also destabilised by the policies of authoritarian regimes as they advocated for Catalonia’s separatist movement, helped destabilise the Balkans and supported the anti-democratic “ideological front” in Europe, including most notably Marie Le Pen’s political movement. Liberals from the CP saw this as a “substitute for direct confrontation with the Western world” (Tusk, 2022b; Schetyna, 2023).

It should be stressed that until 2022, Russian policies were rarely mentioned as a security threat. In its diagnosis of Russia’s role in the European security system, the CP adhered to the liberal notion of international relations. Accordingly, its politicians prioritised cooperation and friendly relations with Moscow, free from historically ingrained prejudices and resentments. On the one hand, they recognised that Russia had a destabilising influence on Central and Eastern European states by attacking them militarily (the war in Georgia, annexation of Crimea, supporting separatism in Donbas, Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and engaging in hybrid warfare (e.g., disinformation). On the other hand, they saw the need to maintain economic cooperation, dialogue and compromise with Russia, accepting it “as it is”. The Polish-Russian *détente* was motivated by pragmatism and reflected a new philosophy in the bilateral relations between Poland and Russia. “Everyone tried a reset at some point. We did too, and it was the right move. We got Putin to visit Westerplatte and Katyń. Except that we, unlike Germany, had prepared plan B in case the reset fell through. This is why our defence spending was a solid two percent of Poland’s GDP, whereas Germany stunted on defence” – this is how Radosław Sikorski summarised Poland’s foreign policy towards the Russian Federation between 2007 and 2015 (Sikorski, 2023).

CP politicians believed that Poland should engage the EU to mediate in its political relations with Russia. They thought that the stronger Poland’s position in the EU, the more seriously Russia would treat it. An Eastern policy based on Poland’s EU membership would help Poland make a greater impact by providing it with “attractive instruments” and a strong enough potential to influence Eastern policies. This mindset implied that Poland could become a leader in policy-making between

Europe and Russia (Platforma Obywatelska, 2011; Tusk, 2005; Komorowski, 2006; Applebaum & Tusk, 2021).

It was only after February 24, 2022, that CP politicians had noticeably revised their perception of Russia, firmly condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine by calling it “a brutal and bloody war”. They made clear that after years of peace in Europe, new threats had emerged – military threats, stemming from Russia’s imperial policies, and the related political threats linked to the fact that many European countries relied on Russian gas and capital. Donald Tusk announced this stance on behalf of CP, stating that “we are seeing history repeating itself in a dramatic and unexpected fashion” and that “what is happening across our eastern border will change the international order”. He identified five potential threats to Poland that were linked to the war in Ukraine: Poland’s isolation in the international arena, internal conflicts, disinformation, the rapid surge of Ukrainian immigration to Poland and the resulting chaos, and inertia among some European leaders who had been underestimating the threat from Russia and refusing to adopt a firmer stance towards it (Polsat News, 2022a; Stolarczyk, 2016).

It is important to note that Polish liberals’ assessments of the international environment were consistent and aligned with global trends – on the one hand, with US policies towards Russia, including Barack Obama’s attempts to reset relations with Russia, and on the other hand, with EU policies promoting multifaceted cooperation with the Russian Federation. Russia’s attack against Ukraine proved that these approaches – shared by most major political parties in democratic states – were wrong. Even when it was still in power, the CP had ample evidence that it was impossible to cooperate with Russia “as it is” (Tusk, 2007). Apart from that, between 2007 and 2015, Poland pursued many policies that ran counter to Russia’s political interest defined by Vladimir Putin’s government (Grodzki, 2010).

International order and alliances

Liberals had the conviction that international alliances were essential to the security environment. As an ally, Poland’s objective was to recognise its own aspirations and defence capabilities on the one hand, and to make a “contribution” by fulfilling its obligations as an ally and improving its defence capabilities on the other (Platforma Obywatelska, 2007). For this reason, one of the defence policy guidelines was to seek and maintain alliances and partnerships. In practice, this meant aligning Polish security policy with NATO and EU policies, and defining it around bilateral relations with states that are important for Poland’s security.

Regardless of the threats they had identified, Polish liberals defined two pillars of Poland's security: membership of NATO and membership of, and firm anchoring in, the EU. CP politicians continued to consider the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Tusk, 2022c) as fundamental to the security system of Europe and Poland. They referred to it as "Poland's safest alliance in its history" (Newsweek.pl, 2014). Liberals' priority within the Alliance was to "strengthen the eastern flank". After Russia's annexation of Crimea, the US became directly involved in Central and Eastern Europe. The CP approved of the declarations and agreements made at the Newport NATO Summit, including in particular the Readiness Action Plan. It provided for the establishment of a "spearhead force" (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – land forces that could deploy wherever needed within 48 hours) and strengthening of the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) in Szczecin. Moreover, the Plan expected to establish six multinational command and control units in Eastern Europe (so-called NFIUs), introduce permanent rotation of the allied forces, organise regular NATO military exercises in the region, and prepare bases and infrastructure for NATO soldiers (Sutowski, 2016).

The Civic Platform–Polish People's Party Government and President Bronisław Komorowski saw the increased presence of the US in Eastern Europe as a positive development that was clearly in line with Poland's security interests. Announced by the US President in June 2014, the European Reassurance Initiative marked the strengthening of US-European relations. Its objectives were to increase the rotation of American military personnel in the region, build military infrastructure, deploy equipment and intensify joint military exercises. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022, CP politicians stressed with even stronger emphasis that Poland's *raison d'état* was to have NATO troops station on its territory, in line with "the-more-the-better" principle. The goal was to have two US heavy artillery brigades permanently station in Poland, as well as missile defence systems and military equipment warehouses in place on its territory (Kozubal, 2023; Sutowski, 2016).

The other pillar of security was Poland's membership of the European Union. Whereas NATO was the most important military alliance, the EU was the key political pact, with the rule of law as a significant security factor. For CP politicians, it was clear that Poland's *raison d'état* was inextricably linked to its membership of the EU. By extension, they thought that Poland should form a strategic partnership with the EU's two biggest countries – France and Germany (Vincent-Rostowski, 2015). In their opinion, European integration changed the perception of international alliances in three ways. First, whereas in the pre-accession period, it was critical to search for core and permanent allies, or "advocates", once Poland joined the EU, maintaining such alliances would conserve asymmetrical – perhaps even

“paternalistic” – relations and undermine Poland’s position in the EU. Second, European integration had changed the context in which alliances and coalitions were formed by marginalising geographical and historical considerations. With Poland becoming part of EU politics, geographical location was no longer of primary concern, overridden by the benefits offered by new potential European alliances. Thus, temporary alliances would be built into EU policies as a common vehicle for Member States to advance their interests. According to CP politicians, these alternating coalitions were “challenging”, but nonetheless afforded more flexibility in policy-making, making it more effective. Third, building political alliances within the EU was conducive to a “positive-sum game”, in which there were no longer “win-or-lose” situations (Platforma Obywatelska, 2011).

In the debate concerning EU Member States’ security, Polish liberals were in favour of creating a European legion – fast response forces. The goal was to establish an EU-funded permanent military brigade comprising volunteers from EU Member States (not soldiers from EU Member States’ regular armies). The Legion would operate under the political supervision of the European Council. The CP was aware of the potential obstacles to strengthening European integration in security and defence, and its politicians raised these concerns. For instance, defence could turn into a politically contentious issue, preventing EU states from reaching a compromise. Furthermore, “old” EU Member States could be reluctant to embrace the project – unlike Poland, situated at the “civilisational rift between the worlds of democracy and dictatorship”, they were safe. The third factor that could hamper this project was highlighted by its opponents. They claimed that a European army would be competitive towards NATO and weaken Europe’s ties with the US. The CP’s stance was that a European legion would fulfil two functions, depending on the degree of US involvement in European security: (1) assist NATO and support the US in “carrying the burden of world leadership”; and (2) guarantee adequate EU defence capabilities, should the United States’ involvement in European security decrease. Polish liberals declared their support for any form of military cooperation within the EU that, in conjunction with NATO, would enhance Member States’ defence capabilities. In doing so, they renounced the French concept of the EU’s “strategic autonomy”, positing that the Community should remain independent from other global political actors in its military, political, and economic actions (Koalicja Obywatelska, 2019; Czuma, 2021).

For the CP, alliances were a significant complement to national defence capabilities (Sikorski, 2012) as well as an essential component of contemporary international relations, the rationale being that no state, regardless of how powerful, would be able to effectively counter threats on its own. According to the party, alliances

could be built around common values (democracy, human rights, rule of law) and similar perceptions of international security (Klich, 2008a). For this reason, CP politicians attached primary importance to the consolidation of Western European democratic states. In their opinion, a safe state was one that enjoyed respect as a “predictable and reliable partner” that shared “common goals and interests” with other countries. Polish liberals considered the arrogant and provocative attitude that the Law and Justice party came to be associated with as “highly risky” (Tusk, 2011; Schetyna, 2014).

The CP believed Poland could pursue its national interests only in conjunction with the two major security organisations – NATO and the EU. The party argued that through these political and military alliances, Poland could meet its global political objectives. These included countering the sources of crises, settling conflicts around the world and empowering international security organisations to build a stable security environment (Klich, 2008b).

Moreover, the Civic Platform pointed to the inconstant nature of international pacts. Among its politicians, the prevailing view was that in international relations, there are no “natural”, “default”, or “perennial” allies, just as there are no permanent coalitions. They changed along with the issues that needed to be addressed. What would not change was the primacy of state interests, or – in the EU context – Community interests. The CP advocated for agreements “with all our partners, friends that are old and new, big and small, geographically close and remote, rich and poor”. This meant that Poland should expand its existing partnerships while establishing and strengthening new (formal and informal) international relations (Platforma Obywatelska, 2007, 2011).

The Civic Platform highlighted the need to ensure a balance between national defence capabilities and state obligations as NATO allies. The party's approach to national defence capabilities was embedded in the context of global security, the central premise being that Poland's defence capabilities were driven by its national needs and allied obligations.

War in Ukraine

After Russia invaded Ukraine, Polish liberals expressed their strong support for helping its eastern neighbour in the war effort. As far as Poland's long-term interests were concerned, the CP talked about one major goal – to make sure Ukraine wins the war. Its achievement would have economic (Ukraine's reconstruction, trade security) and refugee-related (stopping refugee influx) consequences.

According to the CP, politics was about involvement in public matters that rested on ethical foundations and could change the world and help people. Therefore, the party considered refugee aid to be politics “at its purest”. In its estimation, Poland’s capital as a state providing humanitarian aid rested on two pillars: the mass act of solidarity with Ukrainian refugees (involving millions of Polish people) and military support for Ukraine (Tusk, 2023). The CP believed that providing refugee aid would particularly strengthen Poland’s security and raise its international status.

It is interesting to note that in 2014, after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, CP liberals were cautious about the idea of helping Ukraine. Donald Tusk stated that “we are ready to help insofar as we can afford. We are ready to provide Ukraine with support to the extent that it does not undermine Poland’s security”. Poland was willing to help Ukraine on the condition that it would be an international effort. Therefore, it was a prerequisite that the EU, the US and the whole NATO became involved. It was imperative to agree on common policies towards Russia and Ukraine in order for Poland not to risk isolation and exposure to Putin’s revenge. At the same time, the CP supported the notion that Ukraine’s future should be decided by its political authorities, and that international institutions should help it remain independent and withstand pressure from Russia or any other country (Tusk, 2014).

Liberals saw the war in Ukraine in two important contexts: geopolitical and cultural-civilisational. In geopolitical terms, the conflict was critical not only to the security of Ukraine and its closest neighbours (including Poland and the region), but also, more broadly, to the future political boundary between the East and the West, as well as the future global security architecture. In this regard, CP liberals had no doubts that Ukraine must receive multi-faceted support: political, military, economic, and social. The scale of this support would depend on Poland’s established position in the Western world. In their opinion, apart from the obvious political background, the Russo-Ukrainian war was also set in a cultural-civilisational context. It was a struggle between the worlds of democratic values and dictatorships, with the whole world’s future being at stake (Tusk, 2022b; Polsat News, 2022b).

Amid the war in the East, Donald Tusk called for cooperation between members of the global community of democratic nations and for political unity within Poland. In his opinion, the latter could be achieved in three steps. The first would be to abandon the rhetoric of “the West as Poland’s enemy”. Liberals thought that such narrative essentially fed into Russian propaganda aimed at alienating Poland from the democratic community. In order to ensure Poland’s credibility in times of the European security crisis, it was imperative for the country to resolve its disputes with the EU. Another priority would be to restore the rule of law in Poland. According to Tusk, it was unacceptable for Poland to continue its dispute

with the European Union over the freedom of courts. He believed that Poland's stance should reflect the position of the liberal democratic camp as opposed to that of the ruling authoritarian camp. Accordingly, restoring the Polish judicial system was necessary for Poland to bolster its position with the EU and US allies. Thus, the CP had reiterated its emphasis on the internal and external dimensions of state security. The third step towards security would be to have all major political parties in Poland work on laws to support the country's defence capabilities (Wirtualna Polska, 2022). CP politicians realised that in the face of the Russian threat, Europe should place more emphasis on hard power, since the soft power approach proved inadequate.

CP believed that Ukraine had a chance to join NATO and the EU. They argued that Ukrainians had proven to be even more pro-Western "than some of the European politicians, even some of the European nations". Evidently, this stance ran counter to the party's previous outlook on the matter. In the years 2007–2015, the CP's prevailing view was that Ukraine was not ready to integrate with the West. In 2022, there was a major shift in thinking within the party. Now, CP politicians stressed that portraying Ukraine as a weak and corrupt country whose standards would not qualify it for membership of the EU was a narrative that served Russian interests and as such should be abandoned, since "corruption is not only a Ukrainian invention" (Tusk, 2022c).

Polish liberals took part in the political discussion around the Polish-Ukrainian grain dispute and the shift in Ukrainian policy towards Germany. They criticised the United Right's attitude towards Ukraine, describing it as "a love-hate policy: it started with delight and euphoria, just tell us what you need – they almost fell to their knees; but then, when political gains were at stake – they made a U-turn" (Bankier.pl, 2023). As an alternative, the CP offered a policy that was "stable, strategically sound and fostering good relations with Ukraine but not at Poland's expense". It would be free from emotion, sentiment and resentment – "without exaltation, whether positive or negative". The CP's plan to stabilise Polish-Ukrainian relations rested on the belief that Ukraine was an important partner for Poland. It assumed four boundary conditions for the future Polish-Ukrainian cooperation: 1) to define Poland's role in rebuilding Ukraine – as a maximum option, Poland would be a major participant in this process; 2) to rationalise military aid to Ukraine such that Poles do not have to bear its financial burden; 3) to clarify the status of Ukrainian refugees in Poland based on a well-defined legal and organisational framework without excessive burden on Poland's budget; and 4) to resolve the grain crisis to allow Ukrainian grain transit in Poland without putting Polish farmers and producers at risk of bankruptcy (Bankier.pl, 2023).

For Polish liberals, the war in Ukraine was also a pretext for addressing the issue of Poland's rule of law. In their estimation, it was unacceptable to reject the rule of law on the grounds that a large section of the Polish society and political class had shown an admirable attitude towards Ukraine. One of the key ways to guarantee Poland's security was to ensure its firm anchoring in Western Community structures through consistent observance of the integration rules. The alternative to this would be to condemn Poland to isolation in Europe. This, in turn, would weaken its ties with the EU and undermine broader international relations, ultimately for the benefit of Russia. In the liberal spirit, Tusk emphasised that Ukrainians fight not only for the sovereignty and integrity of Poland, but also for the "great Western values". In his estimation, Ukraine was ready to make the greatest sacrifices for these values, just as Poland was when it liberated itself from the Soviet yoke. The ultimate victory of freedom and fundamental values of Western civilisation was a precondition for peace in Europe (Tusk, 2022a).

Conclusions

The analysis of Civic Platform politicians' views on the security of Poland in the context of the war in Ukraine has led to four conclusions:

First, the party's politicians had a largely liberal approach to international order (institutional and legal). They refused to accept balance-of-power politics and opposed war and the use of force, as well as the Schmittian understanding of international relations along the "friend or foe" line.

Second, one of the core points on Polish liberals' agenda was to make Poland's security a matter of international concern by bolstering its external pillars – alliances and strategic partnerships – while strengthening Poland's self-reliance in terms of defence capabilities (to be able to respond adequately when allied action is thwarted).

Third, until 2022, the CP's stance on international relations and security largely tied in with the liberal paradigm. This was reflected in how its politicians diagnosed and prioritised matters in their security policies (i.e., use soft power by exporting democratic values and promote multilateralism in international relations). Starting from 2022, in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the CP's political thought took an evident and unprecedented turn towards realism. Polish liberals placed more emphasis on building hard power (this included a well-equipped and trained army, and an effective missile defence system).

Fourth, Poland's security rested on the pillars of its NATO and EU membership. In this context, CP politicians saw the rule of law and a stable constitutional order as the key political considerations.

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