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POLISH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF DONALD TRUMP IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF OFFENSIVE BANDWAGONING

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to analyze and evaluate the Polish-American alliance during the presidency of Donald Trump in the perspective of the concept of offensive bandwagoning. In Poland, the United States is invariably perceived as the main external guarantor of security. For this reason, Poland's security policy is clearly pro-American. The Polish authorities from the Law and Justice party and the US administration of President Donald Trump were brought together by many factors, including ideological closeness, disputes with Western European political elites, relativizing the principles of the rule of law and democracy, and a similar view of the geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe. I argue that in recent years the Polish-American alliance was deepened, but at the same time the asymmetry in relations between the states increased. Even more than usual, symptoms of clientelism were noticeable in Poland's security policy towards the US, which was a consequence of the implementation of the offensive bandwagoning concept. I also argue that the tightening of Polish-American alliance was detrimental to the cohesion and solidarity in NATO and the EU, which was against the basic interests of Poland's security. During the research, the method of text source analysis was used. The research could support decision-makers in developing the basic principles of Poland's security policy towards the United States.

Keywords: Poland, the United States, military alliance, bandwagoning, “Fort Trump”, NATO.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Relations with the United States play a special role in Poland's post-Cold War security policy. There is a clear asymmetry in these relations due to America's dominant position in the world and its global interests. Poland is incomparably less important in the security policy of the superpower. Polish authorities usually try to hide the asymmetry in bilateral relations by emphasizing symbolic gestures of the American authorities. They convince about the uniqueness of the "Polish-American alliance", giving it the character of "special relations". During the presidency of Donald Trump, Polish-American relations were filled with mutual courtesies, celebration, and at times even courtship. The Polish and American authorities, including the presidents, have in fact built a kind of special bond with each other, based on mutual sympathy and respect. The Polish side hoped that this would translate into an increase in the importance of the state in the security policy of the United States, and thus in the international arena. In practice, however, the American administration was guided mainly by the strategic and economic interests of the US when making political decisions.

The aim of the paper is to analyze and evaluate the Polish-American military alliance during the presidency of Donald Trump. The main research problem is the question of whether the alliance between Poland and the US was tightened during this period, and whether the relations between the countries became more balanced? To answer this question, it is also necessary to answer the following detailed questions: What is the mutual perception of the importance of states in security policy? What factors were conducive to strengthening defense cooperation between states? Was it appropriate to base Poland's security on close cooperation with the US to the detriment of relations with European allies? Will the positive climate in Polish-American relations continue during the administration of Joe Biden? The main hypothesis assumes that during the Donald Trump administration the military alliance between Poland and the US was tightened, but the asymmetry in bilateral relations deepened, which was a consequence of implementing the offensive bandwagoning concept. Moreover, the durability of the tightening of this alliance is problematic as it was mainly deepened with President Trump's administration and not more broadly with the American political elite, as well as because it was built in opposition to Western European allies. During the research, the method of text source analysis was used.

2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW FOR OFFENSIVE BANDWAGONING IN POLISH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE

Stephen M. Walt (1987, p. 12) defines an alliance as "a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states". The essence of such an agreement is the *casus foederis*, which determines the circumstances of undertaking joint defense (Madej, 2012). The most common reason for making alliances is a shared perception of an external threat. The aggregation of defense resources is intended to balance the threat posed by a state or a group of states with opposing security interests (Waltz, 2008). A classic example of "balancing" in practice was the formation of the North Atlantic Alliance in the face of the threat posed by the Soviet Union and its Central European satellites.

Another mechanism for forming alliances is “bandwagoning”. The term was introduced into the literature by Quincy Wright (1942), in turn popularized by Kenneth Waltz (1979). This mechanism applies to situation when weaker countries join the dominant power, even if there is no real external threat. Such a threat, however, may be created by the power they join. Such a situation is called defensive bandwagoning, and Andrzej Dybczyński (2005) defines this as a “potential victim’s strategy”. A weaker state prefers to join a neighboring superpower rather than be exposed to repressions on its part. With the accession, the risk of an attack by the dominant power is eliminated, but the weaker state must meet its expectations, especially in the field of foreign and security policy. The second form of inclusion is defensive bandwagoning, also known as “hyena strategy”. Weaker states join the dominant power, counting on a share in the profits resulting from its activities on the international arena. Bandwagoning, however, has negative consequences for weaker countries, including the possibility of becoming dependent on the dominant power, no real influence on its policy and the possibility of deteriorating relations with other countries (Kuźniar, 2012). After the Cold War, an example of defensive bandwagoning may be the alliance with Russia of some post-Soviet states within the Collective Security Treaty Organization. An example of offensive bandwagoning is Poland’s attempt to tighten its alliance with the United States, including participation in controversial international undertakings of the superpower.

As a result of Poland’s membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, it is included in the collective defense and deterrence system. In return, it contributes to the strengthening of this system, and must also act coherently with its allies (Czaputowicz, 2012). The Polish authorities are trying to go beyond the standard allied bond that exists within NATO. They are at least seeking the position of the United States’ closest ally in Central and Eastern Europe. Being in close relations with the superpower, they want to strengthen Poland’s position on the international arena and make it the actual leader of the CEE region. For this reason, they show an unequivocally pro-American attitude, deciding to support US actions even in regions where Poland has no obvious interests. The specificity of the offensive bandwagoning is, however, that it is the dominant power that decides on the distribution of profits from specific activities on the international arena. In practice, even the most pro-American state may not be rewarded. The most glaring example of this was Poland’s participation in the American-led coalition of the willing to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The Polish authorities counted on a number of benefits from this involvement, including the strengthening of multidimensional cooperation with the US and a number of economic contracts in Iraq and the Middle East. In practice, however, most of the Polish postulates have not been met.

Due to the unequivocally pro-American policy, at the beginning of the 21st century Poland was defined by David H. Dunn (2002) as “America’s New Model Ally”, and by Marcin Zaborowski and Kerry Longhurst (2003) as “American Protégé in the East”. Poland’s attitude was also subject to more expressive criticism. Ryszard Zięba (2013) described the submissive policy of the Polish left-wing and right-wing authorities towards the United States as a practical implementation of the concept of bandwagoning, with symptoms of clientelism and self-vassalization. David Sylvan and Stephen Majeski (2009) described Poland as the American “client state”. They justified this by the specificity of tightening bilateral military cooperation, the form of inter-allied communication and multi-billion orders for military equipment in the US, also for American loans. Roman Kuźniar (2018), in turn, stated that the authori-

ties from the Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) political camp put Poland in relations with the USA in the position of a client, satellite and even a semi-colony.

The main symptoms of offensive bandwagoning in the Polish-American alliance during the presidency of Donald Trump were:

- basing the state's defense strategy on security guarantees from the USA,
- determined efforts to locate a permanent base of the US Armed Forces in Poland,
- priority treatment and dependence on the supply of arms and military equipment from the USA,
- supporting the US's controversial security initiatives in the international arena,
- treating the USA as a priority partner also in the area of energy security,
- implementation of the above activities without proper consultation and equal consideration of allies from Western Europe,
- limited benefits resulting from the above activities, which would go beyond the standard security guarantees obtained within NATO,
- limited influence on US decisions towards CEE and no influence on decisions concerning other regions.

3. FACTORS FAVORING THE POLISH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF DONALD TRUMP

For the Law and Justice government, the main motive for deepening the alliance with the United States is the traditional fear of Russia. The ambivalent attitude of the Obama administration towards CEE meant that the Polish authorities eagerly began to strive for a more determined involvement of the Donald Trump administration in the region and even closer linking of their own security interests with those of the US (Goh & Sahashi, 2020). The PiS unequivocally supports a unipolar world in which the United States maintains military primacy (Lanoszka, 2020), believing that close ties with the superpower are Poland's only credible external security guarantee.

The rapprochement between the Polish and US authorities was a consequence of their complicated relations with Western Europe. They were both reluctant towards the institutions of the European Union and the leaders of Western European powers – Germany and France (Goh & Sahashi, 2020). Polish authorities are distrustful of the political intentions of Western European allies, including the reliability of security guarantees (Paruch, 2020). This distrust deepened along with accusations against Poland of violating the principles of the rule of law and liberal democracy, including undermining the independence of state institutions, mainly the judiciary, and restricting the freedom of the media. Tightening relations with the Donald Trump administration was supposed to be an antidote to the accusations from the EU. The United States has many possibilities, mainly in the area of security, to put pressure on Poland to stop the illiberal trend. President Trump, however, did not criticize the way Poland was governed and provided political support to the Polish authorities (Appel, 2019).

Donald Trump has repeatedly contested the legitimacy of the European Union and entered into political and personal disputes with the leaders of Western powers. They criticized the way in which the American president exercised leadership, accusing him of a lack of a long-term strategic vision, contempt for Western values, a transactional approach, disrupt-

ing Western unity and undermining security guarantees. This criticism punctuated Trump's narcissistic personality, so he preferred to tighten relations with the countries where he was received with the highest honors, including Poland. Moreover, President Trump could count on Poland's support for controversial international initiatives. A characteristic example was the US-led Middle East conference in Warsaw in February 2019, which had an unambiguous anti-Iranian purport. Contrary to the expectations of the Polish authorities, their position was not adequately taken into account during the conference, and the role of Poland in the Middle East policy has not increased. Once again, the implementation of the offensive bandwagon concept, aimed at increasing the importance of the state in global politics, ended in a fiasco. While the organization of the anti-Iranian conference was a mistake, the support for the US-led international coalition against the Islamic State was justified due to the allied cohesion within NATO.

The Polish and American authorities were also brought closer by a similar conservative-nationalist ideology. They had a similar view on a number of important socio-political issues, including negative attitudes towards immigration, manifestations of Islamophobia and aversion to LGBT communities. In their rhetoric, they cultivated traditional values, including adherence to the Christian religion, patriotism and family. They expressed opposition to the liberal-left ideological current which they believe undermines the foundations of Western civilization.

In the Polish-American relations, a huge role is played by the symbolism of the historical community of the struggle for freedom, embodied, among others, in the heroes of the US Independence War – Jerzy Washington, Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski (Kiwerska, 2014). In the 21st century, the Polish-American brotherhood in arms and solidarity in the fight against tyranny are transferred to the war against international terrorism (Bouchet, 2015). During the presidency of Donald Trump, the courtesy of cultivating joint armed struggle accompanied bilateral meetings to an even greater extent than before.

The parties shared a similar approach to the need to rebalance influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland, in cooperation with the countries of the region and with the support of the US, is trying to build a counterweight to both Russia and Western Europe, mainly Germany. President Trump's administration had supported the regional integration initiatives proposed by Poland. First of all, it concerned the Three Seas Initiative, which is an intra-EU grouping, aiming to strengthen the infrastructure, energy and economic cooperation of the countries located between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea (Kowal & Orzelska-Stączek, 2019). Within the TSI, energy cooperation is of particular importance, which is to lead to the integration of energy markets of the countries in the region and their independence from supplies of energy resources from Russia. The United States is becoming an increasingly important exporter of liquefied natural gas. Poland wants to become an important gas hub, from which American gas would be supplied to the CEE countries (Michalik, 2019). President Trump participated in the second TSI summit in Warsaw in June 2017, showing American support for the initiative. In addition, the US has allocated \$ 1 billion to support its infrastructure projects. Within the TSI, the US focused on increasing the region's energy security through LNG exports (Jančoškova, 2017). The Trump administration had also imposed sanctions on companies building the Nord Stream II gas pipeline, through which Russian gas is to be sent to Germany, as the main European gas hub, and further to other European countries. Poland and the United States rightly believe that

this project is mainly political and poses a threat to the energy security of the CEE countries. While preparing to implement the civil nuclear program, the Polish authorities initially expressed particular interest in cooperation with US companies, paying less attention to talks with, for example, France.

Donald Trump's administration also supported the cooperation formula of the so-called Bucharest Nine (B9) initiated in November 2015 in Bucharest by Poland and Romania. It is a regular meeting of defense ministers of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia), the Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia), Bulgaria and Romania. The goal of B9 is to jointly lobby the interests of the states of the NATO's eastern flank, especially in the context of the increasing threat from Russia. Importantly for the US, most of these countries have a clearly pro-American attitude. The United States support for TSI and B9 increased their rank and potential. Nevertheless, the participants of these initiatives have different interests on many issues, which significantly reduces the possibility of their coherent operation, and thus balancing the influence of both Russia and Western Europe.

4. THE CONCEPT OF "FORT TRUMP"

Russia's threat to NATO's eastern flank is gradually increasing, and in the event of aggression, the countries in the region would not be able to defend themselves effectively. According to the Polish authorities, the gap in the deterrence and defense capabilities would be best filled by the permanent stationing of the US Armed Forces in Poland. Additionally, it would be a key stabilizing factor in CEE (Banasik, 2019). In this way, the Polish authorities wanted to tie Polish security interests as much as possible with the American ones, which directly fits in the concept of bandwagoning. The main benefit of the permanent stationing of American forces was to increase Poland's security, but also to increase its importance in the region.

Therefore, in May 2018, the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Poland (2018) submitted to the US Department of Defense *the Proposal for a U.S. Permanent Presence in Poland*, applying for the permanent location of the American armored division in Poland. The Bydgoszcz-Toruń region was selected as the place of stationing, which was to meet all the requirements for housing, communication and training infrastructure. In addition, Poland proposed an amount of between USD 1.5 and 2 billion for the construction of the necessary military installations. President Andrzej Duda during his visit to Washington on September 18, 2018, expressed to President Donald Trump that he hoped to locate a permanent American base in Poland. He proposed to call it "Fort Trump", which was to honor the American president's merits for CEE. As you might guess, the financial incentive and the proposed name were to target Donald Trump's transactional approach and self-centered personality (Szklarski & Iłowski, 2019).

The Polish proposal started a debate in Poland and the United States on the possibility of locating a permanent American military base. Its supporters first of all pointed out that permanent stationing would be a much more serious guarantee of Poland's security in the political and military dimension than a rotational one. In addition, it was to enable the US troops to better understand the social and geographical conditions in Poland and CEE, which was to positively translate into the effectiveness of defense. It would also foster the development of military infrastructure and logistical facilities for NATO forces on the eastern flank. Pro-

ponents also argued that the permanent base would be more cost effective than a continuous rotation of personnel and equipment.

Opponents of permanent stationing pointed out that modern hybrid threats require greater flexibility and quick transfer of forces to the most endangered places. The rotation system ensures continuous exercises of troops in the field of mobility and logistics, which is crucial in the context of the admission of allied troops during a military crisis. The rotation would also allow for the alignment of more US forces with regional armed forces. Moreover, they indicated a higher level of combat readiness of the rotating forces. Political arguments were equally important, including the high probability of Russia's reaction in the form of a further increase in the military presence in Poland's neighborhood and thus deepening tensions between NATO and Russia.

The Polish authorities and generals were unequivocally positive in favor of the permanent stationing of the US Armed Forces in Poland. The political opposition did not openly oppose permanent stationing, but did not believe that the Americans could accept the Polish proposal. In turn, the approach of the American political and military elites to this project was varied. Both President Trump and Secretary of Defense James Mattis appreciated the Polish proposal, but approached it with restraint, pointing to the need for detailed analyzes and talks. Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti opted for an intermediate solution in the form of stationing American soldiers in Poland, both on a permanent and rotational basis (Hennigan, 2019). In turn, former US Army Europe commander Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges (2018) referred to the project unequivocally negatively, assessing it as both "unnecessary" and "unfeasible". He argued that its implementation would be a provocation against Russia and would adversely affect NATO's cohesion.

Many American think tanks presented their position in the debate on the permanent US military base in Poland. John R. Deni (2017) from the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College did not make it clear whether permanent or rotational stationing would be more effective in the context of achieving deterrence and defense objectives on NATO's eastern flank. He pointed to the advantage of the rotational stationing in the form of higher combat readiness and the ability to react quickly to a conflict. In turn, he found the permanent stationing more beneficial in terms of costs, soldiers' morale, full-time staffing, knowledge of the area and local culture, and the level of interoperability with the Polish Armed Forces. Peter B. Doran and Col. Ray Wojcik (2018) from the Center for European Policy Analysis spoke in favor of the permanent stationing of American forces in Poland, at least the size of an armored brigade and supporting units. Among the advantages of such stationing, they indicated, first of all, better deterrence capabilities, anchoring the US in Poland and CEE, more balanced burden-sharing within NATO and increasing the level of interoperability. Among the shortcomings, however, they indicated the undermining of NATO's political unity, increased tensions in the region, Poland's lack of preparation for the implementation of the project, and unjustified remuneration of Polish authorities departing from the principles of the rule of law and democracy. They recognized, however, that the negative consequences could be mitigated by taking appropriate remedial actions. Amb. Alexander R. Vershbow and Gen. Philip M. Breedlove (2020) from the Atlantic Council stated that the permanent location of the American division was too ambitious and would generate high political and military costs. They argued for increased rotational stationing of forces, which would ensure adequate flexibility and convince Russia of NATO's readiness to respond to

aggression. According to them, only forward American commands and smaller units should be stationed in Poland permanently. Billy Fabian, Mark Gunzinger, Jan van Tol, Jacob Cohn and Gillian Evans (2019) from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments spoke in favor of an increased presence of the US Armed Forces in Poland, at least in the form of an additional US Army brigade, but they did not clearly decide on what basis it should be stationed. They stated that at the very first stage of the conflict, at least a NATO division should be present in the region, which would ensure an effective counterattack. The possibility of its quick use was to be ensured by the warehouses with weapons for the division located in Poland and the division headquarters. As the main arguments for rotation, they indicated higher combat readiness of forces, better transfer capacity and flexibility of their deployment during a crisis. Among the arguments for permanent stationing, they indicated mainly better knowledge of local conditions and increasing the level of interoperability of forces, as well as lower involvement of personnel than within the rotational system. According to Quentin Lopinot (2019) from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the USD 2 billion proposed by Poland would not cover the costs of preparing the base and stationing soldiers. He believed that the money should be used to remove the infrastructural, logistic and legal barriers limiting the mobility of NATO forces in Poland and between Poland and its allies. This would enable the deployment of large NATO forces during a conflict in the region.

The most important international barrier to locating a large permanent base of US troops in Poland is relations with Russia, including *the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation* (NRFA) (NATO, 1997) signed on May 27, 1997 at the NATO summit in Paris. In the document, the North Atlantic Alliance undertook not to increase the military potential in Central and Eastern Europe, and especially not to build permanent bases with significant NATO armed forces. Formally, NATO did not suspend the application of the NRFA, despite the fact that Russia repeatedly violated its provisions, including by significantly increasing its military potential in the western part of the country and conducting military operations in Eastern Europe. About 300,000 soldiers are stationed in the Western Military District of the Russian Federation bordering Poland and the Baltic states (Dyner, 2016). Besides, Russia made military interventions in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. It also conducts provocative actions against NATO countries, violating their airspace and territorial waters, and carries out hostile actions in cyberspace. Russia violated not only the provisions of the NRFA, but also many other documents that formed the basis of the post-Cold War architecture of European and world security, including; *the Charter of the United Nations* of June 26, 1945; *the Helsinki Final Act* of August 1, 1975; *the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* of November 19, 1990; and repeatedly updated so-called *the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures*. According to the Polish authorities, Russia's actions meant that the circumstances of the "the current and foreseeable security environment" laid down in the NATO-Russia Founding Act changed significantly, therefore the obligations of 1997 ceased to be binding. However, some NATO countries, including Germany, believe otherwise and are opposed to a significant increase in the military potential of the Alliance in the CEE region. The German authorities argue that this would be a provocative action against Russia that would deepen the so-called the security dilemma in the region and intensify the arms race. President Trump's administration did not take an unequivocal position on this issue.

There have been accusations in Poland that the negotiations on the American base were conducted without proper consultations with European allies from NATO, which was supposed to undermine the transatlantic unity. The strengthening of the alliance with the US under the bandwagoning concept was therefore detrimental to wider allied cooperation. In turn, in the American public debate, there was an argument that the decision to locate the base would be a breach of the expectations of Donald Trump's voters, who wanted to limit the US involvement in world politics in order to focus on internal affairs. In addition, there were leaks that the American authorities were to expect Poland to participate even more financially in the construction and maintenance of the base, as well as to refuse to accept Poland's proposals to locate the installations near the border with Belarus and Russia (Plucinska & Ali, 2020).

President Trump used Poland's proposal, including its financial aspect, to put pressure on allied states, mainly Germany. It was about meeting the obligations under NATO to finance defense at the level of 2% of GDP, and increasing the level of participation in the costs of stationing US forces. He warned the German authorities that if they did not increase defense spending, the number of the US military contingent stationed in the country could be reduced. He also announced that some of these forces could be transferred to Poland. At the beginning of 2019, President Trump presented the "cost plus 50" concept, which assumed that US allies should cover the costs of the stay of US troops and additionally pay 50% of this amount for the privilege of hosting them. The entry into force of the concept would even mean a several-fold increase in the spending of countries hosting US forces. Under the proposal, however, advancing the goals of US foreign and security policy could partially reduce these costs (Wadhams & Jacobs, 2019).

Ultimately, the concept of "Fort Trump" collapsed in favor of much less ambitious solutions. 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 forces are to be stationed on the basis of the so-called permanent rotation, as part of the "heel-to-toe" tactic. The decision of the American administration to send additional soldiers to Poland coincided with the decision to withdraw 9,500 soldiers from Germany. Some Western media and politicians accused Poland of being jointly responsible for this decision, which the Polish authorities strongly opposed. If the administration of President Joe Biden implements this decision, it will undoubtedly be detrimental to the security of Europe, including Poland.

5. OTHER AREAS OF POLISH-AMERICAN DEFENSE COOPERATION

As a consequence of the Ukrainian crisis, the United States significantly increased its involvement in military exercises carried out on NATO's eastern flank. During the presidency of Donald Trump, the US Armed Forces participated in many exercises carried out on Polish territory, both in the bilateral and multilateral dimension. They were attended by land, air and sea units, including special forces. According to the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Poland (2018), just in 2017 Poland hosted 16,000 American military personnel during various types of exercises. In the following years, the high number of American

soldiers exercising in Poland was maintained. Joint exercises on the territory of Poland bring benefits to both sides from the allied cooperation within bandwagoning. The United States can reaffirm its role as the dominant power and main defender of the West, and Poland is increasing the level of deterrence against potential aggression.

The largest exercise undertaking of the US Armed Forces in Europe of that period was the strategic maneuvers “Defender-Europe 2020”. The exercises were organized by the Command of the US Army Europe and were the largest transfer of US forces from the United States to the old continent in 25 years. The maneuvers were primarily to test the ability to regroup the American armored division, the ability of host nations to receive them, and the ability to defeat the enemy’s Anti Access / Area Denial systems. These capabilities are crucial in the context of joint defense against potential aggression in the region, including by Russia and China.

Individual exercises under “Defender-Europe 2020” were to be carried out on the territory of ten European countries, including NATO’s eastern flank. Originally, about 37,000 soldiers from 18 countries were to take part in them, including 29,000 American soldiers, 20,000 of which were to be transferred from the US to Europe. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the scale and calendar of maneuvers had to be modified, some exercises were canceled, and only slightly more than 6,000 US soldiers and 3,000 units of equipment were transferred from the US to Europe.

In Poland, the main activities under the modified maneuver plan “Defender-Europe 20 Plus” were the exercises “Allied Spirit XI” carried out on June 5–19, 2020 at the proving ground in Drawsko Pomorskie. About 4,000 American soldiers took part in them, instead of the originally assumed 6,000. The exercises mainly involved the Polish airborne operation, crossing the river of Polish-American forces the size of a division, stopping the simulated enemy offensive and carrying out a counterattack. In turn, on July 14 – August 22, 2020, the “Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise” was carried out in Poland. The exercises assumed a dynamic deployment of US forces in Poland, the relocation of American equipment, including M1 Abrams tanks, from warehouses in Germany to Poland, and combined fire exercises at the company level. About 550 American soldiers took part in the exercise.

The main problem with the exercises was the raging pandemic that required special precautions. Moreover, there was an intensified disinformation campaign by Russian hackers, which was aimed at presenting the exercises as offensive, ridiculing combat capabilities, and dividing the allies. Despite the difficult circumstances, the maneuvers confirmed that Europe’s security continued to be an important element of the United States’ security policy. Summing up the exercise, President Andrzej Duda said: “The presence of US Army soldiers in our country and their joint participation with our Polish soldiers is undoubtedly a sign, on the one hand, of Polish-American friendship, but on the other hand also a clear sign of real American responsibility for world peace, also in our part of the world.” The main organizer of the exercises, Commanding general of US Army Europe Christopher G. Cavoli appreciated the preparation for the exercises of the Polish Armed Forces and expressed his satisfaction that it was possible to carry it out despite the raging pandemic. According to him, this was to confirm that the allies would not give up in the face of any difficulties.

An important area of Polish-American military cooperation was the acquisition of weapons and military equipment. The world’s highest technological advancement of the US arms industry undoubtedly makes it an attractive partner in the field of military-technical cooperation. The process of modernizing the equipment of the Polish Armed Forces creates an op-

portunity to tighten relations with military companies from the US and to develop the Polish defense industry based on this cooperation. It should be emphasized that the PiS government treats cooperation with the US in the procurement of arms and military equipment as a priority, at the expense of European partners. This approach is a clear manifestation of bandwagoning and also has the hallmarks of clientelism.

During Donald Trump's presidency, Poland signed large contracts for the purchase of American weapons and military equipment. In January 2020, an agreement was signed to purchase from Lockheed Martin 32 fifth generation stealth fighters – F-35A "Lightning II" with additional logistics and training packages for USD 4.6 billion. Some experts indicated that the Polish Air Force would not be able to use the potential of modern aircraft for many years, so a better solution would be to buy much cheaper machines of the earlier generation, for example the F-16 "Fighting Falcon". In March 2018, an agreement was concluded with Raytheon for the purchase of two batteries of the Patriot PAC-3 medium-range anti-missile defense system with additional equipment for USD 4.6 billion. In January 2019, Poland ordered 4 S-70i "Black Hawk" helicopters from Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation. In February 2019, an agreement was signed for the purchase of 20 M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System launchers manufactured by Lockheed Martin. In addition, Poland purchased various missiles from the American concerns Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, including the F-16 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles and the man-portable fire-and-forget anti-tank missile FGM-148 "Javelin". The Polish authorities have also started making efforts in the US to obtain approval for the purchase of M1 "Abrams" tanks.

The Polish authorities emphasized that the above purchases guaranteed the Polish Armed Forces a technological leap and a significant increase in the security of the country, which is true. Characteristic for this period, however, was the resignation from both the organization of tenders and the offset. This included some of the largest purchases, such as the F-35 contract. Direct orders do not guarantee that the Polish Armed Forces will get the best product for the lowest possible price. The lack of offset, in turn, limits the development possibilities of the Polish defense industry and the Polish economy.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Polish-American relations after the Cold War are clearly asymmetrical. This is due to the large disproportion between the potentials of states and the roles they play in the international environment. Poland treats the United States as the most important external guarantor of security, and for Americans Poland usually has little importance in global security policy and limited importance in European security policy. However, the unequivocally pro-American attitude of the Polish authorities encourages the US to cooperate closely in the military field. The decisive efforts to strengthen the alliance with the United States are manifestations of the implementation of the offensive bandwagoning concept, and consequently have symptoms of clientelism.

The Polish authorities from the political camp of the Law and Justice party are Americanophiles, which is reflected in the security policy they implement. During the presidency of Donald Trump, there appeared some factors that additionally brought the authorities of states closer to each other. These included ideological closeness, aversion and disputes with Western European political elites, relativizing the principles of the rule of law and democ-

racy, and a similar view of the geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe. The above factors made Poland and the US tighten their security and defense relations. This was manifested, inter alia, by the increase in the US military contingent stationed in Poland. However, the asymmetric nature of the Polish-American alliance deepened, which was manifested in the prioritization of American defense companies, or support for President Trump's controversial international initiatives.

Tightening the alliance with the United States is undoubtedly in the interest of Poland's security. The pro-American attitude of the Polish authorities would not raise any objections if it was balanced, brought tangible benefits, and did not harm relations with the European Union and the powers of Western Europe. In recent years, the US and Poland's distance towards Western European allies has deepened. The Polish authorities tried to use the proximity to the American administration to counterbalance the weakening position of the country in the EU. On the other hand, the US administration treated Poland instrumentally in its dispute with Western leaders, mainly the German authorities. Such a situation was against the interest of Poland's security, which is closely dependent on the cohesion and close cooperation of the West. The actions of the Polish and American authorities contributed to lowering NATO solidarity and the cohesion of the EU. This, among other things, limited the possibility of influencing Western European powers to pursue a more balanced policy towards Russia. The beginning of the administration of President Joe Biden was characterized by an attempt to rebuild relations with Western Europe, symptoms of withdrawal from CEE and a greater focus on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, which could have a negative impact on relations with Poland. However, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine meant that the United States began to fulfill its allied obligations within NATO, as well as towards Poland.

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