

**The American *National Security Strategy* 2025 is a document that clearly signals the end of the era of illusions. The United States is ceasing to serve as the guardian of the liberal world order in an inevitable, taken-for-granted way. It abandons long catalogues of “pious wishes” and value-laden declarations in favor of a hard calculation of national interest—anchored in America’s military, technological, and economic dominance. This is a strategy that treats the internal transformation of the United States as the top priority, and Europe—including Poland—as a peripheral theater whose role is primarily to reinforce Washington’s defensive and industrial capabilities.**

For Poland, NSS 2025 represents a moment of reckoning for the assumptions of its security policy to date. The document makes it clear that America’s perception of Poland’s attractiveness depends on defense spending levels, readiness to sign long-term defense and energy contracts, and the ability to serve as a logistical and industrial hub for the region. Poland is becoming a client and a buffer, not an automatic co-creator of the West’s grand strategy. In this context, Poland must shift from a passive recipient of security guarantees to an active architect of its own security. Instead of relying exclusively on U.S. guarantees, it must develop national technological, industrial, and defense capabilities. NSS 2025 leaves no doubt: alliances cannot replace national interest. It is an impulse to finally formulate an interest-driven security strategy for Poland in a new and demanding world.

NSS 2025 represents a deliberate break from the traditional model of American strategic documents. It abandons the “laundry list” approach—catalogues of wishes and slogans—in favor of a concise, tightly prioritized strategy subordinated entirely to the core national interests of the United States. It is a manifesto of mature Trump-era pragmatism: gone is the belief in a universal democratic mission; in its place stands a cold calculation of how to maintain American military, economic, and technological power while minimizing external costs. Foreign policy is to serve, above all, America’s internal reconstruction—reindustrialization, border and supply-chain control, restoration of energy and technological supremacy—and only secondarily the ordering of the world.

This shift is particularly evident in how NSS 2025 defines its five main strategic objectives: full territorial and migration sovereignty (including a “Golden Dome” missile-defense shield over the United States), military and technological dominance, reindustrialization and economic “decoupling” from critical dependencies (primarily on China), energy dominance based on oil, gas, coal and nuclear power, and a form of soft power serving only U.S. national interests. This is not an adjustment—it is a new hierarchy. The strategic priority is domestic transformation as a condition for competing with China and maintaining global influence, not ambitious normative projects resembling the “liberal international order.” The

Western Hemisphere gains significant prominence, presented as the first regional focus of the Strategy and described unambiguously as America's exclusive sphere of influence. Notable changes also appear in the perception of the Middle East, which has not ceased to matter but is reframed as a region for pursuing partnership, friendship, and investment—in a spirit of accepting the region as it is.

Europe—and this is crucial for the Polish debate—is not at the center of this hierarchy. Its role has been reduced to ensuring stability in what Washington views as a peripheral theater, one that cannot be allowed to drain resources away from the Indo-Pacific. Within this logic, Europe is subjected to sharp criticism, expressed in the shortest chapter of the Strategy—just three pages—entitled *Promoting European Greatness*. The document identifies the European Union and European elites more broadly as responsible for “civilizational decline,” due to mass migration, falling birth rates, regulatory censorship of public debate, and a departure from Western identity. The U.S. under Trump no longer intends to police liberal democratic standards in Europe. Instead, it declares support for nation-states—Poland included—that defend sovereignty, borders, and traditional social norms, provided that they genuinely strengthen defense capabilities, share the burden of security, and align themselves with the American economic and technological agenda. Europe is not a partner of shared values but a resource: a market, a projection space, and a reservoir of industrial and military-production potential meant to relieve the United States.

A key instrument of this new logic is the shift from *burden-sharing* to *burden-shifting*—from sharing responsibility to transferring it. The statement: “The days when the United States upheld the entire world order like Atlas are over” is more than rhetoric. It reflects the June *Hague Commitment*, which obliges NATO states to commit up to 5% of GDP to defense, and pressure to reduce America's physical military presence in Europe while forcing an expansion of Europe's own defense capabilities. Access to American technology, investment, and trade preferences becomes a privilege reserved for states that genuinely invest in defense and comply with American export-control and China-related standards. Within this framework, Poland and other regional states are valuable mainly as clients and subcontractors—defense and energy purchase hubs, or nodes in friend-shoring supply chains—rather than as autonomous contributors to Western strategy.

NSS 2025 openly treats Russia as a problem to be stabilized rather than a mission to be won. The reference to an “expeditious cessation of hostilities in Ukraine” signals openness to ending the conflict quickly and returning to predictable deterrence, even at the cost of limiting ambitions regarding the long-term shape of security in Eastern Europe. From Poland's perspective, this marks a decisive shift from the “moralistic” narratives of some Western actors. In this strategy, the U.S. accepts that Russia will remain a problem but not

the center of strategic planning. The primary challenge remains China, supply-chain security, and technological rivalry. Expectations toward Europe—and Poland—are clear: we must assume the heaviest burden of deterrence and of rebuilding Ukraine. Washington focuses on the Indo-Pacific and on its own economic-technological transformation.

In this new architecture, Poland and the broader region of Central and Eastern Europe matter only insofar as they are useful. From the U.S. perspective, Poland's "attractiveness" increases with several indicators: high defense spending, readiness for long-term U.S. defense and energy contracts (LNG, nuclear), alignment with the American line on China, and the ability to serve as NATO's and Ukraine's logistical and industrial hub.

In the latter area, Poland stands to gain immensely if it builds capacity to receive and transfer large volumes of energy resources and goods (an energy-and-commodity hub). Expanding ports, energy-transfer infrastructure, railways, roads, and border interconnectors would allow us not only to integrate into supply chains but also to become a provider of goods, raw materials, and security for the entire region. It is also an economic opportunity: to earn margins from flows and to persuade the U.S. not to withdraw from Poland but to participate in deterrence—because critical infrastructure and strategic flows would be located here.

Such a project would also enable the formation of a regional alliance (building on the Bucharest Nine and Scandinavian countries) of states that feel vulnerable to Russia. If Poland succeeds in assuming the leadership role—natural given its potential—the U.S., while pursuing its own policy, would be more inclined to cooperate with us in security and technology transfer.

But the current model still casts us primarily as a client and testing ground—we purchase equipment, host infrastructure, and join supply chains designed elsewhere. The U.S. strategy does not promise automatic inclusion of Polish industry in higher-value segments of these chains. On the contrary, it clearly signals that first priority goes to American manufacturing capacity and reindustrialization inside the United States. Unless Poland proposes its own proactive offer—from technological offsets to participation in R&D—Poland will remain a market and buffer, not a co-architect of the system.

The conclusions for Polish security and foreign policy are uncomfortable but necessary. NSS 2025 confirms Churchill's intuition that states have no friends, only interests—and applies this rule consistently to allies. For Poland, this means it can no longer treat either Washington or Brussels as guarantors of its security "by definition," but must instead formulate its own strategy: determining where interests converge (e.g., criticism of EU

centralization, concern about the crisis of European values, strengthening the Eastern flank) and where they diverge (pace and terms of ending the war in Ukraine, dependence on the U.S. defense industry, energy-transition model). The greatest challenge is transitioning from the role of buyer to value-creator in supply chains—defense, energy, and technology—through deliberate development of national industrial and technological competencies, not merely short-term increases in numerical capabilities. NSS 2025 ends the era of illusions about automatic allied guarantees. For Poland, it can be an impulse to build a genuinely interest-driven national security strategy—one that treats the United States and the European Union as key partners, but ultimately as instruments of Polish national interest, not substitutes for it.