Poland today is among America’s most reliable allies in Europe – consistently delivering on defense spending, energy security, and credible deterrence against Russia in today’s turbulent times. President Karol Nawrocki, continuing the conservative course of his predecessors, has deepened Poland’s partnership with President Trump’s administration. For Washington, this should serve as proof of Poland’s firm commitments to NATO and its intention to build a stable transatlantic partnership.

This orientation has already paid off domestically. It underpins the modernization of the Polish Armed Forces, attracts American investment, and positions Poland as the anchor of security on NATO’s eastern flank.

By contrast, Berlin’s push for ‘strategic autonomy,’ supported by Donald Tusk’s government, risks fragmenting Europe’s security response. Poland argues that strategic autonomy must complement – not replace – the transatlantic pillar anchored in Washington. Higher energy costs, slower military modernization, and a return to business as usual with Moscow expose the gap between Germany’s ambitions and its actual capabilities.

For Poland, this is far more than a simple choice between Washington and Berlin. The real challenge is to combine the American pillar with strong regional alliances, ensuring that Poland remains the subject of strategic decisions, never their object. President Nawrocki’s course makes this clear – an Atlantic path, reinforced by national economic and defense capabilities, is the only way to guarantee Poland’s security and sovereignty.

Poland’s Modernized Armed Forces: Setting the Standard for NATO

Poland today is NATO’s eastern anchor – and the Alliance’s most reliable investor in defense. In 2024, Warsaw spent 3.78% of GDP on defense, more than any other Ally and nearly double Germany’s 2.1%. In absolute terms, this was close to $38 billion, ranking Poland fifth among all NATO members. Crucially, Poland directs the majority of its budget toward hard capabilities rather than bureaucracy.

The result is an army of over 210,000 soldiers – larger than the Bundeswehr and behind only two NATO armies – the United States and Turkey. This force is backed by more than 130 modernization contracts worth over $40 billion. Apache helicopters, Patriot and Wisła air defense systems, HIMARS launchers, Abrams tanks, and F-35 fighters are not just symbolic acquisitions – they guarantee full

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interoperability with U.S. forces, strengthen NATO’s collective defense, and provide credible deterrence against Russia.

At the same time, Warsaw is investing in its own defense industry. American technology transfers and joint production projects are bringing Polish companies into global supply chains, ensuring that equipment can be serviced and upgraded at home.

President Nawrocki’s strategy makes this clear – Poland will remain fully compatible with U.S. forces, expand joint training, and adopt American standards while strengthening national sovereignty. This dual approach – interoperability with Washington and resilience at home – turns Poland into NATO’s frontline model, a fact often underscored by President Trump himself. It also strengthens the Alliance’s ability to counter not only Moscow, but also growing Chinese influence in Europe’s critical industries.

Poland’s Economy: A Strategic Partnership with the United States

The inflow of American capital into Poland is more than investment – it is strategy. Under President Nawrocki, Warsaw has deepened cooperation with President Trump’s administration, accelerating U.S. projects in defense production, nuclear energy, and advanced technology. These ventures strengthen NATO’s eastern flank by embedding American resources in a frontline ally.

The scale is significant. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the stock of American investment in Poland stood at roughly $13 billion in 2021. When indirect flows through European subsidiaries are included, the American Chamber of Commerce estimates the figure at $26 billion – and rising. Yet it is not only the numbers that matter, but the direction – Poland has become the key platform for American business and security interests in Central Europe.

This orientation reduces dependence on Berlin, shields Warsaw from Chinese penetration of strategic industries, and positions Poland as a reliable U.S. partner inside the European Union. By ensuring that the American presence complements EU initiatives, Poland positions itself as the indispensable bridge between Washington and Brussels.

Looking ahead, Poland’s energy transformation is built on this partnership. By 2040, three-quarters of its energy mix is expected to be low-emission, with nuclear power

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at the core. U.S. small modular reactors, LNG infrastructure, and renewables will make Poland not only energy-secure, but a model for Europe on how to align sovereignty with clean energy.

Poland's Energy Security: American LNG and Nuclear Power as a Model for Europe

Energy is security – especially in the European context. That is why Poland builds its transformation on American LNG and nuclear technology, complemented by European grid solutions, rather than unreliable supplies from Russia or costly experiments from Berlin. Under President Nawrocki, cooperation with President Trump's administration has the potential to accelerate investment in LNG terminals, pipelines, and small modular reactors. This is not just commerce – it is strategic deal-making that could make Poland the energy model for Europe.

The facts are clear. In 2024, wholesale electricity in Germany averaged about $73 per MWh, more than double the U.S. price of $33–48 per MWh. For industry, American power costs roughly $0.07 per kWh, compared to $0.18 per kWh in the EU.

Europe's competitiveness is bleeding away, while Poland is choosing resilience. U.S. LNG and SMRs, supported by renewables and European grid solutions, will make Poland not only energy-secure, but also the showcase for how sovereignty and clean energy can go hand in hand.

Berlin's approach underscores the contrast. While declaring Russia and China "systemic rivals," Germany continues to prioritize the interests of its industrial giants. Poland's course is different – partner with the U.S., secure affordable energy, and prove that NATO's eastern flank can be both strong and independent.

U.S. Policy Toward Russia: Pragmatic Deal-Making and Poland's Strategic Role

President Trump has never hidden his pragmatic approach toward Moscow. He has signaled that sanctions could be adjusted if Europe fully abandons Russian energy – making clear that America will not carry the burden alone. This hard-nosed deal-making reflects a simple truth – Allies who expect Washington's protection must also make tough choices.

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For Poland, this logic only underscores our value. Warsaw spends more than 3.5% of GDP on defense, fields the largest land force on NATO's eastern flank, and supports sanctions that have already reduced Russia's GDP. These actions prove that Poland is not a client asking for protection, but a partner delivering real deterrence.

The real danger lies elsewhere – In Europe's temptation to return to business as usual with Moscow. That path would undermine both NATO's credibility and U.S. resolve. President Nawrocki's course is the opposite – keeping sanctions firm, building military resilience, and aligning closely with U.S. strategy.

The conclusion is clear. Whatever course Washington takes, Moscow and Beijing will face a NATO frontline anchored by Poland – sovereign, reliable, and ready.

Public Opinion in Germany and the United States: Isolationism vs. Reliability

In Germany, more than half of voters now say Ukraine should cede territory to Russia, and nearly two-thirds fear being drawn into the war. Support for AfD has climbed to record levels, with 77% of its electorate opposing aid to Kyiv. Even mainstream leaders like Chancellor Merz highlight France and the U.K. as partners – leaving Poland absent from Berlin's strategic vision.

In the United States, isolationist pressure is rising as well. Forty-two percent of Republicans consider aid to Ukraine excessive, and nearly half of conservative voters now identify with isolationism. Across the electorate, 40% want America to reduce its overseas presence.

For Washington, these numbers confirm a growing challenge – public opinion can weaken strategy. For Warsaw, they confirm an old truth – Poland cannot base its security on the shifting moods of others.

President Nawrocki's course is clear – build resilience at home. Defense spending above 3.5% of GDP, investments in energy independence, and a society prepared for crisis ensure that NATO's eastern flank rests on something stronger than opinion polls – sovereignty, preparedness, and will. This makes Poland the Ally America can count on, even as others waver – and it closes the door to both Moscow and Beijing.

Strategic Conclusions for Poland

1. **The transatlantic alliance remains the cornerstone of Poland's**

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security. American troops on Polish soil, full interoperability, and defense contracts provide real deterrence against Russia. With defense spending between 3.5% and 5% of GDP, Poland is not a client but a partner Washington can rely on.

2. **Limited trust in Berlin and Western Europe.** German rearmament is too slow, and its energy policy is driven by narrow industrial interests. Poland must balance these risks by leading NATO's eastern flank and strengthening cooperation within the Three Seas.
3. **Prepare for key strategic scenarios.**
   • If the U.S. reduces its presence in Europe – Poland must assume regional leadership and build security guarantees through the Three Seas.
   • If the EU reforms energy and industry – Poland should act as the bridge between Brussels and Washington.
   • If Russia rebuilds military and economic power – deterrence and societal resilience must be the priority.
4. **Economics proves the Atlantic choice.** American LNG, nuclear power, and investment flows strengthen Poland's economy and defense industry while reducing dependence on Berlin.
5. **Countering China's influence.** Poland's strong defense spending, energy diversification, and U.S. partnerships limit Beijing's ability to penetrate Central Europe's critical infrastructure and industry.
6. **President Nawrocki's course is sovereignty.** Deterrence, investment in national capacity, and leadership in the region make Poland the frontline Ally and security pillar of NATO's eastern flank.

Conclusion

Poland's record is unmatched. Spending more than 3.5% of GDP on defense, fielding the largest land force on NATO's eastern flank, and investing in U.S. energy and technology, Warsaw delivers credibility that others only promise. While Berlin debates and Brussels delays, Poland delivers.

For Washington, this matters. Poland proves that NATO can still work – when commitments are honored, investments made, and sovereignty defended. This is exactly the kind of hard-nosed burden sharing President Trump has demanded.

And the stakes extend beyond Moscow. By anchoring U.S. LNG, nuclear power, and defense contracts in Central Europe, Poland also blocks China's ability to dominate Europe's critical industries.

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Under President Nawrocki, Poland is not just another Ally. It is NATO’s eastern anchor, a sovereign frontline state, and a regional leader – the Ally America can count on, and the partner Europe needs.

The Sobieski Institute publishes commentary in both Polish and English to support the strategic debate at home and to present the Polish perspective to international partners. Both versions of this text are based on the same data and conclusions but differ in style and emphasis, tailored to readers in Poland and in the international environment.

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