

“In the long term, maintaining American economic and technological preeminence is the surest way to deter and prevent a large-scale military conflict.” - this sentence from page 23 of the National Security Strategy of the United States, published on December 4, constitutes one of the keys to understanding how the administration of President Donald Trump perceives the new architecture of international security. The economic themes recurring on almost every page of the NSS confirm that the United States is moving from a model of global projection of military power to a security architecture in which partnerships and alliances are meant above all to serve economic objectives, conflicts are viewed as a barrier to conducting business, and military power is intended to secure access to raw materials, protect supply chains, and guarantee the free flow of trade.

The NSS frames the international system as one in which sovereign states operate according to economic logic, with the government functioning as a steward responsible for enhancing the economic well-being of its citizens. Relations between states endure insofar as they contribute to shared economic advantage, and the ultimate goal – clearly formulated by the United States – is to maintain a dominant position on the global market.

According to the NSS, every state interested in cooperating with the United States is presented with a strategic choice, set out explicitly on page 18: *“The choice all countries should face is whether they want to live in an American-led world of sovereign countries and free economies or in a parallel one in which they are influenced by countries on the other side of the world.”*

This also applies – and from our perspective applies above all – to Poland and our closest allies in the region. How we respond to this challenge will shape our relations with neighbors, our role in the European Union, bilateral relations with other states, and the future of our transatlantic engagement. Poland, like other countries, has received an offer. Whether we use it depends solely on us.

The World: A Fight for Economic Dominance

Although the layout of the document at first glance does not differ significantly from earlier National Security Strategies, what stands out is the consistent emphasis on economic and commercial drivers across the document. This applies both to the section describing goals, priorities and means of implementation, and to the parts devoted to individual regions of the world. Elements of classical military power, although present, are increasingly framed as tools supporting broader economic objectives. Ideological themes appear only marginally and mainly in the context of the problems they generate, not as tools for building the global

position of the United States. That position is clearly defined – the United States is a global economic power whose dominance in economic relations is meant to serve above all America and its citizens, in the spirit of the *America First* philosophy.

Within this framework, it follows that the United States is reassessing its approach to nearly all international actors. Russia is notably less prominent in this year's NSS, reflecting a recalibration rather than the absence of security concerns, and the situation in Ukraine is assessed primarily through its implications for Europe's economic and political stability. The Western Hemisphere, elevated to the rank of a key area of U.S. interest and described as a space of returning to the Monroe Doctrine supplemented by the Trump Corollary, has crucial significance because it generates risks to the internal security of the United States through, among other things, the activities of drug cartels, as a source of illegal migration and organized crime. No less important is the economic dimension, since the Western Hemisphere constitutes the largest and closest market for Americans – rich in natural resources and millions of consumers of American goods and services.

The role of Asia in U.S. policy is also changing. From a region of military power projection, it is becoming an area of intensive economic activity, which – given the highest growth forecasts according to the IMF – should not be surprising. The role of China is also changing, as although present in the document both directly and implicitly, it is presented not so much as a geopolitical rival, but as the greatest economic competitor capable of posing a real threat to American economic dominance. This has significance not only for Asia itself, but also for other regions – the Western Hemisphere and Europe. The importance of Taiwan has likewise been presented primarily from an economic perspective – as a key producer of semiconductors, an element of global supply chains, and a guarantor of free navigation in the South China Sea, the restriction of which would constitute a serious risk to international trade.

Through this same prism one should evaluate the change in the American approach to the Middle East and Africa. Both regions, although present in the NSS, are primarily viewed as areas for expanding economic engagement and opportunity, and – importantly – they are significant not only for the United States itself, but also for its partners and allies. The redefinition of the role of the Middle Eastern states results, as stated explicitly, from the decline of role as world's most important supplier of energy and may be an interesting indicator of a change in the American approach to partners depending on their economic potential and significance for the stability of a given region.

In the global perspective, the key issue therefore becomes securing the economic interests of the United States and using economic and military resources in such a way as to maintain

an uninterrupted flow of global trade relations.

Europe: A Key Trade Partner

Contrary to the interpretations that have appeared across Europe, the role of Europe in the National Security Strategy has not been reduced solely to an area of problems, promotion of harmful ideologies, or restrictions on civil liberties. Such a diagnosis does indeed appear in the document, but it results not from the United States' *désintéressement* toward Europe but is an expression of concern about the impact of these factors on the condition of European economies and, consequently, on the stability of Europe as one of the key trade partners of the United States. The war in Ukraine is considered in this same context – not as an existential threat, but as a risk factor for trade relations. The optics, however, are important here. The NSS presents Europe as a set of sovereign states rather than a single transnational entity, an approach that aligns with President Karol Nawrocki's strategic perspective. The European Union, like other transnational organizations, is in its current form unambiguously criticized by President Donald Trump's administration, and many of the accusations formulated in the NSS should be interpreted primarily with reference to the actions of Brussels, not of individual European states.

From the point of view of the United States, expressed clearly in the NSS, Europe remains crucial for the realization of the assumptions of American foreign and security policy. This is confirmed by the significant sentence from page 26 of the NSS: *"Not only can we not afford to write Europe off—doing so would be self-defeating for what this strategy aims to achieve."* At the same time, Europe, in the eyes of Washington, is not a homogeneous area, and even less is it identical with the European Union. The policies pursued by individual European states are assessed in the NSS through the prism of economic effects, both their contribution to the global economy, as exemplified by the declining share of global GDP, and their trade relations with China. The United States also recognizes political diversity within Europe. Hence the statement that *"building up the healthy nations of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe through commercial ties, weapons sales, political collaboration, and cultural and educational exchanges"* will be one of the elements of American policy toward the region. This passage, incidentally, is declined in all cases in the Polish public debate.

However, the strategic weight of our region depends on the extent to which its states can contribute tangible value to shared objectives. It is a motivation for the reorientation of national policies and for making the choice described in the introduction – an orientation toward the United States or toward other centers of power, implicitly toward China. From the perspective reflected in the NSS, the European Union is not positioned as a major economic actor in its own right; rather, individual states and their choices shape the

strategic landscape. The only such actor is China – a country with which some European states, including Germany, explicitly mentioned in the NSS, are developing economic cooperation, which in practice threatens the economic interests of the United States.

The National Security Strategy therefore does not prove, contrary to some interpretations, that the United States is turning away from Europe. It is above all an offer and a call for policy revision and for an unequivocal alignment with one side of the global economic rivalry – the United States or China.

Poland: Advancing from Customer to Partner

The reactions of some domestic commentators would suggest that Poland occupies a special place in the National Security Strategy of the United States. This, however, is not the case. Poland, unlike Turkey, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom or Ireland, is not mentioned directly in the document, yet its strategic relevance stems from its role on NATO's eastern flank and its growing security commitments. Indeed, our entire broadly understood region (Central, Eastern and Southern Europe) appears only once – in the context cited above. This does not mean, however, that Poland does not remain one of the most important American allies in the region. It means that Poland's current role, from the perspective of the goals of American policy defined in the NSS, does not yet reflect the full potential it could bring to the partnership.

At this point it is worth recalling the assumption described in the introduction, that military forces and means, in accordance with the concept of the President Trump's administration, are primarily to secure the realization of economic objectives. Our strong position on the eastern flank of NATO, significant expenditures on security, and the policy conducted by President Nawrocki are appreciated in Washington, as representatives of the American administration publicly emphasize. Nevertheless, all these actions have – unfortunately still – too limited an impact on the realization of American political priorities, especially the strengthening of the position of a global economic power and ensuring prosperity for the citizens of the United States. Poland's position as a stabilizing anchor on NATO's eastern flank remains significant; however, as the NSS clearly indicates, this war is above all an element of regional balance of power and in the current realities constitutes more a challenge to Europe's economic development. Hence the comments about exceptional favorability of the NSS toward Poland, just like those about exceptional unfavourability toward Europe, are misguided, because they do not refer to the essence of the document nor to the goals literally indicated in it.

From the Polish perspective, it is crucial to make a realistic assessment of what the National

Security Strategy is and what it in fact means for our state. Correct recognition of this issue will determine the direction and manner of reorientation of Polish policy. For the world seen through the eyes of Washington differs clearly from the world seen through the eyes of Brussels, Berlin, Paris or Warsaw. The NSS portrays an international environment defined primarily by economic competition and interest-driven alliances and partnerships based on trade exchange, mutual benefits and the pursuit of maximizing profits for the owners – the citizens. It is not a world based in the first place on values, an understanding of democracy, common enemies or lasting alliances. In this context, the strength and quality of relations are determined above all by recognition of the leading role of the United States in international economic relations and by acting in accordance with this principle. This environment implies choices that favor deeper alignment with partners whose economic and security interests converge and excludes the possibility of maintaining symmetrical relations of everyone with everyone.

Poland thus faces a major opportunity which, as in the case of business decisions, is nonetheless associated with considerable risk. By publishing the National Security Strategy in this form, the United States is sending the world a clear signal. We are ready for close, and often even closer than at present, cooperation with anyone who not so much shares our values and way of seeing the world, as on the one hand genuinely supports us in achieving our strategic objectives, and on the other wants to be a beneficiary of transatlantic relations. For in the NSS there appear several areas in which the United States speaks directly of trade preferences for partners, access to the American market and capital, the inflow of investments to a given country, and cooperation with the USA on emerging markets. These are clearly outlined elements of a political-economic deal which, due to the dominant position of the United States, is inherently asymmetrical, yet offers meaningful benefits to partners able to contribute to shared objectives. This does not at the same time mean that it cannot bring mutual benefits. On the contrary, reading the NSS literally, it should bring such benefits in the spirit of the economic win-win principle.

Bearing in mind the above interpretative framework, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth analysis not only of the document itself, but also of the image of the world that it creates and, consequently, to make a decision as to what role Poland could play in this world.

Strategic Implications for Poland

1. Clear orientation toward the United States in the global economic rivalry

The NSS clearly defines a bipolar structure of the world based on the rivalry between the United States and China. For Poland, aligning decisively with the United States offers the

greatest opportunity to reinforce its position in the transatlantic system. This means developing political, economic, energy and technological relations in a manner that strengthens American economic goals, because only such an approach is rewarded by the new logic of partnerships defined by Washington.

2. A return of the European Union to its economic roots

The administration of President Trump assesses unequivocally and critically the way supranational organizations operate, including in particular the European Union. From Poland's perspective, strengthening the EU's economic foundations – competitiveness, investment and sovereign decision-making – would better align Europe with U.S. strategic logic. A return to integration based on competitiveness, trade, investment and the sovereignty of member states would increase the political coherence of Europe with American strategic logic. This is a condition not only for rebuilding the EU's position, but also for the effective functioning of Poland in transatlantic relations.

3. Building economic partnerships - regional and with the United States

The United States does not oppose building alliances but emphasizes in the NSS that the greatest value lies in those partnerships that serve the realization of economic objectives, strengthen supply chains, trade and critical infrastructure. Hence it is important to continue the idea presented by President Nawrocki in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest: developing Poland as a hub for U.S. LNG and related infrastructure would support America's broader goal of diversifying global supply chains and should be extended to additional areas. Equally important is the search for further areas of economic cooperation with the United States, as well as the active attraction of American investments and the placement of Polish companies in the USA.

4. Strengthening defense potential and integrating Poland into the strategic supply chains of the defense sector

In the new security architecture outlined in the NSS, military power, alongside deterrence and the defense of one's own territory and interests, is above all to secure the realization of economic objectives. Therefore, the modernization of the Armed Forces, the development of defense production based on domestic competencies, real transfer of American technologies and a durable integration of Poland into American supply chains are the best ways for Poland to move from being a recipient to becoming a co-creator of regional security alongside the United States. The role of a frontline state on NATO's eastern flank gives this direction a long-term, rather than merely ad hoc, dimension.

5. Investment in new technologies, the Global South, and societal resilience

In accordance with the logic presented in the NSS, the role of states is the higher the more they are able to offer added value in three areas: the technologies of the future (AI, quantum computing, dual-use technologies), investments in emerging markets (especially in Africa and the Middle East), and societal resilience, which is the basis of economic stability. Poland must invest in new technologies, support the expansion of Polish business into countries of the Global South, and strengthen societal resilience in times of prolonged crises. These three elements will significantly raise Poland's strategic value, particularly in partnership with the United States, and create the basis for enhancing Poland's position in global economic relations and the security architecture.

In summary, the National Security Strategy delineates new dividing lines. It does not divide the world into good and bad, friends and enemies, or democrats and autocrats. The world described in the NSS resembles in this sense the American Dream, in which everyone – including Poland – can succeed. Provided that they agree to play by American rules.