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# The 2019 NATO Summit in London in the context of Poland's military security

Szczyt NATO w Londynie z 2019 roku w kontekście bezpieczeństwa militarnego Polski

**Abstract:** The paper provides reflections on NATO's London Summit held on 3 and 4 December 2019 in the context of Poland's military security. The paper is divided into an introduction, six sections, and a conclusion. The first section is devoted to issues of formation, functioning, and disintegration of alliances from the perspective of the theory of defensive structural realism and explains the methodological assumptions of the paper. The second section presents the atmosphere as prevailed before and during the Summit, which significantly impacted its process. The following sections are devoted to the main problems raised during the Summit from the perspective of Poland's military security. The first involved the approval of Poland and the Baltic states' defense plans together with a discussion on the danger of their blocking by the Turkish delegation. Another issue was the symbolic and practical confirmation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty's significance in the perspective of the approach to Russia's threat. The next two problems concerned the level of Member States' defense spending and the vision of strengthening the EU's defense potential. The paper's main thesis is that the decisions of the NATO Summit in London have had a positive impact on Poland's military security. However, the climate and discussions that accompanied the Summit also brought a great deal of uncertainty and revealed a growing gap between allies concerning various issues.

**Keywords:** North Atlantic Alliance, Poland, military security, NATO London Summit

**Streszczenie:** Przedmiotem artykułu są rozważania na temat szczytu NATO w Londynie z 3-4 grudnia 2019 r. w kontekście bezpieczeństwa militarnego Polski. Artykuł składa się z wprowadzenia, sześciu części i zakończenia. Pierwszą część artykułu poświęcono kwestiom powstawania, funkcjonowania i rozpadu sojuszy w perspektywie teorii realizmu strukturalnego typu defensywnego, jak również metodologicznym założeniom artykułu. W części drugiej przedstawiono atmosferę, jaka panowała przed szczytem i w jego trakcie, któ-

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ra miała istotny wpływ na jego przebieg. Kolejne części artykułu poświęcono zasadniczym problemom podejmowanym podczas szczytu w perspektywie bezpieczeństwa militarnego Polski. Pierwszym z nich była kwestia zatwierdzenia planów obronnych Polski i państw bałtyckich wraz z omówieniem niebezpieczeństwa zablokowania ich przez delegację turecką. Kolejną kwestią był problem symbolicznego i praktycznego potwierdzenia znaczenia artykułu 5 traktatu waszyngtońskiego w perspektywie podejścia do zagrożenia ze strony Rosji. Dwa następne problemy dotyczyły poziomu wydatków na obronność państw członkowskich, jak również wizji wzmacniania potencjału obronnego UE. Główną tezę artykułu jest stwierdzenie, że postanowienia szczytu NATO w Londynie pozytywnie wpływają na bezpieczeństwo militarne Polski. Z drugiej jednak strony klimat i dyskusje, jakie towarzyszyły szczytowi, niosły za sobą dużą niepewność i odkryły narastający rozdźwięk między sojusznikami w wielu kwestiach.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Sojusz Północnoatlantycki, Polska, bezpieczeństwo militarne, szczyt NATO w Londynie

## Introduction

The current NATO Strategic Concept of Lisbon 2010 is an outdated document that does not correspond to contemporary reality. This Concept was developed and clarified in NATO Summit Declarations and lower-level strategic documents. Their adoption is a consequence of the Alliance's adaptation to and operation in the changing security environment, as well as the need to co-shape it. NATO's decisions on strategic directions of development and operations are usually the result of long-term studies, lessons learned, articulations of particular interests and difficult negotiations, but at the same time, they provide space for some flexibility so that they are acceptable to all members of the Alliance.<sup>1</sup>

Russia's military operations in Ukraine have become the biggest challenge for NATO after the Cold War. They have not only affected the security of Ukraine but the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe, where the Allies are also located. Therefore, NATO had to take some action to ensure the security of its members. The credibility of the Allies' guarantees and the Organization's further functioning depended on the reaction of the Pact.<sup>2</sup> The NATO Summits in Newport on September 4-5, 2014 and in Warsaw on July 8-9, 2016,

1 Adelphi Papers, *NATO and Europe*, New York 2006.

2 M. Webber, 'Introduction: Is NATO a theory-free zone?', in: *Theorising NATO. New perspectives on the Atlantic alliance*, eds. M. Webber, A. Hyde-Price, London-New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 1-21.

were groundbreaking in their response to the growing military threat from Russia. NATO members strongly condemned Russia's aggressive actions to destabilize international security and pledged to take steps to strengthen the security of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> Actions taken in the political and military areas confirmed NATO's readiness to defend its members.

On November 29, 2019, a meeting of the National Security Bureau (BBN) of Poland took place during which President Andrzej Duda approved Poland's stance for NATO's Summit in London.<sup>4</sup> Among the main objectives were updating Poland and the Baltic states' defense plans and the issue of Member States' defense investments. Before the Summit, the Chief of Staff of the Polish President, Krzysztof Szczerski, said that "Poland expects a clear message from the meeting that NATO is united and is a live and sustainable alliance. The 70th anniversary of founding the alliance encourages to confirm the allies' obligations and the fact that we can design next years in peace because we all are protected by a common defense alliance."<sup>5</sup> Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, Defense Minister Mariusz Błaszczak, Head of the BBN Paweł Soloch, and Chief of General Staff General Rajmund Andrzejczak, joined the Polish delegation at the Summit, along with President Andrzej Duda.

The NATO's London Summit was held on December 3-4, 2019, i.e. on the anniversary of the Organization's 70 years of functioning and 30 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The Summit began with a debate with politicians, experts, and journalists on the future of the Alliance – *NATO Engages: Defence and Deterrence for a New Era*. President Andrzej Duda spoke during the debate, pointing out that NATO is an alliance of almost 30 countries, each of which has its interests, what creates "a great area for discussion and negotiation."

3 J.A. Larsen, 'NATO's responses to Russian belligerence: an overview', in: *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century. An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*, ed. K. Friis, London-New York: Routledge, 2017, pp. 8-15.

4 'National Security Bureau meet prior to London NATO Summit', *Poland In*, 30 November 2019, <https://polandin.com/45568834/national-security-bureau-meet-prior-to-london-nato-Summit> [2020-02-14].

5 'Poland expects "clear message" from NATO Summit in London: official', *Poland In*, 3 December 2019, <https://polandin.com/45609676/poland-expects-clear-message-from-nato-Summit-in-london-official> [2020-02-14].

President Duda described the establishment of NATO's presence in the Eastern flank as NATO's "best achievement during the last few years". Despite Poland's concentration on Russia's threat, the President said that Poland is "ready to fulfill all our duties and responsibilities as a NATO member."<sup>6</sup>

## 1. Theoretical and methodological assumptions

According to Andrzej Dybczyński's proposed universal definition of an alliance, "an international alliance is a union formed by autonomous international actors, guaranteeing the aggregation of actors' resources contributing to the increase of their military potential; the basis of the relationship is the actors' common interest and anticipation of international reality."<sup>7</sup> The reciprocity of the assistance commitments and the so-called *casus foederis*, the trigger factor for the Alliance's commitments, play a particular role in alliances.<sup>8</sup>

The functioning of modern international alliances can be seen in the light of the theory of defensive structural realism. According to the realist theory, the main actor in international relations is the state. According to Kenneth Waltz, the anarchic order in the international environment influences states' motives in foreign policy and shapes their external actions. The countries' main objective in this anarchistic system is survival.<sup>9</sup> According to Stephen Walt, states are striving to balance the main threat to security. Therefore, they do not balance the power of other states, but rather the threat they create. Power and threat can often go hand in hand, but they are not the same. States aim to maximize their own security rather than maximize relative power, which is one of the main objectives of the theory of defensive structural realism. To achieve a balance, the state's forces should refrain from taking risky action. However, the unintended effect of increasing one's own security level may be a loss of others' sense of security.

6 D.A. Wemer, 'NATO is defined by its success – not its tensions', *Atlantic Council*, 3 December 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/nato-is-defined-by-its-success-not-its-tensions/> [2020-02-14].

7 A. Dybczyński, *Sojusze międzynarodowe*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2014.

8 M. Madej, 'Sojusze polityczno-wojskowe – NATO', in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe*, eds. R. Kuźniar et al., Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2012, pp. 171-190.

9 K.N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979.

In the framework of the defensive type of structural realism, the security dilemma does not prevent cooperation between states and can be mitigated by cooperative activities.<sup>10</sup> In an alliance among unequal members, the contribution of weaker members to the security of the alliance is small but desirable. The dominant power in the alliance does not have to fear the weaker allies' loyalty and rely on their wishes each time. It is freer to act so that it can focus on threats posed by the main adversary.<sup>11</sup> As the disparities between the alliance members diminish, the interdependence between them and the importance of consultation and cooperation to counteract threats increases.

There are a number of environmental, intra-allied, and intra-state factors that determine the duration or dissolution of the alliance.<sup>12</sup> Among the main factors conducive to the continuation of alliances, Marek Madej pointed out one of the alliance members' hegemonic leadership, proving efficiency, the internal policy of individual members, institutionalization, and the creation of common resources. In turn, as the main factors responsible for the breakup of the alliance, he identified a change in perception of threats, a decrease in the effectiveness and credibility of the alliance, internal changes in the Member States, and the acquisition of alternative security measures.<sup>13</sup> Bolesław Balcerowicz, on the other hand, emphasized the relatedness of security goals and the weave of interdependencies, most often historical and cultural, which causes a kind of "gravity" towards each other. The deepening gap between key security interests, in turn, causes a decrease in alliance cohesion.<sup>14</sup>

The paper aims to analyze and assess the impact of the London NATO Summit on Poland's military security. The main research question concerns whether the provisions of the NATO Summit and the accompanying atmosphere positively translate into Poland's military security. The main tenet assumes that the decisions of the London NATO Summit positively affect Poland's military security. On the

10 S.M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca-New York: Cornell University Press, 1987.

11 J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Współczesne koncepcje*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012.

12 A. Dybczyński, *Sojusze międzynarodowe...*

13 M. Madej, 'Sojusze polityczno-wojskowe – NATO..'

14 B. Balcerowicz, *Sojusz a obrona narodowa*, Warszawa: Bellona, 1999.

other hand, however, the climate and discussions that accompanied the Summit brought a great deal of uncertainty and revealed a growing gap between allies on many issues. The paper uses the theory of defensive structural realism. The text source analysis method was used when writing the paper.

## 2. The atmosphere before and during the Summit

A month before the London Summit, a heated debate on NATO's condition and the credibility of US security guarantees for Europe had taken place. In an interview by *The Economist* published on November 7, 2019, President of France Emmanuel Macron said: "What we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO." According to him, this state occurred because of a lack of strategic coordination and leadership from the United States. President Macron warned the European countries that they could no longer rely on America to defend NATO allies. The criticism of the administration of US President Donald Trump was the result of a reaction to his unilateral decision to withdraw soldiers from northern Syria, which enabled Turkey to conduct military operations there. The French President also said that Europe stands on "the edge of a precipice" and called on Europe to "wake up" and to start thinking of itself strategically as a geopolitical power so as not to lose "control of our destiny". The President also said that he did not know whether he still believed in the effectiveness of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>15</sup> However, according to commentators, he did not signal France's reluctance to come to the attacked ally's aid. Rather, it was a sign of lack of faith in the United States, which, in his view, should be "a guarantor of last resort", because of its power.<sup>16</sup>

The frankness and directness of the President of France and the use of the radical term "brain dead" shocked the allies. President Donald Trump said that President Macron's statement was "very insulting"

15 'Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead', *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead> [2020-02-14].

16 O.R. Bell, "Brain-dead" or not "brain-dead"? That is not the question', *Atlantic Council*, 12 November 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/brain-dead-or-not-brain-dead-that-is-not-the-question/> [2020-02-14].

and “very nasty”. He also warned France that “Nobody needs NATO more than France” and that “It’s a very dangerous statement for them to make”, claiming that “NATO serves a great purpose.”<sup>17</sup> The U. S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rejected President Macron’s allegations saying: “I think NATO remains an important, critical, perhaps historically one of the most critical strategic partnerships in all of recorded history.” Thus, the American administration assumed the role of NATO defender, despite the fact that during the election campaign and even after receiving the presidential nomination, Donald Trump repeatedly questioned the importance of the Alliance. German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the French President’s statement as “drastic words” and disagreed with them. She said that “NATO remains vital to our security”, and constructively stated that if problems arise, they need to be solved.<sup>18</sup> President Andrzej Duda stated in turn: “I am asking French President Emmanuel Macron not to talk about the ‘death of NATO’s brain’, but to propose what exactly we can do to improve our cooperation in NATO.” He also added: “We would like NATO to be strong and united. We would like the Alliance to be consistent.”<sup>19</sup> The Polish President’s approach was balanced and focused on the implementation of the national interest, which is maintaining NATO’s cohesion and transatlantic solidarity.

According to researchers, there is no consensus as to whether NATO is actually undergoing a “brain dead” period, or whether it was only a rhetorical figure that was supposed to condemn President Donald Trump’s way of pursuing an international policy. In principle, however, there is an agreement that one should act for the political strengthening of NATO and the development of its military capabilities.<sup>20</sup>

17 ‘NATO members adopt joint declaration in London despite Summit tensions’, *The Defence Post*, 4 December 2019, <https://thedefensedefencepost.com/2019/12/04/nato-joint-statement-london/> [2020-02-14].

18 S. Erlanger, ‘Macron Says NATO Is Experiencing “Brain Death” Because of Trump’, *The New York Times*, 7 November 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/07/world/europe/macron-nato-brain-death.html> [2020-02-17].

19 A. Brzozowski, ‘Poland hopes to sway Turkish threat to NATO’s Eastern defence plans’, *Euractiv*, 3 December 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/poland-hopes-to-sway-turkish-threat-to-natos-eastern-defence-plans/> [2020-02-17].

20 J. Dempsey, ‘Judy Asks: Is NATO Brain-Dead?’, *Carnegie Europe*, 28 November 2019, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/80450> [2020-02-14].

### 3. Turkish threat of deadlock

In the months before the NATO Summit in London, Turkey and other NATO members' differences deepened. The dispute began with the failed 2016 coup, aggravated by Washington's reluctance to extradite the alleged coup leader – Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen.<sup>21</sup> It was escalated by the purchase of Russian S-400s missiles, which began to be delivered to Turkey in July 2019, for Turkey's military offensive in northeastern Syria against Kurdish militias. The evolution of the political system and the growing regional ambitions of Turkey make it difficult to maintain NATO's cohesion. The widening gap in security objectives may even lead the country to withdraw from the Alliance, which confirms the theory of defensive structural realism.

President Erdoğan urged for unconditional support of the Alliance in the fight against the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG). He warned that Turkey would block NATO's plan for the defense of Poland and the Baltic states unless the Alliance designates the Kurdish group as "terrorists", as Turkey has done with the Kurdish organization, The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).<sup>22</sup> Before the NATO Summit in London, the United States urged Turkey to provide its support to NATO's defense plans for Poland and the Baltic states. Nevertheless, until the Summit, Turkey rejected this possibility, demanding more political backing from NATO in its fight against the Kurdish militia in Syria.

After the Summit, it was announced that President Erdoğan agreed to adopt the defense plans for Poland and the Baltic states. After persuasion by the allies, the Turkish President said that he agreed to support the Poland-Baltic plans and, therefore, counts upon NATO not abandoning Turkey in its fight against terrorism.<sup>23</sup> Under heavy political pressure, Turkey has agreed to refrain from blocking the defense plans. However, the YPG was not recognized as a terrorist organization and, instead, NATO only traditionally condemned all forms of terrorism and agreed to "a forward-looking reflection process" –

21 A. Brzozowski, 'Turkey continues to block NATO's Eastern defence plans', *Euractiv*, 10 December 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/turkey-continues-to-block-natos-eastern-defence-plans/> [2020-02-17].

22 'Turkey threatens to block NATO's Baltic defence plan over YPG', *Al-Jazeera*, 3 December 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/turkey-threatens-block-nato-baltic-defence-plan-ypg-191203083651527.html> [2020-02-17].

23 A. Brzozowski, 'Turkey continues to block...'

a mechanism that allowed Turkey to lift its threat.<sup>24</sup> As for the plans themselves, the London declaration only includes the following general statement: “We are adapting our military capabilities, strategy, and plans across the Alliance in line with our 360-degree approach to security.”<sup>25</sup> In the general opinion of the Summit participants, however, the issue of plans was finally approved.

Two days later, however, Turkey's position changed again. Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said Turkey would block the final publication of NATO's Eastern defense blueprint until the allies agreed to brand the YPG as a terrorist group. He stated that earlier Turkey had only agreed to move to the “next stage of the arrangements”, but the final confirmation still depends on Turkey being included in NATO's defense plans and meeting its condition on the YPG.<sup>26</sup> Advisor to President Duda, Krzysztof Szczerski, replied that: “Decisions were made for both the Polish-Baltic and the Turkish plans and now we are waiting to implement the plans. That's a military matter.” On February 12, 2020, a NATO defense ministerial meeting was held, during which the implementation of NATO decisions from London regarding deterrence and defense policy and about the preparedness initiative was discussed.<sup>27</sup>

## 4. Article 5 and attitude towards Russia

● For Poland, strengthening Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, including the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, is a key issue. Symbolically, the statement from the declaration concluding the NATO Summit in London confirmed the “solemn commitment as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty that an attack against one Ally

24 P. Wintour, ‘NATO to launch fundamental review of its future direction’, *The Guardian*, 4 December 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/04/turkey-agrees-to-back-nato-plan-for-baltic-states-and-poland> [2020-02-17].

25 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration*. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, nato.int, 4 December 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_171584.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm) [2020-02-14].

26 A. Brzozowski, ‘Turkey continues to block...’

27 The Ministry of National Defence of Poland, ‘NATO defence ministerial meeting’, gov.pl, 12 February 2020, <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/nato-defence-ministerial-meeting> [2020-02-17].

shall be considered an attack against us all.”<sup>28</sup> A practical manifestation of this during the London NATO Summit was, in turn, the effort to approve the defense plans of Poland and the Baltic states described above. The Summit also decided to launch Exercise Defender-Europe 20, which is to be one of NATO’s largest military exercises in the last 25 years. It is expected that 37,000 soldiers from 18 countries will participate. They are meant to check the interoperability of NATO forces, including in particular the strategic force deployment from the United States and Western Europe to Poland and the Baltic states.<sup>29</sup> These exercises are to be a practical demonstration of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and American involvement in Europe.

For Poland, strengthening Article 5 is particularly important in the context of the growing threat from Russia. The statement concluding the Summit upheld the position that: “Russia’s aggressive actions constitute a threat to Euro-Atlantic security.” At the same time, NATO announced “measured and responsible” responses to Russia’s deployment of new intermediate-range missiles, which pose a threat to NATO countries and violate international agreements. The development of capabilities to repel hybrid attacks was also confirmed; however, it was refrained from identifying the main potential source of these attacks, which is Russia.<sup>30</sup> According to the theory of defensive structural realism, NATO wants to balance the threat posed by Russia; therefore it focuses on strengthening its defense potential and avoids risky activities.

The discussed theory allows rivals to work together to reduce tensions and the security dilemma. During the Summit, President Macron spoke in favor of opening a discussion on the approach to Russia and the gradual rebuilding of relations with that state. He argued that this was not a sign of naivety towards Russia, because he realizes that Russia has committed many international law violations, including over Ukraine. Many NATO members, including mainly Poland and the Baltic states, but also European powers, like Great Britain and Germany, did not share France’s optimism about Russia.<sup>31</sup> Despite this, they de-

28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

29 The Ministry of National Defence of Poland, ‘NATO defence ministerial meeting...’

30 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

31 P. Wintour, ‘NATO to launch fundamental review...’

cided to confirm in the closing declaration that they “remain open for dialogue, and to a constructive relationship with Russia when Russia's actions make that possible.”<sup>32</sup> This means that from a NATO perspective, the possibility of rebuilding relations with Russia depends on the latter. Primarily, it would have to return to compliance with international armaments agreements and withdraw from its military policy towards Ukraine. At a press conference after the Summit, President Andrzej Duda stated that although Poland disagrees with Russia on many issues and considers some of its activities unacceptable, a path should be sought to improve relations between NATO and Russia.<sup>33</sup> Given Poland's geographical location, exacerbating the conflict with Russia is not by any means in the Polish interest. Poland should advocate the search for political ways to resolve the conflict, but this cannot be done with the consent of Russia's violation of the basic principles of the international community.

## 5. Expenditure on defense

For a quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War, the technological gap between the United States and its European allies has widened. This was mainly due to the fact that European states excessively used the so-called “peace dividends”. They were convinced that the risk of war on a large scale in Europe was averted, so they began to significantly reduce the funds for defense. An additional safeguard for them was the belief that in the event of a military threat they could count on the US. Russia's military activities in Ukraine have dispelled the myth of eternal peace in the North Atlantic zone. American pressure on Europeans to start increasing defense spending, which has been applied for years, has finally begun to bring measurable results in the face of changing international circumstances. During the meeting preceding the London NATO Summit, the BBN estimated that by 2024 the required 2% of GDP for defense will be met by half of the Al-

32 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

33 ‘London NATO Summit a succes for Alliance and Poland – president’, Polish Press Agency, 4 December 2019, <https://www.pap.pl/en/news/news%2C552580%2Clondon-nato-Summit-success-alliance-and-poland-president.html> [2020-02-17].

liance's Member States.<sup>34</sup> The declaration crowning the Summit has traditionally confirmed the attachment to the principle of spending 2% of GDP on defense and the allocation of 20% for investment purposes to acquire new capabilities.<sup>35</sup>

President Andrzej Duda took part in the meeting organized by the US President Donald Trump for the leaders of the NATO Member States which spend at least 2% of GDP on defense. Until the beginning of the Summit, nine NATO countries had met this basic requirement. President Trump mainly criticized wealthy Germany, which spends only about 1.2% of GDP on defense.<sup>36</sup> However, creating such symbolic divisions by President Trump does not seem to be a good idea. Different political and economic methods, including incentives, should be used to convince NATO members to fulfill their Alliance commitments. The London Summit declaration stated regarding Article 3 of the Washington Treaty on maintaining individual and collective ability to resist the armed attack that: "We are making good progress. We must and will do more."<sup>37</sup> The rise of Russia's strength in Eastern Europe must lead to European Member States' military strengthening. This will make it possible to maintain the balance of power in the region, which is an important element of the theory of defensive structural realism.

## **6. Development of the European Union military component**

The interview with President Macron has reactivated the discussion on the need to develop the European Union's military component. The French President has been concerned about the decreasing level of security in Europe for years. The surging threat results from the development of authoritarian regimes, the growing rivalry between global powers, the increase in international instability, the intensification of divisions in Europe and the spread of the phenomenon of terrorism. One of the key reasons is the gradual withdrawal of the United States

34 'National Security Bureau meet prior to...'

35 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

36 'NATO members adopt joint declaration...'

37 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

from Europe, favoring involvement in other regions of the world, mainly in Asia-Pacific.<sup>38</sup> President Macron argued that increasing European defense spending should be targeted to pursue Europe's own strategic goals, in collaboration with NATO but not beholden to it. The President of France advocated the strengthening of the European Union and its rapprochement with Russia.<sup>39</sup> According to him, efforts to develop EU military capabilities should be intensified, and a strong European army should be formed in the future. Certain actions have already been taken in recent years in this direction, in the form of the European Intervention Initiative, the European Defense Fund, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation. According to President Macron, Europe should start thinking geopolitically, not only from the perspective of "soft power", but also "hard power."<sup>40</sup> Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte is of a similar opinion and calls for the evolution of thinking in the EU from the power of principles towards principles and power.<sup>41</sup> In turn, the new European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has a plan to boost the EU's role on the world stage, and has talked about the creation of a 'Geopolitical Commission'. As a former German defense minister, she wants to devote great attention to the European Union's defense and security,<sup>42</sup> despite the fact that these competencies are mainly the responsibility of the European Council and the Council of the European Union.

Jens Stoltenberg said that it was in NATO's interest to strengthen the European Union militarily. At the same time, however, he emphasized that there should be no duplication of command structures and an attempt to replace the Alliance. This would result in dispersion and waste of limited resources. Poland is presenting a similar position on this issue. Polish authorities are in favor of strengthening the EU's military potential as a pillar of NATO's security. According to them, the

38 O.R. Bell, "Brain-dead" or not "brain-dead"?...

39 S. Erlanger, 'Macron Says NATO Is Experiencing...'

40 O.R. Bell, "Brain-dead" or not "brain-dead"?...

41 Government of the Netherlands, 'Churchill Lecture by Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Europa Institut at the University of Zurich', government.nl, 13 February 2019, <https://www.government.nl/documents/speeches/2019/02/13/churchill-lecture-by-prime-minister-mark-rutte-europa-institut-at-the-university-of-zurich> [2020-02-17].

42 L. Bayer, 'Meet von der Leyen's "geopolitical Commission"', *Politico*, 4 December 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/meet-ursula-von-der-leyen-geopolitical-commission/> [2020-02-17].

creation of parallel command structures may lead to a relaxation of the transatlantic bond and a decrease in cohesion within NATO itself. It is dangerous for Poland that, unlike France, it invariably perceives the United States as the ultimate external guarantor of its own security. The declaration concluding the London NATO Summit stated that “there is unprecedented progress in NATO-EU cooperation.”<sup>43</sup> NATO has declared further support for strengthening the European Union’s military potential in close cooperation between organizations. This approach is beneficial in the context of defensive structural realism.

## Conclusions

At a press conference following the NATO Summit in London, Polish President Andrzej Duda announced that it was a success for the North Atlantic Alliance and Poland. According to him, the Summit’s outcome disproved voices that NATO is in a crisis or that it could even be dissolved. He emphasized that the Summit had reached a crucial decision for Poland’s security and defense to upgrade the collective defense plans.<sup>44</sup> While the voices for NATO’s disbanding were exaggerated, the risk of some members relaxing NATO cooperation or even withdrawing their membership still exists. The approval of the security plans for Poland and the Baltic states was undoubtedly a success. On the other hand, however, the climate that accompanied this issue, the uncertainty about the possibility of reaching an agreement, and, after the Summit, the certainty of its finality, undermine intra-alliance coherence to some extent. However, this is not an emergency situation and the North Atlantic Alliance is referred to as a success dressed in the permanent clothes of the crisis. From the perspective of the defensive structural realism theory, the North Atlantic Alliance’s existence is beneficial for members who feel an external threat. It is important that the decisions and actions taken by the allies contribute not so much to the increase in the power of NATO but mainly to the increase in the level of its members’ security.

43 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *London Declaration...*

44 ‘London NATO Summit a succes for...’

Russia's military threat is still recognized as one of the main challenges for NATO, alongside terrorism, violation of the world order by state and non-state actors, increased migration, and threats in cyberspace. The Member States' position regarding the need for a firm attitude towards Russia was no longer as clear as it was at the Summit in Newport or Warsaw. There were calls for more decisive attempts to rebuild relations with Russia. The idea itself is understandable because Russia is a powerful state with which it is better to cooperate than to continue in conflict. On the other hand, the renewal of relations cannot rely on a policy of concessions to Russia which violates the fundamental principles of international law, including its neighbors' independence and sovereignty.

Poland's security is also important in terms of the confirmation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, an increase in defense expenditure of the Member States, and the development of the European Union's military capabilities. These matters are directly linked. The uncertainty of some NATO members about American security guarantees and the military weakness of European members of the Alliance spark a discussion about the need to strengthen Europe. The open question remains whether it should be carried out in close cooperation with NATO, as its European pillar, or in parallel with NATO. This is not a new issue, as discussions on this matter have been going on since the European Union's founding, or even earlier. While countries such as France have traditionally been skeptical about US guarantees and advocate autonomous European military structures, most European countries, including Poland, treat the United States as the most credible ultimate guarantor of security and prioritize strengthening NATO.

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