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POLISH NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY IN A NEW REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT. CASE STUDY: NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF POLAND (2014)

ABSTRACT

Military aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine was a turning point on the international arena; and particularly in Europe. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, concluded by the illegal occupation and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula represented the first post-Cold War event in which one state claimed – equipped with the full array of force – a territory belonging to another state, whose borders are recognised under the international law. Russian aggression triggered a general concern in Eastern Europe. The Polish leaders were among the first European officials who vehemently condemned the actions taken by Russia. This paper aims to explore Polish stance on Russian military aggression against Ukraine and how the Polish leadership posture is reflected in the new concept of the national security strategy. Thus, we focus on the National Security Strategy of Republic of Poland (2014).

Keywords: national security, military aggression, sense of insecurity, threats, enhancing security, defensive capabilities, national security strategy of Poland, NATO

1. INTRODUCTION

Immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Poland's strategic objective was to join the Euro-Atlantic structures. An equally important goal was to strengthen the strategic partnership with the United States. Both objectives have been reached. However, Poland did not feel fully secure and have continued to demand military presence of its Allies on its territory. Vladimir

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Putin's coming to power and the new foreign policy pursued by Russia, as well as the military means to be used in Georgia, reawakened Warsaw leaders' concerns about Putin's (geo)political goals. In fact, six years later after the episode in Georgia, Russian aggression on Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea evidenced Russia's return to the use of military means to reach its geostrategic objectives and Kremlin new tactics of pursuing and achieving its goals by introducing the dimension of the hybrid war.

The outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine and Russian return to the policy of force and the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state questioned the sustainability of the Western rules of political behaviour, which threatened to compromise such rules on the international scene (Kupiecki & Michta, 2015, p. 8), thus wiping out the illusion of a lucrative political cooperation with Russia under the Putin regime. The magnitude of events near its borders has convinced Polish leaders that these security issues require urgent (re)action (Missala, 2015, p. 106–107). Whereas other Western states such as the USA (with interests taken in other regions), Germany (interested in direct relations with Russia) were initially hesitant in taking even defensive military countermeasures, Polish leaders constantly reacted and did lobby for the permanent deployment of NATO troops on its territory as a part of credible security measures against Russian aggressive potential. It is the moment when the paradigm shift occurs in the configuration of the national security strategy.

Polish current security strategy focuses on the need to improve and develop national defense capabilities, the need for consensus within Nord-Atlantic Alliance and collective defense in guaranteeing national security of Poland in the context of potential threats coming from Russia. Enhancing defensive capabilities mainly implies NATO's "boots on his ground". All these signify the first major change of rhetoric in comparison with the previous Polish official documents. To keep track of the said change in narrative is our primary research goal. In other words, Poland could be a potential target of military threats; hence, national security must be collectively ensured. Our research is based on the contents of two Polish official national strategy documents, from 2009 and 2014 respectively, and the main argument of this paper is that the new Polish national security strategy should, more than before, focus on combating Russian threats (in a defensive manner), while decision-makers has had in their mind the national and regional vulnerabilities vis a vis Russian aggression.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The concept of (national) security is characterized by distinct prongs and meanings depending on the period dealt with, on the theoreticians approaching it and the theoretical sphere which they belong to and on the evolution of threats to the state.

2.1.1. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY DURING THE COLD WAR

We start the overview of the series of approaches and meanings given to the concept of national security with the most popular proponent of traditional realism theory, Hans J. Morgenthau. Morgenthau believes that as far as foreign policy goes, the state is guided by national interest. Because the state will have to defend and promote its national interests in an international system lacking in moral principles, the state will use military force (Morgenthau,

1949). A similar approach is advocated by George F. Kennan. The author describes the national interest and national security as subject to governmental concern, where the national interest - political integrity, population welfare or military security – is defined in abstraction from moral values. In other words, national interest lies in national sovereignty and should have been defended as such (Kennan, 1985).

Quite unlike the former, Arnold Wolfers (1952), recognized for his dualistic realist-liberal theoretical approach, assumes a more cautious, albeit more comprehensive, perspective. In his view, security can be considered an intermediate goal or instrument, always having a negative value and being measured subjectively. Holding close to Arnold Wolfers' vision, Charles F. Hermann also stipulates several meanings to the notion of security. Likewise, he adds contextual dimensions associated with national security requirements (Hermann, 1977). Richard Ullman, in turn, warns against the neglect of dimensions of security other than military ones. From his point of view, such a policy produces more than a zero-sum game. So, what we end up with in the relations among various states is a negative-sum game, which, according to this author, leads to the weakening of global security instead of producing security (Ullman, 1983).

2.1.2. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AFTER THE COLD WAR

Within theoretical approach to the concept of national security, underlining the multiple meanings of security to the detriment of concentrating on it as a goal coincides with the end of the Cold War, even though, as we saw above, there are some theoreticians who approached the national security from different angles. Moreover, although the state will remain the most important actor, new actors are appearing on the international stage. Also, the spectrum of the threats to national security is extended once the actors multiply.

Barry Buzan started the reconceptualization of *security* in the early 1980s in his *People, States and Fear*, published in 1983. The need for redefining national security is also underlined by the theorist David Baldwin. Baldwin stresses the need to change the approach to security for two reasons: on the one hand, insisting on security as a goal often represents identifying security with "vital interests" (national sovereignty and territorial integrity) and because the traditional approach of security refers to national security as a "pre-established" fact on the other hand (Baldwin, 1995). In his view, security should not be specified in terms of threats to all state values because it precludes a possibility of distinguishing between political objectives. As a result, security for him means a political objective distinguished from the rest of the objectives that compete for the allocation of resources. In parallel, the idea of Baldwin will be extended/completed by Buzan, Weaver and Wilde in their seminal book *Security: a new framework of analysis*, where the authors provide a complex interdependencies the concept in question exhibits by proving that security does not just refer to the political-military dimension. According to Buzan, in order to be able to understand the concept of security; first and foremost, it is necessary to pass security through the filters of conceptual delimitations, such as levels of analysis, sectors and regions, providing each term with the meaning and role of defining security (Buzan, Weaver & Wilde, 1998).

2.1.3. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

In Barry Buzan's view, the state can adopt two types of security strategies: either national or international one. Depending on the strategy adopted, the state will focus either on reducing

vulnerabilities or on the sources and causes of the threats, trying to eliminate or remove them by political or military actions (Buzan, 1983). On the other hand, for Denis M. Drew and Donald Snow the national security strategy is the interface between the non-military tools of the decision-makers and the military establishment, while stressing the relevance of the civil-military relationship in the configuration of the strategy. In their view, a national security strategy becomes a focus for the use of military force in an international confrontation (Drew & Snow, 2006). Alexandra Ghica and Marian Zulean provide a similar definition of the national security strategy; that is, the national security strategy is the strategic concept of National Security Policy, i.e. "an action plan or set of decisions proposed by policy makers to justify how to employ/expend resources to fulfil strategic objectives", a concept that seeks to reconcile strategic objectives with the resources available and the means to achieve them (Ghica & Zulean, 2007).

2.1.4. SECURITY PERSPECTIVE FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

National security *per se* is an ambiguous concept, difficult to delimit, often misused or vaguely approached (Baldwin, 1997, p.12). The argument resorts to the multiple meanings that the concept of security has been endowed with over time, among others: objective/goal, tool, value, fundamental or public good, consequence or precondition.

Security, upon the first approximation, may represent the main objective of a state, which, being pursued, ensures the protection of the core values, with the core values being sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the military force is the instrument by dint of which this goal is achieved. Thus, security, regarded as the main objective of a nation and strictly pursued in military terms, was often linked to the notion of "survival". This approach manifests itself in the works of classical realists such as Hans J. Morgenthau (1949) or George F. Kennan (1985).

Other accounts identify security with a value. This perspective is characterized by two prongs. First of all, security is a negative value or a burden for some states, because the aspiration for too much security can lead to insecurity rather than security (Wolfers, 1952). In the latter case, security may be regarded as an instrumental value, in the sense that security is necessary to promote other values (welfare, economic development, education, health, etc.) (Hermann, 1977, p. 19). Also, what can be attributed to security is the meaning of consequence because it can be evaluated and defined in terms of the threats it faces (Ullman, 1983, p.130) or in terms of public good provided and ensured by the state.

The plethora of meanings attributed to the notion of security do not give a clear indication of what security is essentially. To appreciate the concept of (national) security entails identifying the components that set the conceptual framework for it. Therefore, the starting point of the "security issue" should be reformulated under the "security for whom?" and "security for what values?" (Baldwin, 1997, p. 13). In this context, national security is a concept composed of: goals/objectives, tools, reference object, security and securitization process (when applicable). Obviously, this process must take place under the umbrella of an institutionalized framework. Institutions are the ones that turn this abstract concept into a strategic planning document - security strategy.

Understanding national security in terms of the main threats to national security offers the prospect of a more precise delimitation of challenges for a state and at the same time will help prioritize national resources to reduce or eliminate the said threats. Moving on to the

national security goals/objectives, apart from defending the core values, which are inalienable, the rest are determined according to national capabilities and power of projection of influence/promotion of national interest. Once the national security objectives have been established, the next step is to identify the tools that will be used to pursue (national) security. The range of instruments may vary, depending on the national strength/power that the state has at its disposal. The instruments are, either of a coercive nature - threat, violence, force (traditional approach), or of a diplomatic nature consisting in relations with other states, or they constitute a mix between the two. Always, when decision-makers set national security goals/ objectives, this process means that the use of instruments will have to be directed against something identified as a vulnerability and/or perceived as a threat. In this situation, policy-makers will have to delimit what is/are the subject or the reference objects and what is the intensity of the vulnerability or threat to it, depending on the identified security problem. At times, the process of securitization of a real or imagined problem can take place; however, it is a matter of pure contingency rather than of necessity.

Enhancing security means increasing addressing capabilities to combat threats; which means, in other words, increasing resources allocated to resolve national security issues. But the question is what counts as a "threat" to security, and this matter depends on the real or perceived/imagined (objective security vs. subjective security) aspects of a threat. This choice will always be made by political decision-makers who will decide whether a threat will be fought. If they choose a security issue to be perceived as a threat, it will be placed on the national security agenda. Otherwise, they may propose risk management strategies or initiate a public debate (Ghica & Zulean, 2007, p. 54) to resolve uncertainty about that security issue.

2.1.5. INSTITUTIONALIZING THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Once the essential conceptual frameworks of national security have been established, the next step is that of conceptualizing national security strategy. There are two key conceptual frameworks that guide the national security strategy: national goals/interests and tools (pathways/lines of action). National goals can be: vital interests, major interests and peripheral interests. Tools can be: military, economic and diplomatic (Drew & Snow, 2006). Therefore, the strategy provides further guidelines for actions which will subsequently have to be implemented through sectoral policies.

NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY (NSP)

The National Security Policy (NSP) operates at the level of political vision and is based on an ideology shared/followed by the acting administration. As a result, NSP is a political choice and sets strategic objectives in order to: achieve security, eliminate subjective fears and ensure the welfare of citizens (Ghica & Zulean, 2007, pp. 39–40). A security policy that combines elements from both national security strategies, the state-centred strategy and the strategy based on the preservation of the *status quo* (with the focus on the sources and causes of the threats, managing them through political action), represents the best choice of that security policy.

Sometimes, the National Security Policy becomes a political trade-off between security and other values. Incorrectly approaching some security issues or misrepresenting one

security issue can change the meaning of the security policy. When national security becomes the "ultimate" goal of a state, the issue will never be resolved. On the other hand, if there is a continuing aspiration for security that turns into an obsession of security, all the values of the state will be subordinated to this *desideratum*. In another form, security obsession can give rise to the accumulation of power and its use against other states, or at least it will be perceived by other states as coercive power accumulation. In most cases, perceived problems fuel the security dilemma in the international system, even if the actor, perceived as seeking military supremacy, does not use its force against other states (Buzan, 1981).

2.2. METHODOLOGY

The case study is structured on two levels of analysis that help us understand the context in which Polish national security strategies and policies have been formulated throughout last years. On the one hand, national security strategies and foreign policy priorities have been formulated in accordance with the status of membership within North Atlantic Alliance (and the European Union). On the other hand, the sense of insecurity originating from its eastern borders and particularly negative historical experiences and tense relations with the Russian Federation under the Putin regime have been taken into consideration in the formulation of national security strategies and policies.

2.2.1. NATO AND "THE BEAR OUT OF HIBERNATION"

The crisis in Ukraine and the aggression against Ukraine followed by the annexation of Crimea by Russia led to an international debate focused on new security scenarios that NATO member states in Eastern Europe could face in the context of Russia aiming to increase its military presence. The new debate also highlights the weakening of NATO as a defence alliance and the measures that the Alliance should have to take to deter Russian aggressive behaviour in Eastern Europe.

The return of the Kremlin regime to the use of military tools and the violation of international law and international order by annexing the Crimea should entice the main Western powers into reconsidering traditional threats. At the same time, the consequences of Putin's actions raise questions about the sustainability of Western standards in the current international order. That is why the main states supporting the preservation of the current international order should (re)analyse the price of compromising such rules and act accordingly. On the other hand, in recent years, NATO, as an organisation, showed the symptoms of regress through some internal transformational processes: defence budget cuts or a degree of self-restraint on defence and military posture in the eastern flank (Kupiecki, Michta, 2015). Also, Kacprzyk sees the NATO cohesion as being already affected by the lack of defence in Central and Eastern Europe, and thus Russia could undermine NATO's credibility as the main defensive alliance and indirectly the credibility of the USA (Kacprzyk, 2015, p. 5). Other authors go further and believe that due to Russian military actions, Eastern Europe is no longer a flank, but has become a frontline - a controversial military border - with two hot spots, the first being the front labelled as "Ukraine" and the other, the "Baltic" front, which, being out of control, can exert negative influence on the Central and Eastern Europe stability (Karber & Petersen, 2016, p. 33).

2.2.2. POLAND AND ITS EASTERN NEIGHBOURS

The second level of analysis, as mentioned above, is Polish foreign and security policy, with an emphasis on the area between its eastern borders and the Russian Federation.

After becoming a fully-fledged member of NATO (and of the European Union) Poland has paid particular attention to the region between its Eastern borders and the Russian Federation in terms of potential security challenges and national interests (Bienek, 2006, Missala, 2016, Novak, 2010; O'Donnell, 2012) because the Russian Federation continued to be perceived as the biggest challenge to Polish national security. Therefore, Warsaw has been pursuing over the years the internationalization of Poland' security and defence policy (Missala, 2016). Having assumed a distinct perspective, Irina Kobrianskaya insists on the stereotypes and fears that have existed for centuries in the relations between Poland and Russia, which is now more conspicuous than ever. Because of these fears, Poland is making the mistake (as well as other European states) of believing that who "flirts" with Ukraine upsets Russia, continuing to say that this reasoning reduces merely to claiming that "beyond the Bug is only the USSR, but in a slightly different form and that its collapse was only temporary". Moreover, the involvement of Poland in the *Orange Revolution* and afterwards the constant promotion and support of integration into the Euro-Atlantic organisations of its eastern neighbours (Belarus and Ukraine) are identified by Bienek and Irina Kobrianskaya as the main issue in Poland-Russia relations. Under these circumstances, Poland will campaign for the permanent deployment of NATO troops on its territory as a guarantee of credible security measures (Missala, 2016).

2.2.3. DATA COLLECTION. NATIONAL SECURITY OF POLAND AS SEEN THROUGH THE LENSES OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

The primary sources we use are related to two official documents, namely: Defense Strategy of Republic of Poland (DSP) and the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (NSSP).

Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2009)

Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland is the most comprehensive sector of the Polish National Security Strategy which deals with its external conditions influencing national defense, concepts, definitions, description of the national defense system, armed forces within the system, as well as with the directions of development and transformation of the national defense system.

The main goals of the strategy refer to the strategic partnership with the United States of America and the importance of the US in guaranteeing national security of Poland. The strategy also reminds us of the potential security threats to Poland, while underlining the low-level possibility of a large-scale conflict. However, regional threats and local conflicts are still persistent, just to mention the Russian-Georgian conflict holding at that time. Moreover, the strategy highlights that Polish security is mainly a function of the processes and developments that take place in its neighbourhood. As a result, the stability of Central and Eastern Europe guarantees the security of Poland, where the development and security policy of these states, particularly these of Russia, are described as having a direct impact on security of Poland. In terms of defense, last but not least, NATO remains the key organization in the regional

security and the most important guarantor of Polish external security. ("Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2009, art: 11, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22).

National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2014)

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (NSSP) pays tribute to the importance of NATO (and EU) for Polish security, wherein the North Atlantic Alliance remains the most important organisation for the security of Poland, while US remains the most important non-European ally. Also, the document does justice to the significance of regional cooperation in the Weinmar Triangle or Visegrad Group (V4) as well as the support for reforms that Poland provides to non-EU countries through the Eastern Partnership, all these in the context of the orientation of the US foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific region, Russia's use of military tools, its aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, art: 6, 7, 8, 42). Under these circumstances, Poland needs to increase its strategic resilience ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, art. 64). Therefore, the three security policy priorities are outlined in the documents as follows: strengthening national defense capabilities, particularly in those security areas where (common) allies' actions may be hindered (consensus-challenging situations); supporting processes aimed to reinforce NATO's ability to provide collective defence (and the development of the EU Common Security and Defense Policy) and supporting as well as selectively participating in the actions of the international community aimed at preventing the emergence of new sources of threats ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 65).

2.2.4. DATA REDUCTION

Poland pays special attention to the region beyond its eastern borders. The sense of insecurity that this region gives rise to stems from official documents, especially after the second Ukrainian crisis and Russian aggression, concluded by the annexation of the Crimea. Thus, in connection with the previous conceptual frameworks of security strategies and policies, both those of a general nature and those that treat Poland as state-actor, we have chosen the following relevant data from our primary sources: security objectives and strategic goals; resistance capacity; NATO as a defensive alliance (military alliance) and the importance of partnership with the US.

Both documents underline the increased attention that political decision-makers in Warsaw give to the Eastern neighbours, namely: Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation. Improving bilateral relations with these states and regional stability in general as well as strengthening the ties between the listed countries and NATO (and the EU) are the main strategic objectives that Poland has prioritized in this region.

Referring directly to the perpetuating conflict in eastern Ukraine and to the perceived risk to national security, the national security strategy underlines the possibility of exposing Poland to forms of political pressure in conjunction with military arguments. At the same time, the document focuses on the concentration of military potential threat or provocative military maneuvers in the vicinity of the Polish state borders and their offensive posture, and continues to observe that the military threats to which Poland may be exposed may take the shape of war crisis, military conflict at different scales - from military attack below the

threshold of classic war, to a less-likely large scale conflict (National Security Strategy of Republic of Poland, 2014, article 36). In this regard, the document invites the allies of Poland to solidarity and consensus. In article 43 of the above-mentioned strategy, the document specifies the degrees of challenge to which European security policy is exposed due to the processes and events taking place in neighbouring countries of Eastern Europe, the ones considerably affected by Russia's strong political, military and economic pressure.

Poland's concern is not only due to the lack of consensus among the European allies over the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's behaviour, but also because of the lack of investment in the national defense sector on the part of most of its partners, which runs counter to any expectedly reasonable conduct in the face of the major changes occurring on the international - with US supremacy being challenged and the Russian Federation increasing its defense investments, European countries continuing to cut budgets in this area (Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016, 2012) (this issue being identified and signalled as early as 2011, 2012).

Consequently, a steady direction of Polish security diplomacy activity represents those measures aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of collective defense in the long run and the deterrence posture of the North Atlantic Alliance, while providing support to the improvement of EU's CSDP in the political and strategic sphere, institutionally and operationally. And last but not least, through its diplomatic activities, the document reveals Poland's desire to improve strategic cooperation between NATO and the EU ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 71), which would be beneficial for Poland.

The sense of insecurity caused by Russian actions in Eastern Europe region is also reflected in some of the statements of the Polish officials who were insisting on NATO troops deployment on the territory of Poland as the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine occurred. They argued for the need of the allies' troops as part of the collective defense protective measures against possible forms of aggression or threats that may arise because of the Russian Federation's actions. Three of the statements on the need for alliance troops in Poland were made by Donald Tusk, the former Polish Prime Minister, by Radoslaw Sikorski, who is the former Minister of Foreign Affairs; and by Andrzej Duda, the current President of Poland. Thus, in the first half of 2014, Donald Tusk, at that time the Prime Minister of Poland, declared that "we want Poland to be defended by military troops, not only by words written in a treaty" (Buckley, Khan, Cienski, 2014, April 1). Radoslaw Sikorski said that "stationing two brigades - or as many as 10,000 soldiers – to Poland would fully satisfy us (Buckley, Khan, Cienski, 2014, April 1). As soon as he took an oath as a president of Poland, Andrzej Duda reiterated the main demand that Poland expects to be met by NATO: "We need a greater presence of NATO in this part of Europe" ("Poland's new president calls for stronger NATO presence to counter Russia", 2015, August 6).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS. EASTERN DIMENSION OF POLAND'S SECURITY POLICY

The region between its eastern borders and the Russian Federation has remained the focal point of national security strategy of Poland. The processes and developments that take place in its eastern neighbourhood have always influenced the formulation of national security strategies. In other words, from the perspective of Polish policy-makers, a stable security en-

vironment in Central and Eastern Europe is the security guarantee for Poland ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014, art. 17). Besides, the evolution of these states and their security policy (of Russia in particular) have a direct impact on Poland's security ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014, art. 21). Also, countries such as Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and, Ukraine - Ukraine as Poland's strategic partner in this region ("Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016", 2012, p. 18) – have been potential causes of instability, primarily because of the influence that Putin's regime exerts on them. For these reasons, Poland reacted every time to the changes occurring in the security architecture of this "grey area", which could have easily become (potential) threats to the stability of the region and hence to its security. The *Orange Revolution* (2004) is one of the examples when Poland denounced the interference in Ukrainian presidential race and the preliminary gross election fraud. Likewise, the involvement of Poland in the *Orange Revolution* contributed to the deterioration of relations with Russia (Kobrinskaya, 2005), a problem that has continued to perpetuate to these days. Thus, whenever Poland tries to promote the Western *repertoire* (democracy, stronger economic ties, human rights etc.) in one of these countries, it had and would have to consider the consequences that can emerge in the form of threats issued by Russia. However, in this area there are some factors that maintain instability, which includes, among others, what follows: the corrupt internal political system in each country, the lack of democracy, Russian propaganda, Russian support for clientelist system in those countries and (in)direct control of the political apparatus of those states. Furthermore, there appeared, after 2014, additional new subversive methods used by the Putin regime to destabilize the region, the toolkit that is part of the so-called hybrid war.

Unlike its eastern neighbours, which, although they gained independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, still remain under close observation and within the sphere of influence of the Russian Federation, Poland took a distinct course, pursuing different goals in its foreign policy, a course wherein embracing democratic values and principles underpinned new republic political frame. Adhering to NATO and the EU represented both collective defence and security and integration into a community of democratic values. However, Poland did not feel fully safe. The feeling of insecurity coming from this "grey area" has persisted. That is why the Polish leaders have constantly promoted the creation of a common NATO-EU security policy directed towards Russia and Eastern European non-member states ("Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016", 2012, p.16), based on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and on the right of each nation to decide on their respective future ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014, article 8). And that was happening many years prior to Russian aggression on Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea.

But the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's return to policy of force and violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state cast a doubt upon the sustainability of the Western rules of political behaviour, with the price of compromising such rules (Kupiecki & Michta, 2015, p. 8) potentially signifying the shattering of the delusion of cooperation politics under normal conditions with Russia led by the Putin regime. The failure to cope, resorting to plain dialogue and/or negotiations, with Russia's aggressive stance - military aggression on Ukraine, the deployment of troops on the border with Ukraine and Belarus - convinced Poland that non-military means cannot any longer deter Russia from using its military potential in pursuing its own interests in the area that belongs to its vital strategic space. The fact that Poland's last security statement insists on the need

to improve and develop national defense capabilities, the need for consensus and collective defense in guaranteeing national security in the context of potential threats coming from Eastwards, and in particular by benefiting from "boots on the ground " signifies the change of rhetoric and strategies in comparison with the previous one. In other words, we have a potential military threat, hence we must protect ourselves with any possible means. Also, if we look at the language used in the national security strategy, it can be noticed that the threat concept prevails when it comes to designating security issues that pose a threat to the new regional security environment emergent after 2014. Under these conditions, the new national security strategy seeks, more than before, to focus on threats and not on vulnerabilities, and the possible threats are viewed from a military perspective rather than from an economic or a social one (although they are also important in the complex picture of the strategy, coupled with the other possible threats that may arise from the extensive mechanism by dint of which the Putin regime uses to pursue Russia's strategic goals in Eastern Europe). All these features therefore point to the use of military means, regardless of whether we deal with national capacities or the capabilities of the North Atlantic Alliance. In other words, this approach can be translated as a call for means that fall into the active defensive category (Ullman, 1983).

In other respects, in the national defense strategy formulated in 2009, the deterrence concept was mentioned once, referring to a general context of enhancing the deterrence potential, in order to ensure the security of the Member States, as well as NATO as a whole ("National Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2009, article 55). Instead, in the 2014 national security strategy, the same concept appeared five times, and generally refers to: the possession or development of national capabilities that can prevent threats, including deterring, defending or protecting against them ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 11); diplomatic actions to strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of NATO's deterrent posture ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 30). Moreover, unlike the defense strategy in 2009, which does not refer to any aspect of the anti-missile defense system, in 2014 it recalls the priority of creating a high-quality defense system, including anti-missile defense ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 30).

Also, in the 2014 national security strategy, what is emphasized is the need to increase the state's strategic resilience against various threats ("National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland", 2014, article 64). This strategic resilience can be related to the term of resistance or defense capability (Wolfers, 1952). In this regard, the policy of deterrence that Poland has consistently supported within NATO comes to fulfil this function. In military terms, Poland is aware of the impossibility of excessive arming of territory or any other ally in Central and Eastern Europe. Then the objective of Poland is to create and enhance deterrence posture of North Atlantic Alliance, established by the presence of military equipment and troops in the eastern flank, to such a degree that would be sufficient to negotiate the increasing aggressive impulses of the Russian Federation (Binnendijk, 2015, p. 26–27). The Deterrence Policy appears even more critical for Poland once one takes into consideration the fact that its main strategic partner, the United States of America, ensures the presence of its military troops on the territory of Poland. From a strategic point of view, the US presence in Poland provides Warsaw with the guarantee that in the case of a scenario of a military aggression launched by the Russian Federation, the most powerful global actor can protect Poland's national security. To boot, American troops on its territory represents the signal of the US long-term military re-engagement in Europe Central and Eastern Europe (Kacprzyk, 2015, p. 7).

Warsaw's attitude and involvement in the recent events in Eastern Europe only prove that Poland has been steady over the years with regard to its security policy towards "the grey area". The main strategic objectives and security interests derive from the stability of the region between its borders and that of Russian Federation. In addition to Poland's security narrative within NATO, Poland is also distinguished within the European Union when it comes it its attempts to lobby for bringing the countries such as Belarus or Ukraine closer to EU. Unfortunately, orientation of US foreign policy towards Asia-Pacific, the European Union's support for the integration and stability of countries such as Ukraine, Belarus or the Republic of Moldova had little effect. The Eastern Partnership, formulated at the initiative of Poland and Sweden, proved ineffective without the support of countries like France and Germany. And, as far as the United States is concerned, it has proved less willing to deal with the Russian Federation on issues concerning Eastern Europe while it was interested in having Moscow closer in negotiating the nuclear agreement with Iran or the crisis in Syria. Under these circumstances, with minimum support within the European Union on security issues related to eastern non-member states of EU, with a NATO focused on crisis management and the United States focusing on other regions of interest, Poland, together with other Eastern European allies, lacking in resources and means, could not deal with such sensitive issues as the Eastern Partnership or Moscow's political, economic and military pressure on Ukraine, Belarus or the Republic of Moldova.

Nonetheless, after 2014, Poland's insistence on the need for Alliance troops' presence on its territory was finally satisfied at the Warsaw Summit. Although rotational policy of troops does not fully alleviate Polish fears about Russian potential of aggression and its unpredictability, the deployment of NATO troops and equipment, particularly the United States, has been a positive reply to Poland's demands. Also, the fact that the last NATO Summit took place in Warsaw marks the role of Poland in the security architecture of Central and Eastern Europe and the results of diplomatic efforts in setting up the current strategic concept of the alliance. NATO's new strategic concept, which is basically a return to the concept of deterrence, as viewed from the perspective of Poland, with any other member states being to a lesser degree affected by it, assumes elementary means designed for preserving national security and regional interests. In fact, the last changes occurred after 2016 imply what follows:

- The Eastern flank of the Alliance has again become the spotlight of NATO main vectors after more than two decades, a period in which Eastern Europe has not been the major concern of the former;
- The Deterrence Policy provides an impetus for strengthening the Eastern Partnership and the CSDP;
- Deterrence Policy provides the premises for respecting the burden-sharing concept both within the North Atlantic Alliance and within the European Union;
- Poland, as a regional pillar, gains importance in the new configuration of European security through its initiatives, political activism and its geostrategic position;
- Programs such as the European Reassurance Initiatives (ERI) and the Very Hight Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) are initiatives that shape institutional cooperation between NATO and the EU;
- And last but not the least, United States has given signs it is ready to be re-engaged in ensuring European security.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Over the years, we can witness a constant feature of Poland's foreign and security policy, meaning the international lobby to strengthen regional security as a part of the agenda of reducing or eliminating possible threats that may arise due to Kremlin regime. Nevertheless, the aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea determined changes in national security strategy of Poland.

The concerns of Poland's political leadership over Russian aggression is reflected in the national security strategy. Also, it is easy to identify the concepts that call for boosting both national and Alliance capabilities in order to protect the core values (national sovereignty and territorial integrity): building a high-quality anti-missile system or developing national capabilities conceived of both qualitatively and quantitatively). At the same time, it proves that political discourse was not only a simple stratagem used by politicians at some point. All those speeches warning about the aggressive potential of Russia and the need to both increase national capabilities and to allow for NATO's "boots on the ground" (on the territory of Poland), are, all things considered, real things pursued in order to strengthen national security against a potential threat and to deter any potential similar actions of Russia in the region.

As it can be seen, National Security Strategy of Poland (2014) has been founded upon the attempt to respond to three major problems identified both at regional and NATO levels as a result of Russian aggression launched against Ukraine. Accordingly, the NSSP, as a strategic document, provides the lines of action by which Poland aims to prevent any scenario like the one having occurred in Ukraine. In this regard, analysts have already identified some other vulnerable areas (Binnendijk, 2015) that might be target of subversive actions of the Russian Federation (see Baltic States or the Baltic Sea) in the vicinity of Polish borders. The three main issues that were considered in the process of developing the latest security strategy were as follows:

- National level - The use by the Russian Federation of military tactics to which Warsaw alone might not be adequately equipped to response;
- Regional level – the ongoing pressure Russian Federation is ready to exert on the Eastern Europe, repeatedly demonstrated by the deployment of troops and military drills in the Baltic Sea and Belarus.
- Within the Alliance – the lack of cohesion within NATO and the hesitation of the main vectors of Alliance to respond, in military terms, to Poland's security needs.

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