

Poland and the New System of European Security

Aleksander Kwasniewski

The year of 1997 promises to be a historic year for the Euro-Atlantic community. Not long ago, that community was troubled by a complex set of dilemmas. Responding to the crisis in Bosnia, adopting the transatlantic relationship, satisfying the evolving security requirements of various European states, developing an enlargement strategy and a vision of relations with Russia - all these proved to be challenging issues. They have been tackled in a responsible and effective manner. In 1997, the accomplishments already achieved are likely to be solidified. We attach particular importance to next year's NATO summit when invitations to membership will be announced. We hope that an early date will be set for the event. Poland and other Central European states have high expectations that concrete accession negotiations will start soon afterwards. We hope that a successful and early conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference will open the way to the decisive phase of our integration with the European Union.

Let me make an attempt to detect the contours of a new system of European security, which is now beginning to emerge and is likely to persist through the 21st century. My personal belief is that this construction is to consist of a number of separable, but not separate elements. To ensure that their relations are of a co-operative nature will be of prime importance.

For Poland, the main pillar of security on this continent is the mosaic of European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Institutions which have stood the test of time - NATO, the EU and the WEU - are now being redesigned and are beginning to broaden their ranks. Central European states, which are assuming wider responsibilities and enhancing their contribution to European stability, quite naturally belong to this circle. By the end of this century, Euro-Atlantic structures will reappear in a modified format. Their enlargement will subsequently continue. They will also play a decisive stabilising role beyond the territories of their member-states.

The Russian Federation has to continue to be treated as a major partner of the Euro-Atlantic community, with an important and constructive role to play. Another crucial issue of the Eu-

ropean security architecture is the position of Ukraine. In June of this year, here, at the Assembly of the WEU President Kuchma of Ukraine, speaking in June of this year, made a strong statement of his country's European aspirations. Declarations of this kind must be built into our thinking on future security in Europe. It has to be remembered that with time, various adjustments to the architecture may be made. This is because structures ought to stem from the prevailing international conditions and not the other way around.

In my view, the geopolitical and geostrategic arrangements in the Baltic Sea region are of particular importance. The Baltic states should be allowed to write the future of their own security into European and Euro-Atlantic arrangements.

The unifying feature of our new security environment is the increased willingness of states to become active in the forging of European arrangements. The approaches that France and Spain are making towards NATO's integrated structure, membership applications on the part of countries of Central Europe, neutral Switzerland's decision to enter the Partnership for Peace - can be taken as good illustrations of that important tendency.

The construction which we are erecting will be of a just and democratic nature. It has to satisfy all legitimate security interests of all the European states. There must be no security deficit in any region of our continent. Apart from the obvious stabilising role of the Euro-Atlantic institutions, this will be guaranteed by the good-neighbourly character of relations throughout Europe. Strategic partnerships between various Euro-Atlantic institutions and Russia, as well as Ukraine, will be of key importance. The OSCE should also play a valuable role in securing a wider framework of international relations on this continent. This conclusion has been confirmed at the recent summit meeting in Lisbon. I am confident that the new European order cannot be but more durable than those systems, which we remember from history, and which were founded on domination, power competition and fear.

The community of strategic interests between Europe and the United States is a fact of

life. Europe continuously needs the engagement of the United States, just as the United States requires European support. The experience of the UNPROFOR operation has displayed the risk which emerge when the Allies differ as to the degree of involvement. This contrasts sharply with the success of the engagement of all the 16 NATO countries - as well as many partner states - in the IFOR operation.

Invoking NATO's entire military structure is not likely to be necessary for certain types of future actions. However, Europe lacks certain capabilities and will for the time being continue to depend on the United States to provide them. With the formation of the Combined Joint Task Forces, Europeans are assuming greater responsibilities and gaining a means to express their defence identity. I believe that the CJTF concept is not merely a temporary solution, but the correct formula for a durable expression of the transatlantic relationship. Poland strongly favours the development of the CJTF concept and is willing to participate in any their activation, as of an early stage. Following the WEU's invitation, we have already assigned specific forces to WEU operations. Addressing this forum today, I would like to reiterate Poland's willingness to the part in such missions. We view it as our contribution to international stability. Apart from military expertise, Poland will be able to offer its substantial experience of working with others. The knowledge gained while developing the Polish-German-Danish military relationship or serving in the Polish-Nordic IFOR brigade will undoubtedly prove very useful. Our commitment to the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia is only the most recent example of Poland's determination to act to the benefit of Europe's harmony.

The conclusion of the on-going debate on the role of various security institutions and their mutual interplay points to the WEU as a European defence entity, which must not be perceived as a substitute or rival, but a complementary and supportive organisation. Poland's close relations with Germany, France and other Western European states are coupled with her consolidating links with the United States. In an enlarged Euro-Atlantic community, we will, thus, very well contribute to its internal cohesion.

Naturally, the WEU cannot assume increased tasks and responsibilities overnight. This would serve neither the WEU's credibility, nor the strength of the transatlantic link. As a member state, Poland will support the evolutionary approach. It is functional, it allows for an organic,

step-by-step growth of WEU's involvement, it will consolidate what has been accomplished in recent years and construct a firm consensus for any broader scope of activity.

Poland is likely to enter the Euro-Atlantic community through the NATO doorway. However, we expect that Poland's membership in the Alliance will not precede its accession to the European Union by a significant period. The year 2000 remains Poland's target date to finalise the details of her integration. WEU membership should arrive soon after that. I assure you that by the time of its accession, Poland will be ready to assume all the associated responsibilities. In return, we shall gain the means to perform more effectively the European aspect of Poland's foreign policy which, to us, is of major importance. As a full-fledged member of the WEU, Poland will be able to significantly increase her involvement within the European pillar of the Euro-Atlantic security system. We perceive our firm and well-defined position on questions of security as an asset which will strengthen the Union from inside. Poland's accession to the WEU will also be in the interest of greater clarity and transparency of the system of European security.

Poland is observing the efforts of Western European nations to further their co-operation in the defence industry. Poland is interested in a substantial engagement in that process, including future membership in the Western European Armaments Organisation and participation in its projects. Within several years, we intend to make decisive progress in the modernisation of our armed forces. High-value contracts will be signed. However, Poland should not be perceived as a terrain of aggressive struggle for markets, but rather, as a partner for co-operation in armaments' production. We have notable experience and technological know-how as well as a large potential for future development. An increasing number of foreign firms have already taken that into account in their procurement tenders.

Poland's internal preparations for NATO and WEU membership are wide-ranging and concern not only modernisation. Personally, I attach much importance to civilian and democratic control over the armed forces. In that field, the recently approved Statute of the Ministry of Defence places the civilian minister as the direct superior of the commanders of the various types of forces and military districts. I have lately appointed the head of the Land Forces command which is currently being created. I firmly believe that the transformations which I have strongly supported since

taking office, have established the necessary institutional framework for effective and credible civilian and democratic control over the army.

While preparing to become a part of the European pillar of the Euro-Atlantic community, Poland is working to become a stabilising factor in Europe, especially in its own region. Poland will assume the presidency of the OSCE in 1998. We are consolidating the ties we have in Central Europe through bilateral contacts. This includes military co-operation. The Polish-Lithuanian as well as the Polish-Ukrainian peace-keeping battalions are being formed. On the multilateral platform, we are involved in CEFTA, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Central European Initiative. We are looking forward to bringing the experience of Poland's regional policy into the Euro-Atlantic community.

Poland's international position as an exporter of stability, both in purely political sense and as evident in our drive to co-operate with others, is founded on a domestic 'success story'. Poland's political, social and economic transformations to date present a highly respectable record of achievement. We have led Central Europe's post-1989 recovery and our economy remains one of the fastest growing in Europe. Poland is now a member of the club of the world's leading industrialised nations, the OECD. Our political system is showing strong signs of maturity and the civil society is consolidating its role in

the nation's social life. Poland is also a country of enthusiasts of European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The Western European Union has been at the forefront of the opening of the Euro-Atlantic community towards Central and Eastern Europe. As an associate partner, we have ourselves benefited from the opening up of WEU structures, which until now has not been repeated by any other Euro-Atlantic or European organisation. It is expedient that we continue our joint conceptual debate. The French-inspired initiative to prepare a reflection on European security interests at the turn of the century, approved at the recent Ostend Ministerial meeting, is an appropriate manner of proceeding.

To be effective and credible, security organisations require firm public support. As a forum of elected representatives of 28 European nations, the Assembly of the Western European Union has crucial role to play in ensuring that such support is forthcoming and that the reasons for the evolution of Euro-Atlantic structures are clearly communicated to the public. I am confident that the parliamentary processes ahead of us will be smooth and constructive, so that we can look forward with confidence to an enlarged and strengthened European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance.

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