

FOREIGN POLICY IN PROGRAMS OF POLISH POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 2007

Comparative analysis

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This paper is the independent analysis of the author. Views expressed in the report are not necessarily those of Association for International Affairs.

INTRODUCTION

Since the political programs of the governing political parties are only one of the recognized variables influencing the nations' foreign policy there might be lack of interest in research in that field (Gourevitch 2002). Nevertheless, in certain situations the views of political elite are significant determinant of the foreign policy shaping processes. This case might occur when the states are not under the external pressure, which might maneuver their behavior as the Realist scholars like to explain.

This paper postulates that conditions of this kind were present in Poland after it entered the European Union in May 2004. Foundations for this statement are based on the fact that all strategic priorities, settled after the radical change of international environment in 1989, were successfully achieved with joining the EU (Rottfeld 2005; Meller 2006; Marcinkiewicz 2005; Cichocki 2007; Bobiński 2007). The previous two objectives were reached during the nineties. Firstly, it was the regaining of the independence by withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Poland and deconstruction of the Moscow-ruled international organizations – Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economical Cooperation; and secondly, joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thus, it might be seen that Polish foreign policy was *tabula rasa* before the elections in 2005. However, this statement would omit the new long-term role which Poland overtook after the EU accession – the role of the European bridge to the East. This status was even enhanced after the *Orange Revolution* in Ukraine and also the winning party in 2005 general elections Law and Justice [Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS] mentioned the strengthening of EU-Ukraine and NATO-Ukraine ties as one of its priorities (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2005). Another long-run political objective, which has been remaining stabile over last fifteen years, is extraordinary positive relations with the United States. Taking into account the large number of American citizens with Polish roots, Warsaw's need of American military presence in Europe, Polish involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan stabilization operations and unsolved visa question, this priority should survive to distant future.

Interestingly, there are different views on other priorities as well as on the way of conducting of the foreign policy among various political parties. This essay is going to analyze the foreign policy parts of political programs of relevant political parties¹ before the early general elections in 2007 and so define (1) the amount of attention paid by political parties to foreign policy, (2) mostly covered topics, (3) and major differences between the parties' views.

Electoral programs are chosen because they allow political parties to present their ideas in the most open way and are directly focused on citizens. Author will use the method of qualitative research of the text in the parts describing the topics and differences, whereas the extent of the text dedicated to the external topic will be examined qualitatively.

¹ Author recognizes relevant political parties under the condition of being elected into the upper and lower chamber of Polish parliament. Ergo, these are Civic Platform [Platforma Obywatelska – PO], Law and Justice, Left and Democrats [Lewica i Demokraci - LiD] and Polish People's Party [Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL], which all obtained at least 5% during the election held on 21st October 2007.

CIVIC PLATFORM²

Eternal electoral program³ of PO has a significant pro-European nature; even the parts devoted to the regional policy or agriculture are entitled with the slogan *“Poland in the Europe.”* The main chapter aimed at the foreign policy makes up around fourteen percent of the text of the whole program. It is called *“Powerful and Secure Poland in the European Union”*⁴ and involves not only foreign but also security policy. The chapter is divided into twenty-four sections focusing on concrete aspects of foreign and/or security policy. The largest number of them (eight) refers to some feature of the membership in the European Union.

The Civic Platform creates an impression of having a very concrete vision of the Polish role in Europe, as well as of the whole European Union. Interestingly, the latter is neither federalist, nor pure intergovernmentalist concept. PO is in favor of the European foreign minister, strong European Security and Defense Policy involving Union’s combat forces and strong solidarity in the field of energy and economical help through European funds for new member states. On the other hand, it is stated in the program that Union should not mean uniformity of values and traditions, for the EU should follow its motto *unity in diversity*. The Polish conduct and priorities in the European Union should be, according to the Civic Platform, rather proactive than reactive, and such tone has also the relevant part of PO’s foreign policy program. Platform states that Poland should catch up the “Old Europe” and promises to introduce all the important reforms in order to do so. It wants to open new information offices as a gate to Europe for citizens and focal point for enterprisers who want to take advantage from the European funds. PO wants to “deeply analyze” the year of entering the European Monetary Union and focus on the preparations of the Polish presidency in the European Council, which should take place in the year

² PO was founded in 2001 as one of the successors of the Solidarity Election Action [Akacja Wyborcza Solidarność – AWS], which was governing together with Freedom Union [Unia Wolności – UW] in the years 1997-2001. Civic Platform won the Polish elections into the European Parliament in 2004. It is considered as a conservative-liberal party; conservative in values and liberal in economics. Major part of its electorate is among the in cities educated settled people and in (post)-modern bourgeoisie. (Kubát 2005; Parties and Elections; Platforma Obywatelska; Kopeček 2005).

³ According to the Platforma Obywatelska 2007

⁴ Silna i bezpieczna Polska w Unii Europejskiej

2011. As the main Polish priorities in the EU would be, as per Platform's program, considered following: energetic solidarity based on coherent European policy in that field; economic solidarity i.e. development assistance for new members within the framework of the European funds; reform of Common Agriculture Policy, which would help to modernize Polish agriculture; and, in the European external policy, close partnership with the United States and broader cooperation with the ex-soviet area.

The latter two areas are also mentioned in the parts concerning bilateral relations. The United States is seen as the priority partner; however, the earthshaking topic of today's international politics – the planned American missile base in Poland – is not remarked in the program. Nor is the attention paid to the visas for Polish citizens visiting the United States, which are currently obligatory. Relations with Russia are seen as complicated and PO proposes the “de-emotivating” of them, whilst Ukraine is treated as an important partner and Civic Platform indicates its will to support Ukrainian's convergence with EU and NATO.

Furthermore, in the part dealing with the policies towards the other neighboring countries the Federal Republic of Germany is treated as an important actor and Platform stresses a need of a good climate of these relations. The reason for that is Germany's significance for transatlantic relations and for the shaping process of the Union's external policy towards the East.

Among other topics are the Polish diaspora; the need for attracting people for return is also stressed, and readiness for parliament debate and consensus seeking on the priorities of the Polish foreign policy.

To conclude, proposal of the Civic Platform for the Polish foreign policy have following fundamental features: strong pro-European tone, stressing possible deepening of the integration in certain areas, but balancing by the carefulness in areas where can Poland lose (e.g. Eurozone, agriculture); focus on the

transatlantic relations; pragmatic and non-emotional relations with Germany and Russia and preparedness for help to Ukraine.

The entire program has rather reflexive nature. The Civic Platform is blaming the former governments for several failings; in general, for the worsening of the Polish image in the Europe and on the world.

LAW AND JUSTICE⁵

The 2005-2007 governing party Law and Justice dedicated around thirteen percent of its program⁶ to the foreign policy. The program is divided into three parts aimed at “*Security*”, “*Solidarity*” and “*Development*.” The tone of the text is positive in the fields concerning the latest development and it has generally defensive nature.

First part focused on security could be divided into several sub-chapters: military issues, energetic security, legal security and, as it is described in the final section, the changes in the diplomatic service during the PiS governments.

⁵ Founded in spring 2001, Law and Justice is the strongest national-conservative party. Its roots go back to early nineties to the party Understanding of Centre [Porozumienie Centrum - PC], whose members were later PiS leaders Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński as well as other current Law and Justice’s politicians like Adam Lipiński or Ludwik Dorn. PiS might be defined as a patriotic party stressing the importance of Christian values and need of rule. Tools to achieve the strong and *just* state are strong security sector with broad competences, tough penalties and fight against the corruption. In economic sphere is PiS rather in the middle with admitting the state interventions as well as the lowering of the taxes. Law and Justice also developed a project of the “Fourth Republic.” It includes a new constitution, which would shift the Poland from the parliamentary republic to presidential republic, and is based on rebuilding of the Third Republic, which arose after the Rounded Table Negotiations, because these have had – according to PiS – served more to the former elites than to the Polish nation. Law and Justice is in the Sejm since the elections in the year 2001 and it won the elections in the year 2005 and formed two following governments; at first a minority one and later in a coalition (Kubát 2005; Kopeček 2005; Parties and Elections; Prawo i Sprawiedliwość).

⁶ According to Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2007

In military issues, in the central position are relations with the United States and transatlantic perspective on the security issues of the whole central-European area. It is written in the text that the Polish military presence in international missions “*strengthens Polish international position and security of Poland.*” Two mentioned states of Polish soldiers participating in the military operations are Iraq and Afghanistan. Indirectly, it is also stated that military presence in these countries should continue. NATO is understood as the principal organization and its role should be enhanced simultaneously with the constructing of the European Security and Defense Policy. The only considered country in the part devoted to the security issues is the United States. This exceptionality is explained by the fact that the partnership with the United States, according to the Law and Justice, improves the security of Poland, prevents other states from introducing some spheres of influence in the central Europe and helps Poland to modernize its army. The result of this paradigm is the decisive support for the American plan to place the elements of missile defense on the Polish soil.

The second sub-chapter describes the views and proposals on the energetic security of Poland. Priorities in this field are the diversification of the supplies, implementation of the concept of energetic security into the NATO and enhancing of this topic within the European Union.

Following part stresses the legal correctness of the post-Second World War events. PiS points out its strong policy against such attempts in the last two years and full support for those, who might be harmed by the decisions of the international judicial institutions.

The last part in the section is devoted to the security and is aimed at the changes in the diplomatic service. Law and Justices highlights the new practice in the Polish diplomacy, which is “*now freed from the PRL’s⁷ habits.*” Positioning of this sub-chapter in the part focused on the “*Security*” shows that for PiS the changes in the diplomatic administration were a way for achieving more secure state. Ergo, in

⁷ PRL – Polska Republika Ludowa – Polish People’s Republic

the eyes of the architects of the Law and Justice's foreign policy, the former diplomatic administration was unsuitable and might have, or even had, harmed Polish security.

The second part of the foreign policy chapter of the Law and Justice's electoral program entitled "*Solidarity*" might be divided into three sections. The first and the longest deals with the European issues, the following stresses the Polish policy towards the East, and final part is aimed at the development policy for the third world countries.

The future of and Polish priorities in the European Union are mentioned in the Law and Justice's program just briefly. PiS wants clearer decision-making process and more transparent functioning of the European institutions and it worries about the predomination of big and economically strong countries in the EU. Further Polish priorities are mentioned in other parts of the program (and therefore also more concretely stated in other parts of this paper). These are the strengthening of the European Security and Defense Policy, better energetic solidarity and EU's assisting role in the democratization of the post-Soviet area. Apart from the future goals, as a grand success was treated latest exceptions and transitional periods negotiated on behalf of Poland on the June's European Council.

The EU should also, according to PiS, play the key role in the democratization process in the Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus. The party also backs the membership of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the Euro-Atlantic institutions and stresses the willingness to act in the same way also in the possible cases of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus in future.

And finally, PiS accents the growing Polish development aid and calls for solidarity with the underdeveloped countries.

The third pillar of the foreign policy program, named "*Development*", describes mainly the role of economical and cultural promotion of Poland. The latter is seen, for example, as a defense from the

untrue accusations of some foreign media and some Poles living abroad. As the main time-period when Poland can promote its international position are perceived years 2011-2012 because of the Polish presidency in the EU, European championship in football in Poland and Ukraine, possible placement of EXPO 2012 in Wrocław⁸ and prospective temporary membership in the UN Security Council.

Last part is dedicated to the Poles living abroad and the willingness of Law and Justice to take care of them. Several proposals are listed in the program; for example, Poland should protect interests of Poles living abroad, mainly in Belarus, Lithuania and Germany, government should promote Polish culture in the areas where the latest diaspora (from the years 2004-07) lives, and Poles settled abroad should have their deputies in the Polish parliament.

To conclude, the Law and Justice's program in the field of foreign policy is brief but its content is quite strong. It speaks mainly about the security and has patriotic character. It emphasizes the successes of the latest development of the Polish international position and puts the stress more on the cooperation with the United States within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization than on collaboration inside the EU.

LEFT AND DEMOCRATS⁹

The part of LiD's electoral program dealing with the foreign policy has several specifics. The major is that there are actually two documents summarizing the priorities for following four years: "*Electoral program of Left and Democrats*"¹⁰ and "*100 Specifics*"¹¹. From the first view, their content is pro-European; for instance, they are both entitled using the noun "*Europe*." Furthermore, the shorter text –

⁸ EXPO 2012 was at the end placed into the Korean city Yeosu.

⁹ Left and Democrats is a coalition of four parties: Alliance of the Democratic Left [Sojuz Lewicy Demokratycznej], Polish Social Democracy [Socjaldemokracja Polska], Democratic Party [Partia Demokratyczna] and Union of Work [Unia Pracy]. It is a centre-left group, which was formed before the municipal elections in the fall 2006. Its visions are strong welfare state with clear division between the state and the church, with equal rights for men and women and support for the lowest class (Kubát 2005; Lewice i Demokraci).

¹⁰ Program Wyborczy Lewicy i Demokratów (Lewice i Demokraci 2007a)

¹¹ 100 Konkretów (Lewice i Demokraci 2007b)

100 Specifics – lists around ten clear priorities, whereas the longer electoral program includes broader arguments for these and evaluates the last development. The foreign policy part of the electoral program makes up approximately twelve percent, although in the shorter text 100 Specifics it is only seven and half percent. On the other hand, it is fair to state that these seven and half percent of text are ten out of the hundred statements.

The first part of the program¹² named “*Diagnosis*” is summarizing the latest progress in the Polish foreign policy. Since the Left and Democrats constitute the parties which were in the opposition in 2005-2007, this part is very critical. Firstly, LiD demonstrates the disagreement with the Polish policy in the European Union and claims that the Treaty Establishing the Constitution for Europe was the right modification of the European primary law and that the Polish effort to modify it resulted into more losses than wins. Secondly, the Left and Democrats claim that the relations with Germany are on the worst level since 1989; finally, they state that Poland did not use the opportunities it had in the role of a “bridge” towards the East. Despite the strong criticism in this part, it lacks concrete examples.

The first pillar of the Polish foreign policy should be, according to the Left and Democrats, the European politics, and this party offers several approaches which are to be followed. Firstly, Polish European policy should be active and should “*obey the rules of the game and not bypass them.*” Secondly, Poland should accept the single currency from the first of January 2012. This should help Polish enterprisers and as well as the stability and growth of the economy. Thirdly, Polish administration should improve its European dimension. Furthermore, Poland should maintain the institutionalized forums for cooperation and keep good bilateral relations within the EU. The final point is pivotal because it shows the Polish European priorities. In the economical sphere the main priority is real single market, mainly the openness of the labor market and simplification of the right to settle anywhere in the Union. To specify it, LiD wants to open the labor markets of Western countries before the year 2011 and to improve the related conditions like the settling procedure and the transfer of pensions. Furthermore, the Left and

¹² Author will focus on the longer Electoral Program of the Left and Democrats, because it offers broader insight into the party’s priorities and there are no differences between it and the shorter form – 100 Specifics.

Democrats state that Poland should also be the recipient of the European funds in the next financial perspective for 2014-2020. Finally, Poland should be prepared for more competitive European agriculture and should direct the agricultural funds into the agrarian research and rural development.

The second pillar make up relations in the central-European region. LiD wants a strong dialog and open cooperation with Germany because it is perceived as the fundament for good functioning of the NATO and the EU. Another topic mentioned is the Eastern dimension of the Polish foreign policy. Poland should help eastern countries in their heading towards Euro-Atlantic institutions. Interestingly, in the relations with Russia the role of human rights is mentioned and the stress is put rather on the EU-Russia relations than on the pure bilateral view.

Last but not least part is devoted to the global and Euro-Atlantic relations. On one hand, United States is seen as the major partner, but on the other hand, LiD wants to boost the withdrawal of the troops from Iraq and emphasizes the growing role of the European Security and Defense Policy without linking it to the transatlantic partnership. Furthermore, international missions are perceived as the important contribution of Poland to the global security. Left and Democrats present in their program following ideas for improvement of the energetic security: better efficiency, renewable sources and better infrastructure. The main perspective is that the security of supplies is a just short-run solution. LiD also calls for more efficient development aid, which could be achieved through cooperation with the non-governmental organizations. In the field of cultural diplomacy two international events, which should bring more world attention for Poland, are mentioned: European Football Championship in 2012 and the Year of Fryderyk Chopin in 2010.

To sum the program of Left and Democrats up, we can state that it offers several interesting and very specific methods and solutions. Its tone is clearly pro-European and very precise in this field; nevertheless, the text slightly neglects the American position in today's world.

POLISH PEOPLE'S PARTY¹³

The electoral program¹⁴ of Polish People's Party is very short and consequently the foreign policy part is also very brief. It makes up around seven percent of the whole program but the international security issues are covered in the part devoted to the security.

In the centre of the PSL's interest is Europe. It believes in the strong position of Poland in the Europe and promises to improve the energetic security, cooperation with the diaspora, relations with the neighboring countries, and effective inflow of the European funds. The suggestion for the immediate withdrawal of the forces from Iraq and Afghanistan sounds revolutionary.

In sum, the foreign part of the PSL's program is generalizing and slightly populist. It has lack of specific plans and does not bring out any clear visions. The main, but not the only, limit leading into such state is the insufficient length of the text.

¹³ Polish People's Party is the most stable element within the Polish party system. Although the party itself was founded in the year 1990, its roots go back into the Second Republic era. It is an agrarian centric party with very disciplined and stable electorate, what results into uninterrupted presence in the Sejm since 1991. The long term priorities of the party are social-sensitive policy, protection of the Christian values and mainly the development of rural areas (Kopeček 2005).

¹⁴ According to the Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe 2007

SUMMARY

Investigation of the electoral programs shows several interesting findings. Whilst the data examined qualitatively demonstrate interesting convergence, the qualitative research shows disparity.

The examination of the electoral programs demonstrates that the foreign affairs are definitely not in the centre of Polish politics. These parts are usually at the end of the parties manifestos; on the other hand, they make up around one seventh and half of the program and cover the most important topics¹⁵ (see the table nr. 1). The most described issues are European politics, transatlantic relation and bilateral relations with the United States, energetic security, bilateral relations with neighboring countries (mainly Germany) and Russia, development aid and conditions as well as relations with the diaspora.

Table no. 1 – Extend of the foreign policy program

	PO	PiS	LiD ¹⁶	PSL
Length of the program (words)	21256	14856	17071 / 3484	3633
Length of the part of the program aimed at the foreign policy (words)	2920	1907	2106 / 262	256
Length of the part of the program aimed at the foreign policy (percentage)	13,73%	12,84%	12,33% / 7,52%	7,05%

¹⁵ The exception is PSL, because their program is very unspecific and the foreign affairs part makes only around one fourteenth of the whole text. Also the statements are vague and foundations for the several strong relatively weak.

¹⁶ The first figures are for the "Electoral program of Left and Democrats" and the second for the "100 Specifics."

The European part of the electoral programs shows significant variances in the understanding of the EU; however, Polish priorities seem to be more or less similar. As clearly pro-European can be labeled programs of the Civic Platform and the Left and Democrats. Such statement would regard also Polish People's Party; on the other hand the manifesto of the Law and Justice might be marked as euro-reserved. The pro-European parties perceive the EU as *ever closing*, whereas PiS feels not identified with the *vectoral* understanding of the Union. The words "European Union" also seldom occur in the Law and Justice's program and are often compensated with the noun "Europe." Nevertheless, priorities in the EU are quite similar: Parties emphasize the importance of the European Security and Defense Policy, although PO and PiS see it as one of the pillars of the transatlantic cooperation, whilst LiD as more independent unit; and attention is also paid to the European dimension of the energetic security issue. All parties stress the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and mostly suppose that these changes should be beneficial to modernization of Polish agrarian sector.

Relations with the United States are generally claimed as very important or even pivotal, but there are striking differences in the concrete aspects. On the one pole is PiS which underlines full support for American anti-missile system facilities on the Polish soil and indirectly promises the continuation of Polish mission in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the middle are PO and LiD; although, only the LiD covers the Iraq issue with the demand to withdraw the Polish contingent. The opposite pole is represented by PSL, which requests immediate removing of the soldiers from both areas – Iraq and Afghanistan.

Germany and Russia are perceived as important actors, but more or less only by the Civic Platform and the Left and Democrats which call for pragmatic unemotional relation with these two. Moreover, parties also stress the importance of the development aid for the less developed countries. Unsurprisingly, PiS and PSL have a plea for strict respect of Polish minorities' rights in other countries in their programs.

To conclude the content and differences, parties cover similar topics; there is lack of striking differences among the main directions of the foreign policy, although the concrete steps are seen variously.

FIRST DISCUSSION – DOES THE ELECTORAL PROGRAM MATTER?

The research has shown that in the evaluating the electoral programs there are several limiting aspects. Such documents are, as mentioned in the introduction of this paper, directly aimed at the citizen. Interestingly, this directness does not mean the full openness in the program. Parties are definitely forced to stress their long-run priorities in order to keep their long-run voter, but on the other hand, they tend to be opportunistic and try to steal other parties' supporters.

For example, electoral program of the Law and Justice has very patriotic rhetoric which might have brought them the earlier electorate of the League of Polish Families and Self-defense, which are the radical parties of the Polish party system. Moreover, Civic Platform has lack of clear, resolute statements in its program what may appear that PO is afraid of making their possible supporter angry. For instance, they do not put on a single word about the American missile base or withdrawal of the Iraqi contingent. Finally, PSL neglects the foreign affairs in general, as their disciplined electorate pays attention to the manifestos only seldom.

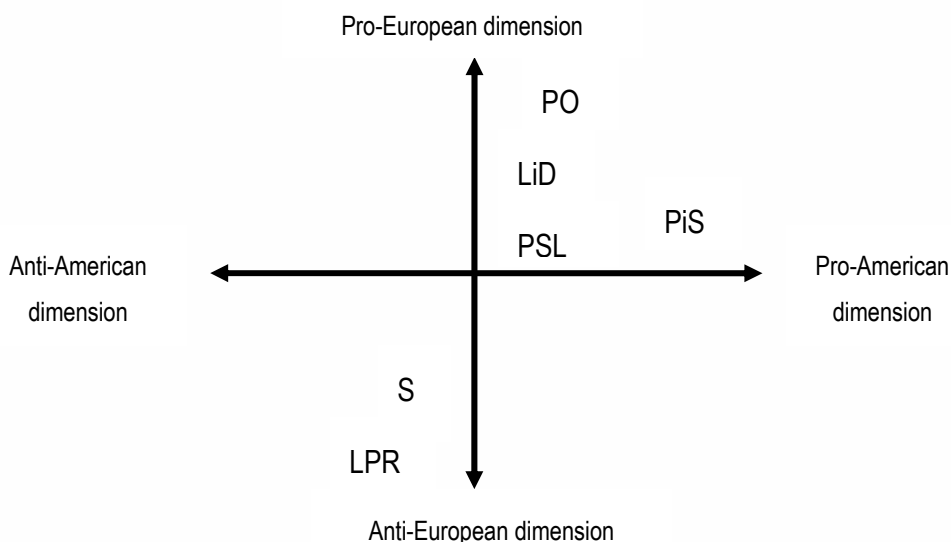
On the other hand, the parties also do not want to be bounded by strong statements. They know very well how unstable is the international arena and how are interstate relations turbulent sometimes. Therefore, in none of the programs is mentioned, for example, the issue of American visas for Polish citizens. The reason for this can be found in the fact that neither Polish nor American executive branch can change today's stance and the responsibility lies on the American Congress.

Taking into account mentioned arguments, we can state, that electoral programs are very specific and not fully reliable statements of parties' priorities in the foreign policy field. Moreover, manifestos of opposition parties usually tend to overestimate losses and underestimate the wins of the governing party and vice-versa. The most crucial limit is that parties are likely to choose for the electoral programs topics which are attractive for the voter and not those which are important to the party or which are, according to the architects of the these texts, the *raison d'Etat*.

SECOND DISCUSSION – WHERE ACTUALLY IS THE DEBATE ABOUT THE POLISH FOREIGN POLICY?

Even the limited information from the electoral programs illustrates that the debate on the Polish foreign policy is not over. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental consensus about the priorities, so the main debate is not about the strategy, but about the tactics. Diagram nr. 1 demonstrates notable coherence in the parties' understanding of the Euro-American axis, which role is often overvalued. Interestingly, all examined parties still accept today's international position of Poland achieved during the years 1989-2004.

Diagram no. 1¹⁷



¹⁷ LPR and S are the minor radical parties League of Polish Families and Self-Defense. Their orientation is added for illustration of the variety of approaches.

Since we postulated in the introduction that the list of foreign policy priorities is not a *tabula rasa*, we can support such statement also in the parties' programatics. Nevertheless, the debate about the foreign policy tactics is still vital and sometimes very turbulent; consequently, there are many disputes; although, there is consensus about the main political orientation of the country.

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