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Transition periods in history usually abound in qualitatively new problems, risks and challenges, which, in turn, determine the essence, adequacy and the rate of implementation of adopted solutions. This also applies to defence-of-state issues. During the first decade of regained independence, Poland had to face a whole spectrum of new tasks that it had to fulfill by itself while overcoming the old habits and stereotypes. It was not an easy time; much was done to build a coherent defence system, which enabled Poland to join NATO. However, lacking a vision, a bold and innovative strategic thinking and a comprehensive approach to the national security problems, many issues failed to be resolved satisfactorily.

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Today, arms control has reached an impasse. Hopes pinned on the reset of Russia-USA relations failed to result in a progress in this important area of international security. It is particularly noticeable in Europe, because this is where the greatest successes were achieved in the regional (continental) context. The stagnation in implementing and developing the conventional arms regime as well as disappointing results in strengthening the European infrastructure of confidence and security building indicate that the risk of squandering the achievements of the past 50 years is growing. As the control regimes that emerged after the cold war have failed to function correctly, one needs, without destroying their fabric and trying to preserve their relevant content, to look for a new formula, suitable for the current situation.

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To build a lasting and predictable strategic partnership with Russia – the third biggest trade partner of the EU and its main supplier of energy resources – is in Europe's vital interest. Accomplishment of that goal will be possible only by pursuing a coherent EU policy towards Russia that rests on constructive engagement and responsibility. In 2011, despite the economic crisis and Brussels' focus on internal affairs, the EU member states more and more frequently emphasized that EU-Russia relations

need to be more dynamic. Cooperation between Brussels and Moscow in the security field – in broad, strategic sense – requires that both parties redouble their efforts towards greater predictability and stabilization in their common neighborhood.

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Aleksandra Dzisiów-Szuszczkiewicz

2011 was a period of ambitious challenges for Turkey’s foreign policy. Pessimistic forecasts of Turkey turning away from the West and focusing instead on the East turned out to be exaggerated, although changes in the country’s foreign and security policy directions are visible. The following issues draw prevalent attention: Ankara’s responses to the events taking place in the Middle East and North Africa, relations with Israel, Iran and Russia as well as the European Union accession process, Ankara’s role in NATO and relations with the USA. Indeed, they reflect the way the Turkish authorities perceive their role and position on the regional and global arena. They also show how the Turkish foreign policy has evolved and succeeded so far. 2012 will be another challenging year for Turkey’s foreign policy efficacy. However, it may also become a rough test for the effectiveness of Turkey’s “strategic depth” concept and particularly its “zero problems with neighbors” policy.

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Since the end of the cold war NATO has admitted 12 new members mainly hailing from Central and Eastern Europe. This process is one of the most significant proofs of political transformations across Europe after the USSR’s collapse. Poland, being one of the beneficiaries of the “open door” policy, supports adhering to that rule in relation to successive candidates. Admittedly, the Alliance enlargement has contributed to expanding of the stability and security zone, as shown, for instance, by the case of the Balkans. Regrettably, this process lost its momentum after 2004. It stems from both uncertainty about NATO’s future role and the political determinants vis-à-vis the candidates. It is hoped that the May 2012 Chicago summit will give at least a partial answer to the questions regarding the further enlargement of the Alliance.

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Contemporary terrorism is characterized by efforts to create new and more efficient forms of attacks. Striving to terrorize societies, terrorists demonstrate their brutality and unpredictability by crossing successive borderlines, both moral and technical. It is participation of children in global jihad that constitutes a significant element of terrorist activities in many parts of the world. Children are treated as the objects and perpetrators of attacks alike. Admittedly, their engagement does not always involve

conscious willingness to sacrifice their lives in the name of Allah. Quite often, children's gullibility is cynically exploited in a perfectly organized process of manipulation and religious indoctrination.

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The law that is currently in force in Poland does not guarantee that the state budget would profit from high revenues for the fossils' mining. From the vantage point of possible industrial production of shale gas, legislative changes seem necessary. The Polish government has announced that the law will be amended. In turn, European gas and oil producers have created a taxation system that provides the budget with high profits from the resources extraction. Tax breaks motivate energy companies to developing costly new exploitations, thus relieving the dropping yield in the worked-out fields. Many countries put the profits from the sale of energy resources in sovereign wealth funds. The money is used to support and develop the economy of the country and ensure the well-being of future generations.

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