

The Foreign Ministers of Poland from 2004–2014: Stefan Meller, Anna Fotyga, Radosław Sikorski

Summary

The main problem under analysis is the impact of deep divisions in Polish politics in relation to the activity of Polish foreign ministers from 2005–2014. In 2005, the Law and Justice (PiS) party won the parliamentary and presidential elections and the Civic Platform (PO) became the opposition party. This opened a new chapter in Polish internal policy. The resulting polarization of the political scene was characterized by the dominant position of the PiS and PO, who were in strong competition with each other.

This situation affected foreign policy in a specific way. The problem is analysed through the examples of three successive foreign ministers: Stefan Meller, Anna Fotyga and Radosław Sikorski. The period under consideration ended with the resignation of Donald Tusk's government in September 2014. This event closed an important chapter in foreign policy, which had been implemented by Sikorski for the preceding seven years.

The book consists of four chapters and appendices. The first chapter presents three activity models implemented by the foreign ministers, defined as connecting, executive and confrontational models. The point of reference is the polarization of the political scene, i.e. a strong rivalry between the PiS and PO. According to the main thesis, under the first model, the non-partisan minister Meller acted as a connection between the government and the opposition; under the executive model, the head of diplomacy Fotyga defined her role as the executor of tasks; and under the confrontational model, minister of foreign affairs Sikorski was involved in the confrontation between the PO and PiS.

None of the above activity models adopted by the foreign ministers under conditions of polarization of the political scene can be considered

to have been in the best interests of the state. Other solutions need to be found in order to build a cross-party consensus on foreign policy and exclude foreign ministers from current internal politics.

None of the models effectively implemented the foreign policy goals. Each model had only some advantages. While, under the connecting model, minister Meller felt marginalized and eventually resigned from office, the advantage of this model was that foreign policy was not strongly involved in internal political disputes. Under the executive model, the president, prime minister and head of diplomacy created a cohesive, well-cooperating group. However, this resulted in minister Fotyga being exposed to constant attacks from the opposition. Even if she tried to concentrate on foreign affairs, she became involved in disputes with the opposition. Finally, under the confrontational model, cooperation between key decision-makers came to a standstill, especially in the period of coalition (2007–2010). Instead of cooperation, which is assumed in the constitution, there was open conflict between Sikorski and Kaczyński. In subsequent years, authorities were so focused on the struggle with the opposition that they committed serious errors in assessing changes in the international environment. The annexation of Crimea by Russia surprised Polish diplomacy. At the same time, the confrontational model allowed the ruling party to use foreign policy and the foreign minister to achieve short-term internal goals. This led to the weakening of the opposition and contributed to the victory of the PO in the 2011 elections.

The next three chapters present the conditions under which foreign ministers Meller, Fotyga and Sikorski worked, and try to highlight the most important factors explaining the mechanisms of Polish diplomacy. Meller's term of office is analysed with reference to Allison's models. It is concluded that Meller came to government with the hope that foreign policy would be based on the so-called rational actor model, but in practice the role of internal factors increased, which is better illustrated by the organizational process and bureaucratic conditions models. The considerations contained in the chapter about Fotyga are based on the levels contained in the analysis method. This means that the conditions under which foreign policy was implemented by the minister are presented with respect to the international system, internal policies and the individual decision-maker. I believe that the qualities of the individual decision-maker, such as the particularly negative personality traits that were attributed to the head of diplomacy, would not have had a major impact on her role if the internal situation

had been different. Under the circumstances at the time, they were used to weaken the political opponent. It should be noted that Meller served as foreign minister for nine months (2005–2006), Fotyga for nineteen months (2006–2007) and Sikorski for seven years (2007–2014). During this period, foreign policy was the greatest contributor to the competition between the parties. The minister also used it to accomplish various, sometimes conflicting objectives.

The final part of the book contains the following documents: annual reports on foreign policy presented by heads of diplomacy in the Sejm (*expose*); sections regarding foreign policy from the political programmes of the PO and PiS; and an excerpt from the decision of the Constitutional Court of 2009 concerning the conflict of competence between the President and Prime Minister regarding Polish representation at meetings of the European Council. These documents have been selected and arranged in such a way as to allow the reader to look into the sources of particular importance to the problem under analysis.

This work does not describe the activity of individual ministers, nor does it contain a comprehensive presentation of Polish foreign policy. It explores the impact of political polarization on the activities of the foreign ministers, who are seen as one of the elements of the decision-making system.