

KAWCZYŃSKI: WE NEED TO STAND UP TO GERMANY, NORD STREAM 2 „SHALL NOT PASS”

In an interview with Jakub Wiech, Daniel Kawczyński, Member of the British Parliament, talked about his view of the Nord Stream 2 project, the role of Germany in the European Union and the security of the EU countries.

Jakub Wiech: First of all, I would like to ask about the letter regarding the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that you have signed. How did the British government react on it?

Daniel Kawczyński: I've been visiting Poland on many occasions and Nord Stream 2 is the issue that has been raised with me in the Polish Sejm, in the Polish media, by many Polish friends and colleagues. It is completely unacceptable for Germany to behave in this way within the European Union. That pipeline jeopardizes not only Polish energy security, but also overall security. So, we formed this group in our Parliament and we wrote to the Foreign Secretary. We are going to have a debate in the British Parliament about Nord Stream 2. We see it as a threat to the Polish national security.

Germany, on the one hand, tries to dictate Poles how they should behave over the immigration issue, tries to dictate – in conjunction with Brussels – about Constitutional Court. Germans want Poland to comply with certain rules and standards of the European Union and indeed will try to threaten Poland with sanctions unless she complies. But on the other hand, Germany is happy to do something that completely goes out of the spirit and letter of what the European Union is meant to be.

We spend a lot of money in NATO trying to put a united front against Russia, we want a permanent NATO base in Poland – all of these things are predicated on a common approach through the energy policy as well. And Germany's actions are not only selfish, but also dangerous for Poland, for Lithuania, for Slovakia and Ukraine.

Is it a common opinion in the British Parliament?

There's been a lot of coverage on this issue in the British media: the BBC has taken an interest, following our intervention. Numerous articles have been published in the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Times. More and more Members of the British Parliament are becoming interested in this issue.

In Poland there's an opinion that Nord Stream 2 is just a part of the German dictate over the European energy sector. Do you recognize it similarly?

The Germans are the ones that - historically and in recent times - has the closest relations with Russia. Merkel and Putin have been working together since 2005. Gerhard Schröder, the former chancellor of Germany, is now a senior director in Gazprom. In fact, on Putin's presidential inauguration, Schröder was the first person Putin shook hands with. What Germany wants to do is to

ensure that no matter how difficult relations with Russia are, she and her economy interests and energy security are guaranteed and protected. And Poland can just get lost basically. It's hypocrisy, isn't it?

I hope that Poland will seek ways to refer Germany to the European Court of Justice. You are being investigated over things like management of your national forests. The Germans and the Brussels tell you that you can't cut down your trees. They say: we will decide when you can cut trees, not your own politicians, not your minister of environment, not your own administration. I hope Poland will say: we think that your actions are against the law and we're going to put it to the test. I think that if Poles did that, there would be a lot of support from Britain and many other countries. We need to stand up to Germany! Who is standing up to Germany at this moment? Very few politicians in Poland and across Europe. It's about time we did so.

It's a nice call to arms. Does it mean that we have to reshape the European Union?

European Union is heading towards a supranational state. They will try to force Poland to abandon the zloty (*Polish currency - editorial note*). I'll come back when we have this referendum in Poland, because I think it would be unacceptable - and I am speaking as a Pole here - for any Polish government to abandon the zloty without a referendum. I will come back on this referendum and I will knock on as many doors around this country as possible to try to convince Polish people never to abandon their currency. Once you abandon your currency, you're no longer a sovereign nation. If your national bank cannot control your money policy, you're no longer a sovereign state. Poland has a choice. That choice will be the most important choice of your generation.

Speaking about Poland and her challenges - do you think that Polish government has some problems with the international communication and, due to this, cannot defend its interests properly?

I think there is a huge amount of deception and misinformation that goes on about Poland. I've met with the British MPs who are very lacking in understanding about Poland. There is a propaganda about Poland. I wouldn't say that Poland has difficulty in expressing herself, it's just the EU propaganda: Poles are doing something we don't like, so we are going to portray the Poles as unreasonable extremists.

How do you assess the attempts of the Polish government to stop the Nord Stream 2 project?

I think that Polish government is very brave. Poland must stand firm. If the Polish government says to the EU: we will do everything you tell us, then you have to ask yourself what is the purpose of having your own government and your own laws? Poland must fight! She must also fight for her war reparations from Germany and for ensuring that there'll be permanent NATO base in Suwałki. These are huge security issues.

I spent my childhood listening to my grandfather's stories of what happened to this country during the Second World War. Those stories are imprinted on my mind and will stay with me forever. Poland need to demonstrate to the European Union and to the entire world that she fought for her freedom and now she is entitled to do whatever will be necessary to protect it.

Do you think that - in the current situation, while Russia is invading Ukraine and there are rumors about possible attack on the Baltic states - Poland's security is in danger?

I do believe that we have to gather Russians and Ukrainians around the round table. There's a huge schism between Kiev and Moscow about what is happening in Donbas. Of course, Russia will continue

to pose a threat. The Polish-Russian border is now the most highly-militarized part of Europe. If the tit for tat missile deployment continues, it will be an equivalent of the North and South Korea's border. We need to engage Russia to have a dialogue with Moscow, but from the position of strength. We can do it through NATO, not through the EU. What keeps peace in Europe is not the EU, but NATO, which hasn't lost the single square centimeter of its territory since it was created and is anchored in the world's only superpower. Six countries – USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Turkey, Great Britain - are committed to the defense of Poland and they aren't EU member states.

But some may say that relying on foreign alliances may lead Poland to the situation similar to the year 1939...

NATO is not a perfect organization, but so far it has been very effective entity that stood up to Soviet Union and Russia. It was the strength of NATO which actually brought the Cold War to the end. If NATO had been weak or divided, we would not have won the Cold War. Now, there are people in Brussels, who say: we can't trust Britain and America. Then I say: we can't trust Germany! I think that it's much better to have a partnership with British or Americans rather than the Germans.

Well, the U.S. President Donald Trump has legal instruments that can put sanctions on the entities involved in Nord Stream 2 project. But he hasn't used these means.

Of course, and the German chancellor who met him last week put a lot of pressure on the president. We are putting an equal amounts of pressure on him in exchange for our support in issues related to Iran or other issues. We can't allow this project goes ahead.

Do you think that after the Skripals' case something changed in the European perception of the Russian projects like NS2?

After the Skripals' case and after the situation in Syria, it's becoming increasingly difficult to engage with Russians and to make them understand an alternative perspective. This is why it's so important to stay strong and united through NATO, not through European army, and to stand up to Germany, to make sure that Germany is behaving responsibly.

Germans should abandon Nord Stream 2 project, start a process of dialogue with Poland over war reparations and acknowledge the NATO's right to build a permanent base in the Suwałki Gap. When you ask German politicians why they are so opposed to NATO bases in Eastern Poland – as I did in the House of Commons – they say: because we want to have NATO bases only in Germany and we believe that such infrastructure in Poland would be a provocation against the Russians. Germans want to create a "Wonderful New European Union" that would be designed for them.

It would be childish to think that other states will try to act for the sake of somebody else in the sphere of international politics...

But this is the mantra of the European Union! Otherwise, why give up your sovereignty? Why give up your currency?

...to gain financial advantages?

You have to remember that Polish economy is one of the fastest growing economy in Europe. I anticipate that Poland will become a net contributor to the EU budget within the next five years. They will come to Warsaw and say: right, no more money, now you have to give us money. Poland will move from net recipient to net contributor. And you will have to assess your policy.

But still there is a question of how much of our growth comes from subsidies from the

EU...

Poland's prosperity comes from the hard work and intelligence of the Polish nation. You only have to look on million Poles who work in the United Kingdom. They've set up 20.000 companies. They're one of the most entrepreneurial people in the UK. Many factory owner and institutions actively seek out for Polish workers. This is how Poland has created her prosperity.

But Poles came to the UK thanks to the accession to the European Union. They have set up their entities not because the EU told them to do so, but because the Polish tax, legal and social security systems are not as attractive for them as the British ones.

You only have to look at the most prosperous companies managed by Poles who operate in very different sectors of the economy and export their products to the whole world. I know that your generation is idealizing the European Union...

I wouldn't generalize.

I hear a lot of positive comments about the EU from young people. But I want to challenge that. In my opinion, Poland deprives herself of her sovereignty. You have to look at things in the next five to ten years. If Poland abandons her currency, sovereignty and parliament, it would make me very sad. I lived in Poland, which had no sovereignty. Then I came back here every year to visit my family. I know what it looks like when the state cannot make its own decisions. We all experienced this - it was called the COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. I would not like to return this system.

So, what you're trying to say is that the communists' regime looks alike the European Union?

I'm trying to say that the basis is very similar - it's about central control of everything. The EU wants Brussels to be the center of law-making, wants Brussels to lead a joint army, they want Brussels to conduct foreign policy and to issue currency. In this sense, the COMECON and the European Union are one and the same. I think that it is very important to assess how the UK functions outside the EU and how the society changes. If such changes fit Poland, it can join us as an independent state. Alternatively, you can stay in the emerging supranational state.

To sum up: what's your advice for Poland?

We've tried to reshape the EU for the last 46 years and we have spectacularly failed. There are people in Brussels, Paris and Berlin, who want to create a supranational state. So my advice to Poles is this: carry on receiving the subsidies, until the moment comes where you move from being net recipient to them asking you for money. At that moment, you must decide: do we continue to be part of this club or do we now have the referendum for Polish people and allow them to decide. But, please, keep your currency.