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Central and Eastern Europe in the Foreign Policy of the United States of America under President Barack Obama. Case study: Poland

Abstract

In this paper the authors attempt to analyze changes in U.S. foreign policy towards Central East Europe (CEE) during the term of office of Barack Obama and perception of these changes in the region. For countries of the region, especially Poland, which is main subject of this article, this feature of U.S. policy is vital for sense of international security. During last decade there have been great changes in international situation of CEE (e. g. accession to NATO and the EU) and also U.S. foreign policy emphasize on new challenges, concentrated mostly in Asia region, not in Europe – zone of prosperity and development. Current American point of view on CEE and Poland may be summarized in six points: Cooperation and improvement of relations with Russia; National Missile Defense; NATO's new Strategy Concept; Eastern Partnership; Energetic security and climate changes; Military cooperation. These facts force a new approach to mutual relations, not always noticed in Poland. Polish politicians, instead of moaning about abandoning by the most significant ally (because of Washington's resignation from the construction of "missile shield" assets in Poland), should direct its attention to creating a more self-vision of the Polish foreign and security policy. Poland should concentrate on seeking the partners and allies among the closest neighbors, in particular within the European Union.

Introduction

In recent years there has been a reevaluation of U.S. foreign policy. For the vital interests of Central East Europe countries (CEE), especially Poland, it has been interesting, how the new American president will create his policy towards this region. Shall the

CEE countries function as “special relations” category of partners, or shall be treated as an integral part of European and Euro-Atlantic international organizations? Shall they become a sort of “buffer zone” between Collective Security Treaty Organization and Western Europe? In this paper authors attempt to give answers to these questions.

It is worth explaining why the article concentrates on U.S. relations with Poland, and not the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. Not without reason one can say that Poland is the most important political factor in the region, both because of its location, size and demographic potential, as well as specific – you could say the most “expressive” – relations with USA and other countries. For years “the American dream” was main perspective of perception of USA in Poland. Positive feelings to America were and are strong enough to endure international situation changes and negative attitude of other EU countries.¹ Poland remembers U.S. efforts after soviet bloc collapse to strengthen independence and democracy in CEE countries, especially *Partnership for Peace*, which ended with their accession to NATO.²

General principles of Barack Obama’s foreign policy

It must be admitted that Barack Obama has embraced the presidency during a difficult period. In the world of geopolitics at the forefront of the race was China because of its growing economic strength. It was necessary to solve the problem of *global Balkans*,³ already mentioned above, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Iran’s nuclear program, Pakistan – a country with a nuclear bomb and the extremists destabilizing the government, the North Korean nuclear program and, finally, the issue of renewal of the expiring in December 2009 START. Additionally, unilateralism and neoconservatism in the way of formulating a concept of foreign policy divided Europe into two camps: “New Europe”⁴ and “Old

¹ Significant here is statement of then President of France Jacques Chirac, that Poland and other CEE countries “missed a good opportunity to keep quiet,” when they supported U.S. policy towards Iraq in 2003. “New Europe’ backs EU on Iraq,” *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2775579.stm> (accessed October 27, 2010).

² See also: Zbigniew Brzezinski, “A Plan for Europe,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 1 (January/February 1995): 33–34.

³ By the term “global Balkans” Zbigniew Brzezinski defines the area of Eurasia between Europe and the Far East, rich in oil and inhabited by Muslims. According to Brzeziński, this region could become the epicenter of future conflicts. More: Brzeziński, „Hegemonic Quicksand”, *The National Interest* (Winter 2003/2004); Brzeziński, *Druga szansa* (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2008), 23–28.

⁴ This name was mostly popular during George W. Bush’s rule, when there was urgent need to find political support for Iraq invasion. Definition properly representing this point of view says, that “New Europe” represents, “with some justification, the interests of the United States in [EU]. In this part of Europe, one does not find the kind of raw anti-Americanism rampant in many parts of Old Europe. Even though 90 percent of the Polish population opposes their government’s decision to deploy a large number of troops in Iraq, anti-war sentiment has not been translated into hostility toward Americans. Also, all four

Europe,” specifically France and Germany. Thus Russia had an excellent opportunity to play Europe off against the United States, even by the idea of missile defense project.⁵ With so many new challenges and threats in the international arena, Poland and CEE have lost their position in American foreign policy, they had to show themselves as more active actors in international relations, more useful for Obama.

Since the beginning of the election campaign it was known that Barack Obama was very cautious of comparisons to his predecessor George W. Bush and his neoconservative vision of foreign policy. As a presidential candidate, during a speech in Denver, in August 2008, Obama announced the end of Bush's bungled policy.⁶ Obama seemed very uncomfortable with the idea that the United States had an exceptional and important role to play in the world, and through its unique history America had a special responsibility.⁷ The new president during his speech in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009 emphasized that America wanted to work with other countries as “an equal partner” rather than as the “exceptional” nation.⁸

Obama also sought earnestly to avoid comparisons to Bill Clinton and his so-called globalist strategy of designating a policy of evasion and avoidance of responsibility. In his article published in “Foreign Affairs” he emphasized the close link between security and prosperity of Americans and people living outside the U.S. – as a representative value of the Democratic Party, Obama was a decided supporter of Wilsonianism.⁹

In practice however, Obama's Cabinet could indicate a return to political realism in the style of Richard Nixon, when it could be hold a dialogue with all. On the position of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates remained, official and unofficial advisers were Madeleine Albright, William Perry, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger.¹⁰ Hillary Clinton, advocate of repairing damages in U.S. foreign policy done by the previous administration, was elected a Secretary of State. She also declared using

made these troop deployments with the full knowledge that this action would alienate major EU partners such as France and Germany.” Richard J. Krickus, *Iron troikas: the new treat from the east* (Carlisle: US Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), 8.

⁵ See more: Stephen R. Graubard, “A Broader Agenda: Beyond Bush-Era Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January/February 2009).

⁶ *Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: American Promise, (Democratic Convention), Denver, CO, August 28, 2008*, http://www.barackobama.com/2008/08/28/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_108.php (accessed February 25, 2010).

⁷ Kim R. Holmes, Henry R. Nau, Helle C. Dale, “The Obama Doctrine: Hindering American Foreign Policy,” *Heritage Lectures* 1172 (November 29, 2010): 3.

⁸ Remarks by the President at the Summit of the Americas. Opening Ceremony, Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, April 17, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-the-Summit-of-the-Americas-Opening-Ceremony (accessed November 29, 2010).

⁹ Barack Obama, “Renewing American Leadership,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no.4 (July/August 2007): 2–16.

¹⁰ See more: Walter Russel Mead, “The Carter syndrome,” *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2010); Joanna Klonsky, *Foreign Policy Brain Trusts: Obama's Advisers*, Council on Foreign Relations, 11.11.2008. http://www.cfr.org/publication/16188/foreign_policy_brain_trusts.html (accessed March 1, 2010).

a Joseph Nye's *smart power*¹¹ – “the full range of tools at our disposal – diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural – picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation.”¹² Judging by his appointments, Barack Obama was not going to focus on creating a rigid framework of foreign policy, he wanted to create a flexible model based on rhetoric of conciliation and *soft power* theory, for responding to specific situations.¹³

As an example of the Obama's *smart power* inspiration was a desire to return to multilateralism and greater involvement in cooperation with international organizations. Obama wanted to put more pressure on the partnership, but also a greater sharing of responsibility by Europe. This has led to the reconstruction of the transatlantic ties through greater European participation in peacekeeping missions, increase military and financial support. It should be mentioned that Europe wasn't a priority in Obama's policy, he supported further EU integration to consolidate transatlantic partnership.¹⁴ The Lisbon Treaty, advanced the Common Security and Defense Policy, was welcomed as a major milestone in a world's history.¹⁵

In the beginning Obama's main goal was to rebuild the American position in the world. The latest National Security Strategy, released May 27, 2010, continued implementation of the previous guideline. The document lays out a strategic approach for advancing American interests, including the security of the American people, a growing U.S. economy, support for American values, and an international order that can address 21st century¹⁶ challenges. The main issues on which the United States should focus are:

- Threat from al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Responsibly Ending the War in Iraq
- Keeping Nuclear Weapons Out of the Hands of Terrorists
- Promoting Peace and Security in Israel and the Middle East
- Re-energizing America's Alliances
- Maintaining Core American Values
- Ending the crisis in Darfur and ensuring Sudan's long-term stability

¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, Richard L. Armitage, CSIS *Commission on Smart Power. A smarter, more secure America*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007.

¹² Ibid. “Clinton: Use ‘Smart Power’ In Diplomacy,” CBS News, January 13, 2009. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/13/politics/main4718044.shtml> (accessed March 1, 2010).

¹³ Nye, “Barack Obama and soft power,” *HuffPost*, posted: June 12, 2008, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-nye/barack-obama-and-soft-pow_b_106717.html (accessed March 1, 2010).

¹⁴ “Obama welcome ‘Strengthened’ EU”, *EUBusiness*, November 3, 2009, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/treaty-check-us.1a8> (accessed March 1, 2010).

¹⁵ Clinton, *Remarks with EU High Representative for Foreign Policy Catherine Ashton after their meeting*, U.S. Department of State, January 21, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135530.htm> (accessed March 10, 2010).

¹⁶ *The National Security Strategy*, May 27, 2010, 1–6.

- Restoring American leadership in Latin America
- Ensuring energy security and fighting climate change.¹⁷

This agenda shows that Obama's priorities in foreign policy focus on engagement in core threats to security in various places around the world and rebuilding U.S. global position. Crucially important was also continuation of the war on terrorism. The new president urged not to stop fighting, but he expected a greater commitment not only from Europe but also from Pakistan, the main hideouts of extremists.¹⁸ Obama followers were most interested in the problem of Iraq and U.S. troops stationed there. But reality surpassed the dreams: the president originally promised withdrawal of troops for 16 months after taking office, and then made it from discussions with military commanders. Finally, year 2011 was concluded as the date for withdrawing American troops from Iraq.¹⁹

In the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the main advisors, Obama should transform American foreign policy based on a following important issues:

- United States' current world role is not defined by "global war on terror" and perception of Islam as the enemy,
- It should begin serious negotiation with Iran on its nuclear program;
- The counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan should be part of political undertaking, rather than largely military one;
- The eventual goal of the United States is "non-nuclear" world and greater commitment to significantly reduce nuclear arsenal;
- Improving U.S. – Russian relations not on geopolitical post- Cold War terms, but based on mutually acceptable conditions,
- The United States should give deeper meaning of transatlantic partnership, compensation for damage caused by the controversy of previous years, they should repair the damage caused by the controversy of previous years.²⁰

Trying to relate these guidelines to the relations of Poland (or whole CEE) with the U.S., we must pay attention mainly to the two points. Firstly: the global war on terror, where continuation of Polish military aid for U.S. was for Obama an important factor from the moral and political reasons rather than military one. Despite the U.S. largest military engagement, America not alone lead the fight against international

¹⁷ *Foreign policy – guiding principles*, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy> (accessed October 29, 2010).

¹⁸ Andrew Nagorski, "Missions critical," *Newsweek*, February 02, 2009, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/183615> (accessed January 20, 2010).

¹⁹ Craig Whitlock, "U.S. plans for possible delay in Iraq withdrawal", *The Washington Post*, February 23, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/22/AR2010022202933.html> (accessed April 15, 2010).

²⁰ Brzezinski, "From hope to audacity. Appraising Obama's foreign policy," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 1 (January/February 2010): 16–17.

terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. Intervention in these countries was a joint decision of the democratic nations to spread democracy around the world.

Secondly: strengthening transatlantic partnership. Barack Obama rejected the distinction between the “New” and “Old Europe” and is strongly committed to the unity within the EU. Moreover U.S. is about to engage close consultation in security issues bilaterally, as well as on multilateral board of all 27 NATO countries. NATO is considered as preeminent security alliance in the world today, able to promote security, deter vital threats, and defend its people.²¹ Poland, as an experienced member of the Partnership for Peace should take advantage of the opportunity to re-emerge in American politics, by mediating between NATO and the potential new members, especially post-communist countries. Complement this concept could be EU *Eastern Partnership* program created by Poland in cooperation with Sweden, assuming long-term cooperation between Brussels and the former Soviet countries.

Case of Poland in U.S. foreign policy

Past few years weakened the positive attitude of Poland to the U.S. Firstly, due to the resignation of President Obama’s administration of the National Missile Defense (NMD) project, as proposed by the George W. Bush. The most unpleasant aspect of this resignation was choice of the announcement day: 17th of September is associated in Poland with betrayal. Secondly, U.S. are more involved in Middle East, overcoming AfPak and Iraqi complicated situation and also trying to resolve the question of Iran. Thirdly, there’s still unsolved issue of visas. The last, but probably most important aspect of this situation is European integration. With growing political, and especially economical, engagement of EU in Poland, the meaning of America is relatively lowering. In recent six years real engagement of Poland in Europe has also increased rapidly. In the same time U.S. was still engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan and had to increase interest in East Asia region, rethink relations with China, so there was no additional involvement in CEE, except unrealized plans of NMD installations.

Moreover, there can be seen new U.S. policy towards CEE countries. During Bush presidency there was tendency to improve bilateral relations with European countries, what was much easier than trying to cooperate with weak, in respect of foreign policy, authorities in Brussels. Nowadays we can observe kind of U.S. answer for strengthening integration within the EU, what manifests in will to cooperate more with whole international organizations, than have special relations with one, especially friendly or important country. The Lisbon Treaty, which structured and unified European policy, made it possible to systematize the whole conversation with the EU, not only with

²¹ *National Security Strategy...*, 41.

individual countries. So U.S. expects coherent and coordinated EU foreign policy.²² That is why presently CEE countries – members of the EU – are treated as a part of this organization. But the first year of Obama's terms gave the hard time the CEE states and taught them a rough lesson of new Washington's realities. The relationship with CEE were relegated to the background and central place in the politics of Washington took mentioned engagement in core threats to security in various places around the world.

What do the USA expect from Poland and CEE countries?

U.S. perceives CEE countries among them Poland through the few critical issues. According to Philip H. Gordon, current Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs²³ American point of view on Poland and CEE may be summarized in six points:

1. Cooperation and improvement of relations with Russia.
2. National Missile Defense.
3. NATO's new Strategy Concept.
4. Eastern Partnership.
5. Energetic security and climate changes
6. Military cooperation.

With respect to Poland and other CEE, according to the Authors of this paper, the individual points require an elaborated commentary:

Cooperation and improvement of relations with Russia. This refers to Obama's "reset" of U.S.-Russia relations to repair the weak and deteriorating cooperation. Thanks to that change, and probably due to Dmitry Medvedev's modernization plans,²⁴ The New START and agreement on military transit to Afghanistan were signed. It

²² More: Sally McNamara, "EU Foreign Policymaking Post-Lisbon: Confused and Contrived," *Background* 2388, March 16, 2010.

²³ Paper was presented at CSIS-PISM Conference: The United States and Central Europe: Diverging or Converging Strategic Interests, Washington, DC, November 4, 2009. Polish translation: Philip H. Gordon, „Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia: amerykański punkt widzenia,” transl. J. Dołęga, *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 52, no. 6 (listopad–grudzień 2009): 17–25.

²⁴ President D. Medvedev published on October 10, 2009 article *Forward Russia!*, which is a plan of modernization of Russian Federation political, economic and social system by fighting four Russian "plagues": everlasting economic backwardness, the habit of existence thanks to exports of raw materials and exchange them into finished good, everlasting corruption paternalistic attitudes widespread in society. Then on November 29, 2009 there was announced by D. Medvedev project of *European Security Treaty*, to create paneuropean security zone and "to end Cold War legacy." Д. Медведев, *Россия, вперед! Статья Дмитрия Медведева*, <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/5413> (accessed October 27, 2010); *Проект Договора о европейской безопасности*, <http://news.kremlin.ru/news/6152> (accessed October 27, 2010).

is important for Warsaw that U.S.-Russian relations have been free from tension and confrontation, which may result in increasing military threat in the CEE. The very last example of this was threat of deployment of nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad in response to the U.S. plan of distribution in Poland elements of NMD.

National Missile Defense. Even during the election campaign, Obama spoke skeptically about the idea of NMD, he did not perceive the system as a guarantee for the European and global security. On the other hand, Polish government had no doubt – the war in Georgia sealed the sense of fairness of the Polish decisions. But the signals coming from overseas indicated a change in the American course in relation with Poland. During a conversation with Obama as a candidate, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski told that in case of the Democrats' victory in the presidential elections the United States must verify whether the anti-missile system really do not endanger the safety of Russia. Barack Obama, as a new president, had to deal with the effects of the economic crisis, hence the declaration of cutting unnecessary spending seemed to be most on the spot and the NMD was on the list of the unnecessary expenditures. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev expressed his hope that Obama will end the selfish foreign policy practiced by George W. Bush, who wanted to force Russia to accede to a new arms race.²⁵ In relation to Poland Barack Obama insisted that she was a loyal and important strategic partner as evidenced by an increase of the Polish contingent in Afghanistan. When it comes to NMD, Obama used a strategy of evasion. Throughout officials meetings and talks there were no specific declarations and promises. Even during the NATO summit in Krakow, Robert Gates, in an interview with Defense Minister Bogdan Klich avoided any strong statement on the NMD. At last, in his famous speech at the Hradčany Square in Prague president Obama declared that the NMD project will be needed as long as Iran continues to develop its nuclear program, great threat to the rest of the world.²⁶ Additionally, a new U.S. military budget has been cut about \$ 1.4 billion, and United States began to consider the Russian offer of creation of a common missile defense system with radar stations in Armavir (Krasnodar Krai, Russia) and Gabala (Azerbaijan's territory). After months of U.S. administration evasive behavior, the final decision was forced by Kremlin: there were signals that Moscow will not agree to reductions in strategic arms, if the missile shield will be built in Poland and Czech Republic. After cancelling NMD project appeared the proposals of Polish and Czech participation in the implementation of a new missile defense system in Europe, aimed more on the fight against missiles of short and long-range, based on the method of intercepting missiles from both sea and land, but the governments of both countries were no longer in the

²⁵ *Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации, 5 ноября 2008 года, Москва, Большой Кремлёвский дворец, <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1968> (accessed October 27, 2010).*

²⁶ *Remarks by president Barack Obama, Hradcany Square Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered (accessed October 27, 2010).*

larger illusions. Barack Obama quickly seized the opportunity to return to the idea of missile defense system which consists of groupings of troops defending against enemy tactical missiles.²⁷

NATO's new Strategy Concept. In recent decade the context within NATO has been functioning has changed: the Alliance was enlarged, the majority of CEE countries joined it, and the so called "new threats to the security" were identified and added to its mission, among them the terrorism. These threats have new to the Alliance aspect: they are rising outside NATO member states' borders. This new context implied the need for the new strategy, such a strategy should concentrate on three points:

1. new reading of Article V, which is fundamental to European collective security;
2. determination of the terms of the global engagement of NATO;
3. searching for response to new perils.

NATO's new Strategic Concept will provide an opportunity to revitalize and reform the Alliance. NATO, as a foundation of European security, must be able to address the full range of 21st century challenges.²⁸

Eastern Partnership. For U.S., very important dimension of EU policies became recently cooperation of Brussels with former soviet republics in Eastern Europe and Caucasus (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). U.S. supports European aspirations of these states for greater integration with UE and is committed to partnering with a stronger European Union to advance shared goals of all. Regarding this issue, the main platform for cooperation between US and EU is promotion of democracy and prosperity in Eastern European countries that are still completing their democratic transition and to respond to pressing issues of mutual concern.²⁹ Important factor for American administration in his topic are CEE countries, which invented and implemented to EU policies new quality – *Eastern Partnership*. It's important not only because of promoting freedom and democracy in Eastern Europe, but also because of stabilizing borderline between NATO and CSTO.

Military cooperation. The most important need of support and cooperation to U.S. Army is rather legitimization and political support of its actions than financial, technical or human aid. Although U.S. Army is involved in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's still the most powerful and with the greatest operational capacity army in the world. Despite this, Poland and CEE countries are significant allies. Cooperation with them is necessary for the U.S. because of exchanging experiences: neither the USA, nor Western European countries experienced political and economic transition in recent years. It was successful in CEE countries.

²⁷ It was an idea forced during Bill Clinton's Presidency.

²⁸ NATO 2020: *Assured security; dynamic engagement. Analysis and recommendations of the group of experts on a new strategic concept for NATO*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed October 27, 2010).

²⁹ *National Security Strategy...*, 42.

What does Poland expect from the USA?

During earlier quoted conference, Radosław Sikorski, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out main issues that Poland wishes to cooperate on with the US:³⁰

1. Eastern Partnership.
2. Community of Democracies.
3. Security cooperation.
4. Visas.

In the opinion of the Authors of this paper issues put forward by the Polish Foreign Affairs Minister consist of the following elements:

Eastern Partnership. This initiative is perceived by Polish government as an important opportunity to strengthen relations between EU, especially CEE countries, and the U.S while providing development assistance to Eastern countries. This program is realization of significant ideas for every democratic society: extension of democracy and building political, economic and cultural cooperation. Thus, it is natural contact point for America and Europe. Though it's an EU idea, it's open for external partners, who can bring on new experiences, ideas and – of course – funds.

Community of Democracies. This is a global intergovernmental coalition of democratic countries, with the goal of promoting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world. It was funded in 2000 by initiative of Bronisław Geremek and Madeleine Albright.³¹ Most important task of this platform allows to exchange experiences between various democratic countries. CEE countries went through a successful political and economic transition and USA has *know-how* to implement this knowledge in international environment. Joint of these two elements may allow to implement successfully democracy in countries seeking it.

Security cooperation. For CEE countries, and especially for Poland, the most important aspect are the strong U.S. guaranties within NATO, ensuring us that our allies will fulfill their duties resulted from Article V, if there are any threats. Russian Federation is still perceived as possible political or military threat by CEE, just because of historical experiences and geographical location, military potential of Russia or unpredictable way of its political development.³² Although Polish government still

³⁰ Radosław Sikorski, "USA – Europa Środkowa: czas dokończyć dzieła!", transl. B. Wiśniewski, *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 52, no. 6 (listopad–grudzień 2009): 25–28.

³¹ *Community of democracies. History and mission*, <http://community-democracies.org/index.php> (accessed October 27, 2010).

³² Nowadays Russia is about to choose proper direction of self-development, probably from two possibilities proposed by Kremlin: either according to President D. Medvedev's program *Forward Russia!*, assuming economical and political modernization and cooperation with EU, USA and NATO, or maintaining the current confrontational course promoted by Prime Minister V. Putin. It's rather impossible that they, or their programs will compete in referenda or elections, but it's still unsure how the changes of international environment will be perceived in Moscow and what will be future relations between CEE, EU, USA and Russia.

tries to have relations as good as possible with Russia, probably only deployment of American troops or military installations (like part of NMD) will provide the full sense of security.³³ The community of Polish-U.S. interests can be traced primarily in efforts to develop NATO's New Strategic Concept, particularly in terms of strengthening the cohesion of the Alliance (especially new reading of Article V) and responding to new perils (mainly connected with prevent destabilization of the former soviet countries).

Visas. Poland is continuously excluded from the Visa Waiver Program with heavyweights on Polish-American relations.³⁴ For U.S. administration it's probably only technical question, but for Poland it has great political meaning. Poland is fully democratic country, member of many international organizations (EU, NATO, OECD, The Council of Europe, etc.), there's no the threat of terrorism on the part of Poland and – what's more important – Poland is U.S. ally, heavily involved on war on terror. Despite this, Polish citizens are for U.S. customs in the same group as they were under communist rule and as citizens of unstable Third World countries. Polish soldiers who fight with U.S. Army against Taliban guerrillas in Afghanistan, can't visit USA without visa and it's not sure if they ever receive one. What is moreover negatively received in Poland is unequal U.S. visa policy towards CEE countries: some, as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia managed to participate in Visa Waiver Program, but other not.³⁵ Maybe new U.S. policy, giving much more interest in regional cooperation, will change this situation.³⁶

³³ In the second part of November there has been a new idea of security cooperation: according to Polish Ministry of National Defense Bogdan Klich, the U.S. Air Force will deploy F-16 jet fighters and C-130 Hercules transport planes in Poland by 2013. There are no further details known yet, except "political will on both sides." Poland to host U.S. jets and C-130s, United Press International, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2010/11/22/Poland-to-host-US-jets-and-C-130s/UPI-86081290427437/ (accessed November 22, 2010); A. Koziński, "Tarczy w Polsce nie będzie, będą za to amerykańskie samoloty," *Dziennik Polska The Times*, <http://www.polskatimes.pl/fakty/333687,tarczy-w-polsce-nie-bedzie-beda-za-to-amerykanskie-samoloty,id,t.html> (accessed November 22, 2010).

³⁴ Helen Conely called it even "a cancer" ongoing U.S. and Central European countries bilateral relations. Helen Conely, "Europa Środkowa: w oczekiwaniu na (nowe) amerykańskie przywództwo," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 53, no. 1 (styczeń–luty 2010): 21.

³⁵ See more: Visa Waiver Program (VWP), http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html#travelertype (accessed October 27, 2010).

³⁶ There can be seen tendency in CEE countries to solve important matters in bilateral relations. It was seen during EU accession process, when individual countries tried to compete during agreeing on the accession chapters, trying to finish this process no matter how were doing others. Happily, Brussels was determined to adopt all CEE countries in the same time. Unfortunately in this matter U.S. administration treats every CEE country individually, what could cause deterioration their relations or lowering relations with USA.

Conclusions

The administration of George W. Bush in negotiation used the Polish attachment and affection for the Washington: United States were usually treated by Polish politicians as a natural protector against Russia. This idea inspired the Polish politicians, whatever policy options they represent, so even after the accession to the European Union Poland has not expressed desire a deeper bounds with the European position, always bearing in mind the direction of U.S. policy, and defining the Polish strategic activities based on American actions. Poles treated the interest of the United States as some kind of award. Poles treated the interest of the United States as some kind of honor. In a society there was built an image of Polish as a special ally of America, functioning on special rights. Implementation of NMD project was to be a reward for Polish pro-American attitude.

Unlike his predecessors, Barack Obama did not see the need to create a separate line of US – Polish relations, especially against the background of U.S. relations with Europe. The new president has decided to calm tensions in the international environment, approaching the problem very pragmatically. For America, a more troubling was the lack of any effect on Iran, the efficient implementation of the Afghan mission, or negotiation of a new treaty on strategic arms reduction than embittering relations with Russia. Polish politicians, instead of moaning about abandoning by the most significant ally, should direct its attention to creating a more self-vision of the Polish foreign and security policy. Poland should concentrate on seeking the partners and allies among the closest neighbors, in particular within the European Union. It is significant that EU strengthens integration, especially in *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) dimension and Poland is one of *Eastern Partnership* founder. Also creation and realization of *New Strategic Concept for NATO* may be important field of activity for Polish foreign policy. Attempt to reactivate the Visegrad Group, as a group of influence within EU would be fine option. The problem is that now its members, like the Czech Republic, are no longer so willing to cooperate, willing not to put at risk their relations with EU “net payers.” Poland should accept the fact that it no longer works in the category of privileged partners of America, but it functions as one of the many good allies of the United States.

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