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POLAND AND CURRENT TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS¹

Transatlantic divisions

Exactly 40 years ago, President John F. Kennedy – while visiting Frankfurt – suggested that ties between the United States and Europe were so close and so essential that both sides should consider not only economic cooperation, but possibly even a political union between these two pillars of the West. He said that “we – Americans – do not regard a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner.” He even proposed that a declaration of interdependence be made between what he described as “the new union emerging in Europe and the old American union”².

That idea did not materialize. Today, in the mid-2003, the situation is very different. Nobody talks about a transatlantic union – many people talk rather about the transatlantic rift. But what are the actual relations between Europe and America? – There is much disagreement on that matter.

Some people believe that relationships between Europe and America are in deep crisis and both sides are moving towards a major clash. Others – on the contrary – believe that what is really true about mutual relations between the United States and the European Union today is the unprecedented degree of economic integration and numerous examples of good political co-operation – moreover, they believe that the existing tensions are temporary and will be amended shortly without any problems.

The first group – let us call them the pessimists – list a growing number of disagreements between both sides: How to deal with the Middle East affairs (Palestinian-Israeli relations; policies toward Iraq, Iran and Turkey); The Bush administration refusal to participate in international agreements (Kyoto Protocol on global warming; verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Control Treaty and

¹ Paper delivered at the Transatlantic Forum of the [American] State Legislative Leaders Foundations, Kraków, July 2003.

² M. Walker, *The European Problem*, “National Review Online” 2003, June 10.

the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; worldwide ban on anti-personal land mines; International Criminal Court); quarrels about subsidies to steel and agricultural products and export of genetically modified foods.

Many European politicians criticize the Bush-introduced preemptive military action as a foreign policy doctrine. The White House, in turn, criticizes European unwillingness to increase defense spending or attempts to diminish the role of NATO by introducing European rapid deployment forces.

These quarrels on international issues are exacerbated by numerous disagreements over such traditionally domestic issues as food safety, the death penalty, data privacy and a range of other civil liberties. Then, the transatlantic pessimists mention the crisis caused by the “war against terror”, and the Iraqi war in particular.

Throughout the Cold War, Berlin Wall was known to divide the world. Russia and Eastern Europe posed a great danger to the Western civilization and Western Europe was the front line in the world’s fight against communism. Therefore, the American foreign policy was aimed to protect European stability as the key to stability and security of the US and of the world. That approach, however, has changed. Today, Americans believe they themselves are on the front line of major world threats, and the danger emanates from beyond Europe. As a consequence, Europe – having already been secure – is increasingly *not* seen by the US as a necessary partner in new global campaigns³. This became clearly visible in the developments following September 11 attack although first actions did not suggest the incoming problems. Right after the terrorist attack, the European NATO partners of the US decided to act along Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty⁴. That has happened for the first time in history of the organization. Moreover, members of the European Union manifested “total solidarity” with the US and helped to ensure swift and unanimous UN support for the United States. But much to Europe’s disappointment the White House seemed not to be much interested in the offered assistance. On January 29, 2002, in George W. Bush’s State of the Union address there was no mentioning of the role of NATO, the United Nations, and the European Union in countering terrorism. Thus, many Europeans felt downgraded to a secondary role in important world affairs⁵. The rift deepened when President Bush declared during the anti-terrorism summit in Warsaw that “a coalition partner must do more than just express sympathy, a coalition partner must perform... You’re either with us or against us in the fight against terror”⁶. The *Berliner Zeitung* wrote that “Never has a president of the United States been so foreign to us and never have German citizens been so skeptical about the policies of their most powerful of allies”.

³ D. S. Hamilton, *The 21st Century Requires a Global U.S.-European partnership*, “European Affairs” 2003, Spring.

⁴ Article V stipulates that an attack on any member country of NATO constitutes an attack on all countries. It places all Alliance members under an obligation to offer military support to the country under attack.

⁵ S. Serfaty, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC 2003, p. 5.

⁶ <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror>.

Then came the Iraqi crisis – it divided the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. Large parts of European public opinion were not convinced by the arguments of US Administration that the nature of the Iraqi war is prevention. They questioned the reasons announced for that war, doubting the seriousness of the threat of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. They did not see that war as a legitimate and exerted pressure on their governments not to participate in it. The NATO members: France and Germany (with the support of Russia) blocked the US-sponsored Security Council resolution on the issue. Transatlantic relations reached a bottom.

In analyzing European-American relations, the pessimists underline that there have been not only differences in the approach to particular issues but a general divergence in perspectives. Robert Kagan – in his well-known article “Power and Weakness” – wrote that Europe is turning away from exercising power: it is moving into a self-contained world of laws and rules, and transnational negotiation and cooperation⁷. The United States, meanwhile, continue to believe in power, in a world where international laws and rules are unreliable, and where true security and defense and promotion of liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military power. Many Americans believe that Europe is faint-hearted, soft-headed and has no or little military and political power⁸. At the same time they see the US as a mighty state – moreover – the country of moral clarity and resolute action. This is why, as far as major strategic and international questions today go – at least in Kagan's opinion – Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: they have little to agree on, and less and less understanding for each other.

Pessimists also stress the growing economic competition across the Atlantic and the increasing role of Euro in the world, which both weaken the position of the United States. So, when they take into consideration all of reasons mentioned above, they are coming to a very dramatic conclusion that the end of the Western world is approaching (as Charles Kupchan recently wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly*)⁹. Kupchan forecasted that the next clash of civilizations will not be between the Western world and the outside but the United States will clash with Europe.

The other group – let's call them the optimists – analyzes the history of European-American relations as well as the current situation differently. In particular, they do not perceive today's state of affairs as anything unusual. They say that outlooks on the two sides of the Atlantic, while often similar, have rarely been identical. They have been differences in the past; there will be differing views in the future. What is crucial though, is the unprecedented degree of economic integration across the Atlantic. The two way trade is estimated now at 40 percent of total world trade¹⁰. In the 1990s, European direct investment in the United States grew from roughly \$247 billion to almost \$900 billion, while US investment in

⁷ R. Kagan, *Power and Weakness*, “Policy Review”, June 2003.

⁸ J. Solana, *Mars and Venus Reconciled: A New Era for Transatlantic Relations*; lecture at Harvard University, April 7, 2003. http://sais-jhu.edu/centers/fpi/Solana_harvard.

⁹ Ch. A. Kupchan, *The End of the West*, “The Atlantic Monthly”, November 2002.

¹⁰ J. P. Quinlan, *Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of the Transatlantic Economy*, Center for Transatlantic Relations, Washington DC 2003.

Europe rose from \$215 billion to nearly \$650 billion. For all the talk about the importance of NAFTA or the “Asian century”, over the past eight years, American investment in the tiny Netherlands alone was twice what it was in Mexico and 10 times what it was in China. In turn, there is more European investment in Texas than there is American investment in Japan. Etc.

There is more between Europe and America than just close economic links. There is a political co-operation as well: to mention but the Balkans and Afghanistan. Moreover, peoples on both sides of the Atlantic share the same approach to democratic governance. There is also a dramatic convergence in societal attitudes and behavior. Shortly after World War II, Theodore White wrote: “The American traveler comes to a Europe which is more foreign to Americans today than it has ever been in all our history”¹¹. Now travelers who cross the ocean move from one family residence to another rather than from one civilization to another. The optimists believe that there is no opposition between power, “the US method”, and law, which is “the European method”. In fact, law and power can be two sides of the same coin¹². Power is needed to establish law and law is the legitimate face of power. Sometimes European countries have tended to forget that law and international standards have to rely on force. And occasionally Americans seem to have forgotten that, if it is to have a lasting effect, force needs to be backed by legitimacy. Yet these problems can be quickly corrected. Those issues come together in the case of Iraq. Not everyone sees the war as legitimate. Therefore, many politicians have tried to make sure that peace is seen as legitimate. That is why the role of the UN in the political reconstruction is important. The United States seems to agree with that as time is passing by and with increased problems faced in Iraq.

Summing up, the optimists do not perceive the current transatlantic relations as ones in crisis and are convinced about further developments of close, mutually beneficial, contacts between Europe and America in the future.

Old and New Europe

In January 2003, Donald Rumsfeld, the US Secretary of Defense, for the first time used the now famous juxtaposition of the ‘Old Europe’, which balked at war in Iraq, versus the ‘New Europe’, which backed the fight for the good cause against Saddam, terror and the like¹³. The terms Old and New Europe have since then been widely adopted to distinguish the founding Western states of the European Union, particularly Germany and France, from the new members from the East, led by Poland. The division was furthered by the widespread belief in Western Europe that the newcomers are post-communist converts to American ideals. Some journalists would go as far as suggesting that these countries may even want to estab-

¹¹ T. H. White, *Fire in the Ashes: Europe in the Mid-Century*, William Sloane Associates, New York 1953, p. 6-7. Quoted after S. Serfaty, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership...*, p. 15.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ R. Foroohar, *What New Europe*, “Newsweek” 2003, June 23.

lish themselves as an entity resembling the 51st American state in the heart of the Continent.

The reality, however, is much different: links between “Old” and “New” parts of Europe are numerous and strong, while at the same time there is a lot of associations between Europe (as a whole, and as all parts of it) and the United States.

There is no separate entity in the East which can be called New Europe and is highly unlikely that one can emerge. The new EU members are a very diverse group with varying agendas¹⁴. There are relatively rich countries among them (Slovenia), and poor ones (Latvia); large (Poland), and small (Estonia). Poles are likely to join forces with France against the majority of EU countries to maintain the current system of agricultural subsidies. The President of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, is an EU admirer while the President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus is Euro-skeptic. Estonians are aggressive free traders, while Poles and Slovaks are protectionists. So it goes. As far as such critical economic matters as key transatlantic trade disputes, tax subsidies for exporters, and laws regarding genetically modified foods, are concerned New Europe is likely to vote hand in hand with Old Europe. Moreover, many East-Central European countries are suspicious of each other and unwilling to develop close ties between themselves, fearing possible domination of one country over another. For example, Czechs have never been ready to accept any formalization of the so-called Visegrad Group, being afraid that Poland's domination in such an organization can diminish their chances in the EU.

Moreover, contrary to what is occasionally assumed – Europe – its individual governments as well as their union – generally acknowledges the primacy of US power and the need for US leadership, despite the fact that it would prefer the multi-power world and occasionally criticizes America. Europeans understand and appreciate the crucial role played by the United States in the revival of many of its nation-states after World War I, World War II, and after the Cold War. Most politicians in Europe also comprehend and fear the threats to security environment by the potential dissemination of weapons of mass destruction to rogue states or to terrorist groups, sharing American opinion on that. Europe also shares with the US many ideas about the future of the Middle East, differing with the US only in how to achieve certain goals.

Therefore, it would be a mistake for the US to continue to promote the divisions between the Old and New Europe, resort to ‘cherry-picking’ from among its European allies¹⁵. To do so would ignore the fact that, collectively, the EU has capacities that its individual members lack. Historically, the US has continued to bring an enormous contribution to ending conflicts between European countries. It would be a mutual loss if people across the Atlantic were to start quarrelling again. Attempts to divide Europe only strengthen those who argue, misguidedly, that European identity lies in opposing the US. Instead Europeans should discuss stronger integration. It means they should talk more about Europe. But at the same

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ J. Solana, *Mars and Venus Reconciled...*

time not less about America. In particular, Europeans should do more to reassure Americans that the union we are completing will continue to make the United States feel welcome in Europe – ensure that what we do is not an attempt to challenge the United States.

On the other side, Americans should remember that the United States without the institutional links to Europe, provided by the Atlantic Alliance, and with the transatlantic partnership reduced just to a one-time limited coalitions with single European states, with no more than an occasional “mission” – an idea floated by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld – can really mean an isolated America adrift in a hostile world – a power without permanent allies¹⁶. To think about Europe without the EU – as well as to think about the EU without NATO – is to imagine the very kind of Europe that the United States has attempted to put an end to throughout the past 50 years: less safe because it would become increasingly divided and less and less predictable, closer to resurrecting its past than to entering the future, and infinitely more dangerous¹⁷.

The position of Poland: from nowhere back to Europe

The Middle Ages, with several exceptions, were a period of growth for Polish influence in Europe. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Poland was one of the largest and most powerful European kingdoms. The country was the crucial rampart of Christianity, a defender of Europe against Turkish and other invaders. Later, the situation changed dramatically. Poland was weakened by external wars and internal political struggle. Finally – in 1795 – it lost its independence. For over a hundred and twenty years, Poland was effaced from the maps of the world. Like a phoenix rising from its ashes, Poland regained its independence after the First World War. Not for long – happiness lasted less than 20 years. Then came the Second World War. Poland was occupied again by Germany and Soviet Russia and suffered tremendous losses. Eventually, in spite of being on the winning side, the country was abandoned by its war allies and disappeared behind the Iron Curtain. Located in the communist Eastern Europe it was often perceived in the West rather as a part of the Soviet Union than a country of the West European civilization.

Polish geopolitical location started to shift again in the 1980s – as cracks began to emerge in the communist system. Through the election of the Polish Pope, John Paul II, through Lech Wałęsa’s ‘Solidarity’ movement, the country started to lessen its ties with the East. Other East European countries followed the suit. Shortly after the 1989 revolution, the US Department of State issued a special directive to its employees – reminding them not to use the misleading and prejudiced expression – ‘Eastern Europe’. The region slowly became recognized again as a part of the Europe proper.

¹⁶ S. Serfaty, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership...*, p. 10.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

The events of 1989-1990 transformed Europe. Once oppressed, states regained their independence and nations claimed back their identity. The astonishing scale of changes in Central-Eastern Europe alone is best represented by the fact that the number of countries in this region almost doubled after the collapse of communism, their number rising from eleven to twenty-one. Until 1990, Poland had bordered three countries: the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. At that time all the three disappeared from the map. A year later, without changing its borders, Poland already had seven neighbors: the united Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – now two separate states, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. In the broader European perspective, people also began to try – through the expansion of NATO and the European Union – to mend the rift that for so long had kept the Continent split in two.

So where does Poland lie today? It lies in the center of Europe, and not only in the geographical aspect. Norman Davies, a famous British historian, titled his well known history of Poland: *Heart of Europe*¹⁸. For him Poland is very much a part of Europe. It is a repository of typically European ideas and values.

Poles never had any doubts about their location in the world. They always felt themselves citizens of Europe and members of the European civilization. It is, therefore, only natural for them to be rejoined with countries of Western Europe. But this has proven difficult.

Joining NATO and the European Union

Right after 1989, everything looked easy. The old Warsaw Pact was dismantled, as well as the Comecon. But then problems began. On the one hand, a large number of people in the West – particularly in the US – had asked for a ‘peace dividend’ and called for dismantling of the NATO – seeing it a relic of the Cold War – a step Russia, too, demanded, never perceiving NATO as defense organization. On the other hand, Poland and other East European countries, still afraid of Russia, were very much interested in keeping the alliance alive and so applied to join NATO. Russia strongly opposed the move. For a while, the West was hesitant. As a delaying tactic, various ‘Partnership for Peace’-type-of initiatives were created. But the Balkan crisis, which developed in the meantime, proved the need to maintain NATO. In 1999, after several years of negotiations, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were admitted to the organization. Since then, these new members have successfully participated in numerous NATO activities. Polish soldiers now serve in NATO contingents in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. Moreover, in 2003 Adam Kobieracki became NATO Deputy Secretary General.

Parallel to these developments, at the beginning of the 1990s, all former East European countries expressed their willingness to join the European Union.

¹⁸ N. Davies, *Heart of Europe. A Short History of Poland*, Oxford 1984.

In general, this request received positive response from the West. Yet when actual negotiations started, Western leaders, always keeping one eye on their domestic approval ratings, preferred to support the demands of their constituencies, often contrary to vital pan-European interests. In the last decade, Europe would find itself lacking visionary politicians, such as Winston Churchill, who talked about the 'United States' of Europe as early as 1945 – or, for that matter, Charles de Gaulle and Conrad Adenauer, who managed to overcome the legacy of the Second World War and reestablish friendly relations between former foes. Therefore, without political encouragement, negotiations to admit new members were often stacked for a long time over discussions about very detailed issues.

When at the Seville Summit in June 2002, the EU finally agreed to bring in 10 new states by the end of 2004, there was little celebration. Timothy Garton Ash called it the 'grim wedding'. On June 27 he wrote in the *Guardian*: "Imagine a wedding party delayed for 15 years by the meanness and prevarication of the bridegroom. Who would have any pleasure in it when it finally came? Such now is the reunification of Europe: the wedding of the western and eastern parts of the continent divided for decades by the walls and barbed wire of the Cold War. Even the name for the party has become a bore. No longer the reunification or, as we also used to say, the healing of Europe, it is just 'EU enlargement'" What went wrong? "We did – Ash continued – We, the Western Europeans. For a start, many Western Europeans never really thought of those 'faraway countries of which we know little' as part of Europe anyway. Others, notably France, did not want these countries to join our French-led, rich man's club at all... Anti-immigrant populists from Haider to Le Pen increased the domestic opposition... Then Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand decided that Western Europe had first to make its own monetary union." So it goes.

Once the EU leaders made political decisions concerning enlargement, another question, namely, who should pay for this, immediately sprang up. The net contributors to the EU budget, and especially Germany, worrying about a possible new recession, do not want to pay more; at the same time the net benefactors protest against any projects that could curtail their former subsidies. As a result, the net sum that the EU proposes to transfer to its ten new members over the first three years after enlargement, from 2004 to 2006, has been set at about € 25 billion. Is it much? One can compare this both to the Marshall Plan, under which the US transferred the equivalent of € 97 billion (at today's prices) to Western Europe from 1948 to 1951, and to the unification of Germany in the 1990s, when West Germany transferred about € 600 billion to East Germany. "So much for the great solidarity of Europeans with Europeans" – wrote Ash.

Despite problems, negotiations nevertheless continued. In the end of 2002 Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller won the risky gamble to obtain advantageous concessions in the final stage of negotiations with the EU. His politics infuriated some while taking others by surprise. The dramatic negotiations in Copenhagen at the end of the EU expansion talks on December 13 confirmed the opinion about Poland being the new tough member the EU will have to deal with in the future.

Poland was greatly successful in the 1990s: democratization of the country, rapid economic transformation, and freedom – and at the same time, paradoxically, growing frustration with the European Union. Poles expected to be welcomed as long-awaited brothers and granted special privileges for their achievements with fighting the communism. Instead, they were greeted with arduous negotiations. Romantic enthusiasm clashed with tough politics and cold calculations – a case entirely different than NATO accession, where the dominating language was close to Polish hearts: the language of shared values, fight for freedom and democracy against dictatorial regimes, terrorists, etc.¹⁹ Thus, NATO often became the personification of Polish nostalgia for the West. And it was mainly thanks to the US that Poland could join the organization.

Poland entering world's politics. Is it the American Trojan horse in Europe?

Shortly after the EU Copenhagen Summit, the Polish government awarded the contract to supply fighter aircraft for the Polish army to the American Lockheed Martin Corporation. Lockheed's F16s won a tough contest with their European competitors. The several billion dollar deal was, of course, welcomed in America but irritated the defeated European partners: France in particular. The US offer was clearly the best, and European ones could simply be no match for it. Nevertheless, Poles were accused of making a purely political decision with no economic justification, of violating European solidarity, of striking a blow to the interests of the European military industry, of impairing credibility of Poland as future EU member, and of embarking upon a road of subjugation by the US. Some media began to talk about Poland playing the role of the American Trojan horse in the emerging new Europe. Tensions between Poland and some of its EU partners grew considerably.

Then the Iraqi crisis developed

In March 2003, as the political strife in the Security Council between the US and the French-German-Russian anti-intervention alliance was entering its final phase, Poland – along with seven other European countries – sent a letter to President Bush supporting his policies towards Iraq. The letter was signed by British, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Czech, and Hungarian prime ministers as well, but France and Germany decided to single out Poland for criticism. They were infu-

¹⁹ *Stary kontynent i nowe kłopoty*, interview with Aleksander Smolar, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2003, March 1-2.

riated by the fact that a country so dependent on their support for EU admission, decided not to follow in their footsteps but instead proclaimed its own independent, pro-American foreign policy. Several media commentators in France and Germany labeled Poland again as the American Trojan horse in Europe, a country supposedly bought by the US to advance the White House interests in Europe²⁰. French politicians quickly followed suit. Jacques Chirac undiplomatically criticized Poland, saying that in serious debates, as a newcomer to world politics, it should keep quiet²¹. The German *Suddeutsche Zeitung* described Poland in even more derogatory terms as a 'Trojan donkey'²².

Poland, however, decided to stay on the course and sent its soldiers to Iraq. In result, throughout the war, White House politicians – President Bush in particular – often praised Polish participation in the 'coalition of the willing'.

By the way, recent Polish-American cooperation with respect to Iraqi affairs was not without precedent. When in 1990 Saddam Hussein unexpectedly attacked Kuwait, American CIA operatives in Iraq were caught by surprise and failed to evacuate to safety on time. Their lives were at tremendous risk. Washington asked all its traditional Western allies for help, but received little assistance. In desperation, the Americans turned to Poland. That was not an obvious move at that time – the communist system had merely started to come apart; Poles already had 'their' Prime Minister, but the President of the country as well as crucial Ministers of Internal Security and Defense were still Russian-educated communists. Nevertheless, the Polish intelligence apparatus decided to help the Americans. With Polish passports in hand and together with Polish construction workers, CIA agents were smuggled out of Iraq. Following that, Poland supplied Americans with detailed maps of Baghdad, once designed by Polish cartographers on Iraqi request, thus helping to plan actions during the 1991 operation Desert Storm. America began to trust Poles. Former communist heads of Polish security agencies received high American honors and Washington decided to sign off 50 percent of the Polish debt incurred under the communist rule.

Returning to 2003 affairs. When Poland joined forces with the US, criticism of Poland returned in European media. *Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote that Poles became 'Uncle Sam's mercenaries' while *Tageszeitung* labeled Poles as 'American hirelings'²³. It was, of course, not true at all. Poland decided to participate in the war in Iraq not because of its own marginal role in the war with terrorism, but because it would increase its standing in the European Union and in the region. Without judging the Washington policies towards Iraq, I believe that in the current circumstances the decision of the Polish government was right – despite the fact that the majority of Poles opposed American intervention. British newspapers, such as *The Times* (May 21) and *The Guardian* (May 15), rightly compared Polish

²⁰ Of interest can be the fact that in 1963 the President of France, Charles de Gaulle, accused Britain of being America's Trojan horse in Europe and vetoed Britain's bid for admission to the European Common Market. Now the stable has different horses.

²¹ „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2003, February 18.

²² B. Majewski, *Jak nas piszą*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2003, June 17.

²³ *Ibidem*.

policy towards the US to those of Tony Blair: acceptance of a leading, but not dominant role of the US in the world, convergence of values and interests and a readiness to cooperate, which – however – does stop short of subordination.

When the Iraqi campaign was over, Americans charged Poland with the task of running one of the four administrative zones in Iraq. It was decided that General Andrzej Tyszkiewicz would command an international division of stabilization forces in that zone. Also, professor Marek Belka, the former Polish Minister of Finance, was appointed deputy head of the American-run Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Chairman of the Council for International Cooperation for the Reconstruction of Iraq. These have been important tasks. These appointments, however, were received with contempt in Germany and France. It was seen as confirmation that Poland's position in the international community was indeed growing. When the Polish Minister of Defense asked his German counterpart to provide soldiers for the international division in Iraq under Polish command, the German Minister was unable to conceal his disappointment that Poles had the nerve to propose such a deal.

These reactions confirmed again one of the deceits of EU enlargement, namely, that Poles and other Central Europeans would be treated as equal partners²⁴. The truth is that Germany and France have not been unanimous supporters of Polish accession to the EU and NATO: Russian sensibilities in particular were usually awarded priority. Moreover, it was assumed that, in an enlarged European Union, Poles and other new members would always pursue a policy of gratitude to their Western partners. Yet it soon became apparent that new members decided to look rather to the US for support. East European countries became aware of the fact that they could not always count on Germany and France, especially in times when these countries economic and political power weakened. In turn, Washington opted for awarding Poland a special status in recognition of the new geopolitical situation in Europe. The crucial strategic problems of the Continent during the coming decade will be connected to the status of Ukraine and Belarus, left outside the new EU frontiers. Here, the wise Polish foreign policy tries to pull these countries westwards, to the benefit of all. The US understands the importance of that move and encourages Polish endeavors.

To stress Poland's new role on the international arena even further, President George W. Bush decided to visit Poland during his last, the 2003 European tour. In Kraków's Wawel Royal Castle, the President delivered a significant speech to America's European partners. He also applauded Polish participation in the battles of Afghanistan and Iraq. "America will never forget – said Bush – that Poland rose at the moment. Again you have lived out of the words of the Polish motto: 'for your freedom and ours'"²⁵.

²⁴ R. Boyes, *Poles wax as Germans wane in new Europe*, "The Times" 2003, May 19.

²⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/>.

In Europe, with America

Being in Europe, feeling European and strongly supporting European integration, Poles are at the same time very much in favor of maintaining close ties with the US. There is a history of friendly mutual relations between the two countries and its peoples. Every Pole is proud of Polish national heroes: generals Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski who also fought for American independence. Poles remember well that Poland regained its statehood in 1918, owing this fact, to a great extent, to the politics of President Woodrow Wilson. Nor do they forget the support given by President Ronald Reagan and the American people to the 'Solidarity' movement. Moreover, according to the last census, in the US there are over 9 million people with Polish roots, a crucial link connecting both states. The United States have remained the very attractive country for Poles. Where, in post-communist Poland, does one find people waiting in the longest lines? In front of American consular offices. Thousands of Poles are eager to go to the US (some 150.000 a year lately). Poles, therefore, see no point in West European attempts to construct a Europe which would seek to keep the US, its traditional ally, out, at the same time promoting Russia, its former enemy, to become a close partner. They remember well that NATO was established 50 years ago for different reasons: to keep the expansionist Russia out, the detached America engaged, and Germany subdued²⁶. This was the goal that secured the longest period with no wars on the Continent. Therefore, Poles see no contradiction in embracing both sides of the Atlantic. They fully agree with what President George W. Bush said recently, that "Poland is good citizen of Europe and Poland is a close friend of America and there is no conflict between the two"²⁷.

Being as much pro-European as pro-American, Poles are at the same realistic about international relationships, knowing only too well that Poland is supported by others not for altruistic reasons but because of their particular interests in certain situations. Poles remember that Europe abandoned Poland several times. They also remember that the democratic United States (as well as Great Britain) signed the shameful Yalta treaty which, in 1945, sold the country for 50 years of enslavement to the Soviet Union. This is why, today, Poles try to pursue multilateral politics – their best security for the future.

In the case of the Polish-European-American-Iraqi issue, as time was going by, all forces of the crisis in the transatlantic camp decided to mend fences. In particular, the meeting of Polish, French and German Presidents in Wrocław in May 2003, during the summit of Weimar Triangle countries, calmed down bilateral tensions. The media followed the change of the mood of Western politicians. Commentators began to stress Poland's right to its own independent policies and the importance of Poland's involvement in world politics. *Handelsblad* wrote on

²⁶ S. Serfaty, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership...*, p. 8.

²⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003.05>.

May 16, that Europeans have to accept the situation where 'Poland joins the club of world's powers'.

On April 17, 2003, Prime Minister Leszek Miller signed the EU accession treaty in Athens. In a national referendum held on June 8, almost 80 percent of Poles voted for integration with Europe. On May 1, 2004 Poland became the full member of the European Union. And will continue to be a close ally of the US.

There is a broad agreement that there is hardly any problem in the world that cannot be solved, or at least managed, if and when the United States and the EU are in agreement – an argument for an ever-closer cooperation between the two “unions” – the *United States* and the *European Union* – the two that together form the community known as the West²⁸. Javier Solana, the European Union High Representative, said recently: “It was only in the arms of Venus that Mars found peace. And was their beautiful daughter not the goddess Harmonia?”²⁹

²⁸ S. Serfaty, *Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership...*, p. 23.

²⁹ J. Solana, *Mars and Venus Reconciled...*