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From America's protégé to constructive European

Polish security policy in the twenty-first century

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Contents

Summary

Following the events of 11 September 2001, Poland emerged as one of the United States's key allies, arguably its protégé, in Central and Eastern Europe. The close affinity of interests on security matters between the United States and Poland became particularly apparent in Iraq, where Warsaw proved to be a strong and highly vocal supporter of Washington. However, at the same time, Poland has been progressively drawn into the internal workings of the EU, and as a consequence its perspectives on European security have evolved towards a more 'EU-positive' attitude. This, coupled with disappointment over the war in Iraq, has meant that Poland's Atlanticism is increasingly questioned, with calls for a more pro-European attitude growing. This paper will reflect upon these debates and argue that Poland's Atlanticism is indeed changing. Focusing on the Iraq conflict and perspectives towards the EU's security ambitions, this paper will show that Warsaw has strived to reconcile its Atlanticism with a concomitant engagement in the European Union's CSFP and ESDP. The paper concludes that Poland's Atlanticism is likely to be toned down in the future as Poland becomes more focused on developing its policies in an EU context and in cooperation with individual member states.

Introduction

Since the early 1990s Poland has emerged as one of the United States's closest allies, arguably its protégé, in Central and Eastern Europe. After Washington became dedicated to pursuing the Eastern enlargement of NATO, America became the security guarantor that the Poles had craved since the late eighteenth century. For America, Poland represents a middle-sized power whose successes with building democracy and market reforms after 1990 mark it out from its regional peers, and especially from the states of former USSR. The United States also sees eye to eye with the Poles on a whole range of foreign policy issues, which was illustrated when Warsaw readily contributed troops to Kosovo, Afghanistan and especially Iraq where the Polish military contingent is the third largest (after the United States and the United Kingdom) and Poland took formal responsibility for one of the occupation zones. Consequently, especially in the period immediately after 11 September 2001, Poland appeared to be closer to the United States than many of its long-standing West European allies. Poland has also been praised and branded in the United States as a 'new European,' as opposed to the 'old Europeans' France and Germany, who opposed the United States's policy on Iraq. However, as will be shown in this paper, Poland's Atlanticism is becoming more questioning, and it is evolving in response to two major developments: Poland's EU membership and disappointment with America's leadership in Iraq.

The crisis in transatlantic relations that erupted post-9/11 presented Poland with a choice that it did not want to make. Warsaw subsequently based its response on two sorts of arguments, the first historical and the second a mixture of political and economic calculations based on a seemingly 'rational' cost-benefit assessment of the current situation. The first set of considerations is deeply entrenched in Polish strategic culture and as such it is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future but the immediate political calculations, which led Warsaw to become one of the United States's closest allies during the war in Iraq, could be challenged by a turn of events. It is argued here that this is exactly what has happened. The continuing lack of stability and meagre prospects for implanting democracy in Iraq, as well as the evident failure of Warsaw to secure some clear benefits from its loyalty towards the United States, prove that the immediate political and economic calculations that informed Warsaw's Atlanticist choice during the Iraq crisis were overplayed or even misguided. This development coincided with Warsaw's growing involvement in the EU – its participation in the Convention drawing up the draft Constitutional Treaty and EU enlargement in May 2004. Subsequently, Poland's former status as a 'friend of America' but an outsider in the context of the EU has been transformed, with considerable implications for Warsaw's attitude towards the European project. This has been evident in Warsaw's increasingly positive attitude towards the deepening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as developing the European Security and Defence Policy, as was seen during the constitutional debate.

This paper will show how Poland, whilst being an Atlanticist, is also, and increasingly so, a committed member of the European Union. These themes will be examined firstly by identifying what will be called here Poland's 'instinctive Atlanticism' in security matters, a predisposition derivative of Polish strategic culture. This instinctive Atlanticism will then be illustrated by examining the Polish position on Iraq and, to a lesser extent, the EU's CFSP and ESDP. The paper will, however, also argue that Poland's involvement in Iraq has been unrewarding, leading to the weakening of the domestic consensus on the general direction of Polish foreign policy. The paper will also identify the evolution of Poland's attitude towards the CFSP and ESDP – from a rather sceptical to a more embracing and forthcoming attitude. Finally, the paper with discuss the prospects for the further evolution of Poland's foreign and security policy, *inter alia* by considering the likely implications of the re-election of George W. Bush.

Understanding Poland's 'instinctive' Atlanticism

Polish-American relations have been consistently vibrant since the end of the Cold War, but particularly since Poland joined NATO in 1999, when the United States singled Poland out to be its most favoured partner in the East and began grooming Warsaw for this role in earnest. In summer 2001 during President George W. Bush's visit to Poland and then in the context of Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski's time in the United States in July 2002, the idea that Poland had become a regional leader was promoted and fleshed out. In Warsaw, where Bush chose to announce the United States's support for the second wave of NATO enlargement, a policy staunchly supported by the Poles, he described Poland as 'a bridge and a good example' for its neighbours to the east and the south.[1] Meanwhile, during Kwasniewski's three-day state visit to the United States in July 2002 the notion of a new form of regional security cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe to be led by Poland – the so-called 'Riga initiative' – was endorsed by Bush.[2] In its role as regional leader Poland also contributed 2,500 troops to operations in Iraq and is currently leading a multinational division, as part of the stabilisation force there.

A further manifestation of this Polish-American closeness with long term implications came when Warsaw announced in December 2002 that it was to accept a $3.8 billion loan from the US Congress to purchase 48 F-16s from Lockheed Martin. Not only was this development significant by virtue of it being the largest military loan in memory,[3] but importantly it demonstrated the unique closeness that has transpired between the two states and illustrates too the likely path the relationship was set to follow. To begin, Poland's choice of procuring US rather than European defence systems was a firm expression of Warsaw's Atlanticist credentials. Furthermore, as noted by the Polish Ambassador to the United States Przemyslaw Grudzinski, the purchase signified Poland's desire to become a 'mature member of NATO'. In the same interview Grudzinski commented that the United States needed partners in Europe and that 'Poland emerges as an excellent ally of the United States'.[4] The great symbolic value of the defence contract was explicit also in President Kwasniewski's speech to the West Point Military Academy during his working visit to the United States in January 2003. Kwasniewski applauded the United States's leading role in the world, stating that it is both 'unquestionable and that it should be exercised', moreover he saw a role for Poland to act jointly with the United States to ensure that Europe and the United States work effectively together in transatlantic security.[5] Poland's subsequent prominent role as one of the few allies of the United States in Iraq clearly demonstrated that its Atlanticism was not just declaratory, and that Warsaw was prepared to back its diplomacy with a substantial military contribution. The importance of Poland's place in America's foreign policy was also demon-

1 John Reed, 'Warsaw gives a powerful friend a warm welcome', *Financial Times,* 16/17 June 2001; 'Bedzie rozszerzenie NATO', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 June 2000.

2 'Poland to take advisory role with new Nato members', *American Forces Information Service*, 24 September 2002.

3 'Polish Pride, American Profits', *New York Times*, 12 January 2003.

4 Quoted in ibid.

5 'President Aleksander Kwasniewski pays a working visit to the USA'; http://http://www.president.pl/ser/index.php3?tem_ID=5382&kategoria=Last%20month.

strated during the recent presidential campaign in America. During televised debates President Bush referred to Poland's role in Iraq as proof of his ability to maintain international coalitions (flawlessly pronouncing the name of Poland's president 'Kwasniewski' on these occasions). At the same time senator John Kerry argued that the United States should have been more appreciative of Poland's role in Iraq.[6]

Overall, there is no doubt that Polish-American relations have been close since the end of the Cold War, and in particular since 9/11, when Poland emerged as one of the very few European countries prepared to unconditionally support American foreign policy. It is clear that strategic considerations play an essential role in this new intimacy in Polish-American relations. For Poland, the US presence in Europe provides reassurance against its powerful neighbours, whilst for the United States Poland is a friendly state located at the strategic boundary between Eastern and Western Europe. Having said this, these strategic considerations are bolstered, if not underpinned, by cultural and historical factors. These include the prominent role played by Polish generals Kosciuszko and Pulawski in the War of American Independence of 1776 and the ideological link between the American revolution and the failed reform of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the late eighteenth century. There is also a strong sense of gratitude in Poland for America's role in recreating the Polish state in 1918 (President Wilson's 14-point declaration) and in ending the Cold War. Finally, the two nations are directly linked by the presence of some 10 million Americans of Polish extraction, with Chicago being the biggest concentration of Poles outside Warsaw. Referring to these factors, the former American Ambassador to Poland, Christopher R. Hill, argued that 'the Poles and Americans have similar attitudes towards security and foreign policy in general, which is a consequence of our particular historical experiences.'[7] Although, as discussed later, Polish public opinion no longer supports US policy in Iraq, it is certainly true that there continues to exist a congruence of perspectives between Washington and Warsaw on some key security issues. For example, not unlike in America, there is also a general predisposition in Poland in favour of an interventionist foreign policy combined with a sceptical attitude towards multilateralism.[8]

In addition, there is also a strong sense in Poland, and indeed in many other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, that a close alliance with the United States is both beneficial for its security and at the same time enhancing for its position vis-à-vis other European partners. Only 15 years after regaining its sovereignty Poland continues to be uncertain of its place in Europe and determined to be recognised as a major European player. Retaining a close alliance with the United States is seen as conducive to these objectives. Consequently, unlike many West European states, Poland does not seek to constrain American hegemony, in fact Warsaw conceives it as its interest that the United States maintains and pursues its powerful position, as seen in Kwasniewski's speech at West Point.

The Poles, as well as many other Central and East European nations, are reconciled with the notion that they are unable to provide for their own security, consequently, they accept a hegemonic international system, so long as the hegemon is liberal-democratic and is not a nearby state. In addition, since until 2004 Poland was in NATO but outside the EU there was a strong inclination in Warsaw, particularly within circles of security experts, to perceive the relationship with the United States as more inclusive than their relations with Brussels.

6 However, Kerry failed to mention Poland as one of the United States's allies in Iraq, which could have been a factor affecting voting preferences of some 10 million Americans of Polish extraction. For Kerry's views on relations with Poland in the context of Iraq, see an interview reported in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 October 2004.

7 Interview with Christopher Hill, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 December 2002.

8 See 'Transatlantic Trends 2004', German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004.

Poland's strategic culture: the past in the present

To understand Poland's preoccupation with security and the notion of inclusion/exclusion it is necessary to grasp the essence of Poland's strategic culture as rooted in its geopolitical history. Poland's position between Germany and Russia/the Soviet Union was in the past a source of threat to the Polish state and a major reason for its collapse in the late eighteenth century and again in 1939. This turbulent history marked by inherent insecurity and vulnerability to external aggression, coupled with its current position as a state bordering the former Soviet Union, means that Poland's security policies remain strongly concerned with, if not fixated on, the issue of territorial defence. Consequently, Warsaw decided to apply for NATO membership as early as 1992 – a policy which quickly became underpinned by a broad political consensus, including the former communists.[9] Unsurprisingly, there remains a strong preference in Poland for an American-led NATO which is able to honour its commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Warsaw's Eastern policies are also shaped by historical experience and thus on occasion appear quite distinct from the policies of its West European partners. In particular, Poland's policy towards the East is characterised by strong support for the newly independent states between itself and Russia.[10] Poland has been the major advocate of efforts to anchor Ukraine and Lithuania in the West; it supported the pro-independence movement in Belarus and promoted NATO's enlargement beyond its eastern borders. On all of these issues Poland was supported by Washington, whilst its European allies were initially reticent about greater involvement in Ukraine or Belarus. A further defining tenet of Polish strategic culture, which gels with current American security thinking, is a disposition towards favouring proactive engagement when confronted with the threat of regional instability. This derives from an enduring facet of Polish identity – having been a victim of West European pacifism in the form of French and British appeasement policy towards Hitler and the subsequent failure of France and Britain to actively defend Poland in September 1939. This disposition translated clearly and directly into Polish policy and public opinion which unambiguously supported NATO's engagement in Kosovo and the United States's operation in Afghanistan.[11] The Polish view on military action in Iraq was admittedly more split (as was opinion in the United Kingdom), though as noted earlier, élite support in Poland for Washington's policy on the issue and the role of the UN remained strong throughout the conflict.

A third characteristic of Polish strategic culture already alluded to is a rather ambivalent position towards multilateral security institutions (with the notable exception of NATO), which are perceived in Poland with a certain amount of scepticism and utilitarianism, not dissimilar to the US perspective. There remains a strong Polish conviction that the prewar League of Nations proved unable to prevent the

9 Stuart Croft et al., 'The Enlargement of NATO', in *The Enlargement of Europe* (Manchester and New York: MUP, 1999).

10 According to Antonio Missiroli the fear of Russia constitutes the most distinctive feature of Poland's, as well as the Baltic states' Atlanticism. See Antonio Missiroli, 'The Central Europeans Between the EU and NATO', *Survival*, vol. 46, no. 4, Winter 2004.

11 Olaf Osica, 'In Search of New Role. Poland vis-à-vis Euro-Atlantic Relations', in Marcin Zaborowski and David Dunn, *Poland – A New Power in Transatlantic Security*, a special edition of *Defence Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 21-39.

outbreak of the Second World War and effectively strengthened German revisionism in Central Europe. The UN is perceived in more favourable terms but is charged with having been unable to prevent the emergence of the Cold War status quo, which left Poland on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain. This Polish scepticism towards the primacy of international law and the UN was clearly demonstrated during the NATO operation in Kosovo. Unlike in Germany, no debate about the illegality of NATO action – which did not have a UN mandate – seriously emerged in Poland.[12]

Since Poland joined NATO in 1999 these strategic cultural predispositions – a preference for a strong US-led Alliance; a commitment to reforms in Ukraine and Belarus and in turn a further eastward enlargement of NATO; a lack of faith in multilateral security institutions save for NATO and a proclivity to use force proactively – have rendered Warsaw a firm member of the Atlanticist wing of the alliance and a feisty adherent of the US position on almost all recent foreign policy issues. Two particular areas where Warsaw either came to support Washington's position or found its own position in accordance with that of the United States were the war in Iraq and, initially, ESDP.

12 Ibid.

The Iraq war – from enthusiastic endorsement to disappointment

Whilst Atlanticism has been an apparent feature of Polish foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, the level of Poland's support for US action in Iraq surprised many of its European allies, causing irritation in Berlin and Paris and earning Poland the dubious title of 'America's Trojan donkey'.[13] In fact, even some traditional promoters of Poland's Atlanticist orientation, like Zbigniew Brzezinski, expressed criticism regarding what he called 'a too-excessive and divisive demonstration of loyalty', which he saw as unnecessary and damaging to Poland's relations with Germany and France.[14] Overall, Poland's position during the Iraq crisis has been distinguished by the three following policies:

- signing the 'letter of the 8', which supported US policy on Iraq and was perceived as defying the Franco-German position;[15]
- Polish special units fighting under US command during the combat operation in Iraq;
- Poland contributing 2,500 troops to the stabilisation force and taking chief responsibility for one of the four occupation zones in south-central Iraq since September 2003.

With the exception of the United Kingdom, none of America's allies offered a comparable level of support. Although the cost of transporting Polish troops to Iraq has been covered by the United States, it is extraordinary that Poland has kept 2,500 troops there and has taken upon itself the responsibility for stabilising almost a quarter of that country since September 2003. It is also worth pointing out that, next to Britain, Poland was the only European ally of the United States where a considerable political consensus held on the issue at the time of the invasion of Iraq. The main opposition parties supported the Government's decision to send troops to Iraq, with objections being voiced by the fringe parties, the populist Samoobrona (Self-defence) and the far-right LPR (League of Polish Families).[16] Whilst it is true that public opinion was divided over the war, Poland experienced no mass anti-war demonstrations and certainly nothing on the scale remotely comparable with that seen in other countries supportive of Washington's policy, like Britain or Spain.[17]

This unprecedented behaviour in Europe begs the question about the reasons that drove such a staunch response from the Government, as well as the lack of a credible domestic opposition to what turned out to be a risky and radical policy. It is clear that Poland's rationale for engaging in Iraq was heavily flavoured by its regional specificity and as such was distinctive from the motives of the United States or even the United Kingdom, although there are some similarities with the latter case. For example, the overwhelming rationale in America of seeing Iraq in the context of the war on terrorism and the events of 9/11 had little or no resonance in Poland. At this point Poland was not targeted by terrorist networks and had traditionally good

13 'Is Poland America's donkey or could it become NATO's horse?', *The Economist*, 10 May 2003.

14 Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski ' Przez glupote i fanatyzm', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 October 2003; see also 'Zbigniew Brzezinski dla Rzeczpospolitej', *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 April 2003.

15 'Europe and America must stand united' – letter by the '8', 30 January 2003.

16 'Sejm:Miller o udziale Polakow w silach sojuszniczych w Iraku', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 March 2003; 'Debata o Iraku w Sejmie: szczyty absurdu', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 April 2004.

17 John Springford, 'Old' and 'New' Europeans united: public attitudes towards the Iraq war and US foreign policy', *Centre for European Reform-Background Brief*; http://www.cer.org.uk.

relations with most Arab countries, including Iraq. If anything, the decision to join the US-led coalition only increased Poland's vulnerability to international terrorism, as indeed shown by Osama bin Laden's decision to include Poland on his list of al-Qaeda's primary targets.

Nor was the Government's decision driven principally by the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) issue. Whilst this argument was emphasised in the United States, and even more so in the United Kingdom and Spain, Iraq's alleged possession of WMDs was rarely mentioned in the Polish debate.[18] The issue simply has not figured as a 'clear and present danger' and has been a remote concern in current Polish security thinking. Finally, unlike the United States and United Kingdom, Poland never had geopolitical or major economic interests in the area. Whilst Polish companies were present in the area in the 1970s and 1980s and Iraq owes a considerable amount of money to Poland, this past economic presence was too small to weigh on Warsaw's decision.

On the whole, unlike the cases of the United States and the United Kingdom, there was no justification for Poland's involvement in terms of responding to a direct threat.[19] Also, expectations of material and political profit were initially rare, although, as will be argued later, this has since changed. Instead, the arguments that dominated the Polish debate have been predominantly historical and moral in nature. There is, for example, no doubt that the most important rationale driving Polish policy on the matter was a demonstration of Poland's loyalty and ability to be 'America's model ally'.[20] Due to its past geopolitical vulnerability, Poland has been keen to develop a relationship of reciprocal obligation with the United States whereby both countries would support each other in time of need. Seen in this context, Poland's support for the United States during the Iraq crisis appears, in fact, aimed at developing a sense of obligation and responsibility for Poland's security in America.[21]

The second vital argument concerned the preservation of NATO and, more broadly, transatlantic bonds. Again due to historical reasons – seeing itself as a victim of the European balance of power – Poland sees the continuing presence of the United States in Europe as a guarantor of its own security. In this context, Poland, similarly to the United Kingdom, would be prepared to go to great lengths to discourage the United States from disengaging, not to mention withdrawing, from Europe. Hence, like the United Kingdom, Poland believed that its involvement in Iraq would achieve this.[22]

The third set of arguments was moral, and concerned with disposing of the human rights abusing regime and bringing democracy to Iraq. Both the president and the foreign minister argued that, due to its own past as a communist state, Poland had special responsibility to support the spread of democracy to other parts of the world.[23] It was often pointed out in this context that in the past Poles themselves had been denied democratic freedoms and had often called for a more active role from the West in opposing their autocratic government. It was therefore natural for the Poles to believe that most Iraqis wanted to get rid of Saddam, and that they would welcome any outside help in this process.

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18 Although the WMD was referred to by President Kwasniewski this usually took place when speaking to the foreign press; see, for example, the President's interview with the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29 September 2002.

19 See transcript from President's press conference following the beginning of the invasion of Iraq: 'Prezydent RP o dzialaniach w Iraku', 20 March 2004; http://www.president.pl.

20 David H. Dunn, 'Poland : America's New Model Ally', in Marcin Zaborowski and David H. Dunn (eds.), *Poland – A New Power in Transatlantic Security* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

21 See the article justifying Poland's role in Iraq by Foreign Minister Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, 'Irak to takze nasza sprawa', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 May 2004.

22 See the article mentioned above as well as an interview with President Kwasniewski for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 April 2004.

23 See the article by Foreign Minister Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, 'Irak to takze nasza sprawa', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 May 2004, and President Kwasniewski's interview for *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29 September 2002.

Fourthly, the Polish position needs to be seen against the background of a broader split within Europe and Poland's preoccupation with being considered as one of the 'ins' in the EU process. Two developments were important in this context: the Franco-German position as opponents of the war in Iraq and Poland's relative isolation within the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Franco-German opposition to the war and a priori rejection of a second UN resolution on Iraq prompted a fear in Poland, and indeed in other European capitals, that their influence was being reduced and the EU security foreign policy agenda determined by two states.[24] At the same time, Poland's ambition to be represented within the Convention's secretariat was thwarted and its defence of the Nice vote-weighting system was only endorsed by Spain. These policy developments fed into the paradigm of 'exclusion and inclusion' in Polish security thinking and consequently influenced Warsaw's decision to sign the 'letter of the 8', which was widely perceived as defying the Franco-German attempt to speak for the whole of the EU. Rather than following the anti-war camp, Poland chose to side with what appeared at the time a more inclusive United States. It was subsequently suggested in this context that Poland, as one of the most vociferous and consistent supporters of American foreign policy and of solidarity between the United States and Europe, was likely to be among the group of states shaping the new Europe and its foreign policy.[25]

In addition to these political and often historically informed calculations, there were also some expectations of material benefits from Poland's military involvement in Iraq. These included securing privileged access for Polish companies in the reconstruction of Iraq and rearmament of the new Iraqi army. It was also widely expected that America would recognise Poland's status as its close ally and change its immigration rules towards Polish citizens by removing the visa requirement.[26]

Disappointment over Iraq

Over a year after Poland took responsibility for security in south-central Iraq much of the Government's early confidence, self-righteousness and optimism have subsided or disappeared altogether. Iraq continues to be highly unstable, a growing number of Polish troops have been killed and very few of the expected benefits have actually materialised. In September 2004 the vast majority of Poles, over 70 per cent, wanted Polish troops to be pulled out of Iraq.[27] Whilst as of autumn 2004 a basic cross-party consensus on staying in has none the less prevailed, the issue is fast becoming a political one, with some opposition parties (not only the LPR and Samoobrona but also the PSL-Polish Popular Alliance and perhaps even the co-governing UP-Labour Union) being prepared to use it during the forthcoming elections.[28]

On top of the continuously bad situation in Iraq it is also apparent that the Government failed to convince the population that staying in Iraq is in Poland's interest. Whilst historical and moral arguments, as outlined above, may appeal to elites, they do not easily translate into 'bread and butter' issues, which is what the majority of

24 See Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 94-5; 'Who Speaks for Europe?', *The Economist*, 8 February 2003.

25 See President Kwasniewski's interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 April 2004.

26 'Polish President Appeals for a More "Open and Gracious" US', *New York Times*, 4 September 2004.

27 '73 proc. Polakow przeciwnych obecnosci w Iraku', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5 August 2004; see also *Transatlantic Trends 2004*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004.

28 The UP argued in favour of the troops withdrawal till the end of 2004 (see: 'Jaruga-Nowacka:powrot z Iraku w 2004', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 May 2004), whilst the PSL turned its opposition to the Polish presence in Iraq into a central point of its campaign (see 'PSL zbiera podpisy przeciwko obecnosci w Iraku', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 August 2004).

the electorate are really interested in. And it is apparent that Poland's involvement in Iraq has brought very few tangible results: only a handful of Polish companies have been involved in the reconstruction programmes, a major arms company, Bumar, lost the notoriously un-transparent bid for the rearmament of the new Iraqi force and, perhaps most painfully, Poles still need visas when travelling to the United States – it is actually harder to get one now.[29]

As the situation in Iraq has worsened, these pragmatic issues have moved to the forefront of the debate, uniting the critics as well as supporters of the war. For example, the centre-right opposition parties, PO (Civic Platform) and PiS (Law and Justice), which voted in favour of sending troops to Iraq, have maintained their early position but criticised the Government's failure to secure any tangible benefits from Poland's involvement in Iraq.[30] Reacting to this domestic criticism, the president and the Government have sought to exercise some direct pressure on Washington. But when President Kwasniewski raised the visa issue with George Bush, it was made clear to him that his query was bordering on inappropriate and that no change of policy was going to happen. Disappointed, Kwasniewski argued then that he was 'hurt' by the visa decision and that as 'a friend of America' he did not understand it. He also appealed for a more 'gracious' and 'less divisive' America.[31]

But, perhaps even more devastatingly for the Government, developments since the beginning of the Iraq war seem to undermine the validity of some of the historical and moral arguments, as outlined above, which guided Poland's policy choice in 2003. There is, for example, little evidence that Polish and British loyalty to the United States prevented a split in the transatlantic alliance and helped to sustain America's commitment to European security. Poland's plans to engage Germany and then NATO in its zone in northern Iraq have largely failed, leading to further tensions rather than an improvement in transatlantic relations.[32] In the meantime, the United States announced plans for the mass reduction of its military presence in Europe. Also the moral argument of bringing democracy and human rights to Iraq is no longer sustainable in the light of the scandal over the abuse of Iraqis in Abu-Ghraib prison.

Overall, it is clear that, one year on, the case for Poland's involvement in Iraq is weaker. This is evident not only in the attitude of public opinion and increasingly in party politics but also within the Government itself. Following mounting casualties among Polish servicemen in late summer and autumn 2004, Prime Minister Belka and Defence Minister Szmajdzinski announced a progressive reduction of the Polish contingent in Iraq. In October 2004 Szmajdzinski went further and expressed the view that the entire Polish contingent should withdraw, irrespective of the situation in Iraq, by the end of 2005 following the expiry of UN resolution 1546, which legitimised the presence of the multinational force in Iraq.[33] Although Szmajdzinski's declaration turned out to be premature and was not made in consultation with the Prime Minister, the Government admitted that it had indeed considered the possibility of pulling out of Iraq in 2005.[34] A more critical view of the United States and its Iraq policy has also emerged in the attitude of President

29 'Pulaski by wizy nie dostal', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 January 2004; 'Zapomniec o wizach', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 August 2004.

30 'Z Iraku na Wiejska', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2 September 2004.

31 'Polish President Appeals for a More "Open and Gracious" US', *New York Times*, 4 September 2004.

32 'Niemcy-Rzad wyklucza udzial trojstronnego korpusu w Iraku', *PAP*, 7 May 2004.

33 'Poland unexpectedly says troops may quit in 2005', *International Herald Tribune*, 5 October 2004; for the original interview with Szmajdzinski, see *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 October 2004.

34 'Awantura o date', *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 October 2004.

Kwasniewski – until recently a staunch supporter of Washington's foreign policy. For example, in March 2004 Kwasniewski caused a storm by announcing at a press conference that 'Poland was misled' over the WMD issue.[35] A few months later, in an interview for the *New York Times*, the President criticised the influence of neo-conservatives in Bush's administration and warned the United States against the folly of unilateralism.[36]

But do the Government's recent difficulties mean that, like Spain, Poland may turn out to be an occasional Atlanticist and change its foreign policy in a radical manner? This is unlikely. However, the Iraq crisis was the first case when Poland experienced the perils of American leadership and hegemony, which effectively meant the end of the honeymoon period for the relationship. It is already apparent that the Iraq experience has eroded the Atlanticist tenets of Polish strategic culture, as demonstrated, for example, in the weakening political consensus on the issue. It is also clear that disappointment over Iraq has been one of the factors fostering the evolution of Warsaw's attitude towards CFSP and ESDP, which has been increasingly positive.

35 In his subsequent interview Kwasniewski argued that he should have said 'ill-informed' rather than 'duped' and that he did not mean to criticise the United States but the intelligence community (American, British and Polish) for providing false evidence; see *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 April 2004.

36 'Polish President Appeals for a More "Open and Gracious" US', *New York Times*, 4 September 2004.

Polish policy towards CFSP and ESDP

Warsaw's attitude towards the EU's CFSP and ESDP has undergone a considerable evolution over the last few years. Initially there was a clear tendency in Poland to regard the EU's international ambitions with scepticism and lack of enthusiasm.[37] However, more recently and especially since Poland's accession to the EU in May 2004, the Polish position has become more constructive, though it remains heavily flavoured by its Atlanticist, pro-American commitments. In addition to the growing disappointment with Washington's leadership, as discussed above, three factors can be identified as having a defining influence on the evolution of the Polish view of CFSP and ESDP: the issue of inclusion and exclusion, an ambivalent attitude towards the *directoire* method and Poland's eastern policy.

5.1 From scepticism to cautious enthusiasm

With the first wave of NATO's Eastern enlargement in March 1999, and having previously secured the status of associate member of the Western European Union (WEU), it seemed that the days when Poland was excluded from core decisions concerning European security were finally over. However, only three months later it seemed that the goal posts were being moved when EU leaders met in Cologne and decided to embark upon creating a Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which would leave non-EU NATO states, like Poland, 'consulted' but crucially 'excluded' from the actual decision-making process. Warsaw did not like the idea and was not shy in saying so. Some Polish commentators went as far as to argue that ESDP would lead to America's withdrawal from Europe and the return of interwar-type instability in Europe.[38] Rather calmer but clearly unenthusiastic about the whole enterprise, the defence minister remarked that 'there is no point crying over spilt milk'.[39]

Warsaw's reservations about ESDP were at this point based on two types of concerns. First, Warsaw argued that Europeans should develop their defence capabilities within NATO's European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), otherwise the EU would be duplicating existing structures, which would weaken the Alliance. Second, Warsaw argued that the planned ESDP excluded those European NATO members who, like Poland, remained outside the EU at that point in time.[40] It was argued in this context that NATO's ESDI was more inclusive, as it involved Poland and other non-EU Europeans in their capacities as full members of the Alliance and associate members of WEU.[41]

Consequently, the Polish reaction to the EU decision to set up headline goals for the creation of a 50-60,000-strong rapid reaction force, as agreed in Helsinki in December 1999, was cool

37 'NATO: Otwarty konflikt miedzy USA i Europa', *Rzeczpospolita*, 6 December 2000.

38 Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, 'Czy NATO jest zagrozone', *Rzeczpospolita*,15 May 2001.

39 Quoted in Olaf Osica, 'CESDP as Seen by Poland', *Reports and Analyses* 5/01, Centre for International Relations, Warsaw (http://www.csm.org.pl), p. 8.

40 Rafal Trzaskowski, 'Poland', in Antonio Missiroli (ed.). 'Bigger EU, wider CFSP, stronger ESDP?', *Occasional Papers* 34 (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, April 2002).

41 Osica, 'CESDP as Seen by Poland', pp. 12-13.

42 Art. 28 Helsinki European Council: Presidency Conclusions, Press Release 00300/1/99, Brussels, 11 December 1999.

and critical.[42] The summit's conclusion stressed that non-EU NATO states, the so-called 'six', would be able to contribute militarily to EU crisis management missions, however this formula lacked any reference to participation in decision-making and was consequently viewed by Warsaw as not sufficiently inclusive.[43] In addition, the summit failed to differentiate between the six and other 'interested states', specifically mentioning in the latter context Russia and Ukraine.[44] Not only, therefore, were Polish fears of exclusion seemingly confirmed but also the wording of the presidency's conclusions gave rise to speculation that whilst ESDP could undermine NATO it might also become a platform for Russian influence in European security.[45]

Poland's generally sceptical position on ESDP was seen in governmental statements. Defence Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz criticised the EU plan as unclear and lacking in military and operational viability.[46] In his annual address (exposé) to Parliament in May 2000, Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek expressed disappointment with the EU for not considering Warsaw's proposals for involving the six in ESDP decision-making mechanisms. Geremek also called for a further strengthening of transatlantic ties, for which purpose, he argued, Europeans should concentrate on the actual 'requirements of security' rather than on creating new institutions.[47] A similar criticism also came from the military, who assessed the EU's plans to create a rapid reaction force as either unrealistic or, worse, potentially weakening NATO's military cohesion.[48]

In the first few months following the Helsinki summit, disagreements between the EU and the group of six grew further. On the one hand, France was pushing for the EU to develop a planning capacity independent of NATO, which confirmed Warsaw's fears that ESDP might be politicised and eventually duplicate NATO. On the other hand, Turkey, a member of the six, vetoed any possible use of NATO assets by future European forces. This standstill was not tackled until the Feira summit in June 2000, for which occasion Poland submitted its own proposal envisaging the more comprehensive involvement of the six in ESDP.[49] With active support from the United Kingdom, most of the Polish proposals were agreed in Feira and shortly afterwards.[50] As a result, a '15+6' committee was created with the purpose of discussing ESDP issues between EU member states and non-EU European NATO members. The six were also given an opportunity to take part in the Political and Security Committee (PSC).[51] Poland was also able to establish channels of communication with the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and Military Staff (EUMS), both of which are more concerned with the actual military capacities, acting as links between the EU and member states' military resources.[52]

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43 Author's interview at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of European Security, Warsaw January 2001; see Roman Kuzniar, 'Nadmiar wizji, brak konkretow', *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no .41, 2000.

44 See Annex IV, Presidency Progress Report to the Helsinki European Council on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence.

45 Nowak-Jezioranski, 'Czy NATO jest zagrozone', *Rezczpospolita*, 15 May 2001.

46 Osica, 'CESDP as Seen by Poland', p. 14.

47 Speech given by Bronislaw Geremek, at the 78th Session of the Parliament on 9 May 2000; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

48 See Trzaskowski, 'Poland', p. 20.

49 See 'Propozycje praktycznego rozwiniecia postanowien z Feira w zakresie wspolpracy pomiedzy UE i non-EU European Allies'; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

50 Confidential interviews, Warsaw, January 2001; see also 'Poland Feels Torn Between 2 Alliances', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 June 2000.

51 'Propozycje praktycznego rozwiniecia postanowien z Feira w zakresie wspolpracy pomiedzy UE i non-EU European Allies', http://www.msz.gov.pl.

52 See Longhurst, 'From Security Consumer to Security Provider', in M. Zaborowski and D. Dunn, *Poland – A New Power in Transatlantic Security*, a special edition of *Defence Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 50-62.

Overall, the atmosphere around the ESDP substantially improved after Feira. With Turkey's unconstructive behaviour in the background, the EU seemed to appreciate that Warsaw had made an effort to bridge the gap between the EU-15 and the non-EU-6. And Warsaw was indeed anxious not to alienate the EU as membership negotiations entered the most intensive phase from 2001 onwards.[53]

The change of government from centre-right to centre-left in autumn 2001 had no discernible impact upon Warsaw's European policy, its attitudes towards the CFSP and ESDP included. However, developments in transatlantic and European security in reaction to the events of 9/11 prompted a change in Poland's view of the EU as a security actor. In particular, three factors came to play a role in this process: the waning importance of NATO, EU enlargement and the leadership question in the context of European security.

5.2 The impact of 9/11 and EU enlargement

In the face of America's snub of NATO during its campaign in Afghanistan and the Bush administration's proclivity to rely on 'coalitions of the willing', Warsaw had every reason to wonder whether its reliance on the Alliance, pronounced as a cornerstone of Poland's security, was in fact sustainable.[54] At the same time, in Europe, Tony Blair invited President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder to work out a coordinated agenda for the EU response to the events of 9/11.[55] Although this initiative brought few tangible results and soon after their meeting the three leaders fell out over Iraq, the mere prospect of a European *directoire*, from which they would be excluded, was unwelcome to the Poles.

Warsaw's greatest fear was that, as America lost interest in Europe and NATO, its role would be replaced by a club of the privileged and most powerful member states, with Poland's influence marginalised, as had been the case during the interwar period.[56] Warsaw's readiness to join the 'coalition of the willing' and become one of America's closest allies in Iraq should, in part, also be seen in this context. But more importantly here, perhaps paradoxically, the deepening of the CFSP, through the moderate and qualified extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), came to be seen in Warsaw as a possible instrument to counterbalance the emergence of a 'Europe of great powers' as well as enhancing European security through a more developed ESDP. Warsaw, however, stressed that CFSP should have a strong transatlantic identity, whilst ESDP should concern itself with developing capabilities rather than institutions.[57]

Despite these reservations, a change of attitude in Warsaw towards CFSP and ESDP became apparent, no doubt partly in response to disappointment with American leadership in Iraq. It was also apparent that Warsaw used its pro-CFSP/ESDP views to counterbalance the criticism from those member states that accused Poland of disloyalty towards the EU. For example, in March 2003 at the height of the falling-out over Iraq, shortly after President's Chirac rebuke of Central and East Europeans for their pro-US stance, Polish Foreign Minister Cimoszewicz outlined Warsaw's vision for the future of CFSP that, while stressing the value of transatlantic relations, was also in favour of deeper integration in the area. Reflecting Warsaw's preoccupation with inclusion, the speech underlined the principle of equality of all member states irrespective of their size or potential.

53 Author's interviews in Warsaw, June 2001; see also 'Poland Feels Torn Between 2 Alliances', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 June 2000.

54 The central role of NATO is emphasised in the Polish National Security Strategy (November 2003); http://www.bbn.gov.pl.

55 'Guess who wasn't coming to dinner?' *The Economist*, 10 November 2001; 'Power to the Capitals', *Financial Times*, 15 October 2001.

56 See the paper by Foreign Minister Wlodzimiesz Cimoszewicz, 'Polska w zamecie swiata', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 June 2004.

57 'Future of the CFSP – lecture by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland Wlodzimiesz Cimoszewicz at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Berlin, 12 March 2003'; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

Cimoszewicz also supported the creation of the post of EU foreign minister with broad responsibilities including some first-pillar issues as well as the moderate extension of QMV in CFSP matters and in the implementation phase of ESDP. The foreign minister also supported the establishment of a European Armaments Agency, although he stressed that it should remain open to transatlantic armaments cooperation.[58]

In its subsequent pronouncements, the Government welcomed the pro-integrationist proposals that emerged in the context of the Convention drafting the EU constitution. The Government was particularly forthcoming in the CFSP area, supporting all major proposals put forward by Jean-Luc Dehaene's working group, including the idea of a 'double-hatted' foreign minister with enhanced authority and a foot in both the Council and the Commission. Warsaw also supported the notion of empowering the EU with legal personality and establishing an EU diplomatic service,[59] and endorsed the idea of developing an EU security strategy.[60]

Warsaw's attitude towards the proposals that came up in the context of Michel Barnier's working group on ESDP was more qualified but none the less still overall forthcoming. Here, Warsaw supported the creation of an EU Armaments and Research Agency (which it has since joined) and despite its initial objections it eventually came round to supporting the inclusion of the mutual defence (*solidarity*) clause.[61] Some reservations emerged in the context of discussions concerning the idea of *enhanced cooperation*, where Warsaw stressed the need for this proposal to be *inclusive* in character, yet Poland proved to be more willing to accept the notion than other Central and East European candidates.[62] Whilst Poland consistently stressed the need to respect and maintain the role of NATO, it made several pronouncements suggesting its openness towards the idea of enhancing EU autonomous planning capacities and it supported the British proposal to install a European planning cell at the NATO headquarters (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium.[63] Overall there was a clear recognition amongst the Polish delegation that the EU needed its own defence capabilities, which, although complementary to NATO, should be deployable autonomously of the United States.[64]

The growing embrace of CFSP and ESDP has also become apparent in Poland's attitude towards the European Security Strategy (ESS). The strategy was generally welcomed in Poland and received praise for its reasonable and bold language, its holistic approach to security and its appreciation of the value of transatlantic relations. The Poles were also satisfied with the prospect of the EU becoming a global actor, not shying away from international activity including the use of force. In fact, the prevailing view in Poland was that the provisions for the use of force should be strengthened by decoupling them from a mandate of the UN Security Council. Warsaw also pushed, unsuccessfully, for the inclusion of a separate paragraph on transat-

58 Ibid.

59 'Remarks by Mrs Danuta Huebner, Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of Poland, at the Conference on New Scenarios for European CFSP, 23 September 2003'.

60 Fraser Cameron and Antoinette Primatarova, 'Enlargement, CFSP and the Convention', *European Policy Institute Network Working Paper* no. 5, June 2003; http://www.epin.org.

61 'Flexible Integration in the Area of CFSP/ESDP. Debates on the Provisions of the Draft Constitutional Treaty' (Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna, September 2004).

62 Ibid.

63 'Remarks by Mrs Danuta Huebner, Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of Poland, at the Conference on New Scenarios for European CFSP, 23 September 2003'.

64 Cameron and Primatarova, 'Enlargment, CFSP and the Convention'.

65 Olaf Osica, 'A Secure Poland in a Better Union? EUSS as Seen by Poland', paper submitted to the on-line series of Trier University on national perspectives on European Security Strategy.

lantic relations.[65] However, despite these reservations, there is a clear recognition in Poland that the strategy promotes a stronger and internationally more active EU, which is increasingly seen as compatible with Poland's interests. This view is strongly supported by public opinion, 77 per cent of which, the highest percentage in Europe, believes that Europe should acquire more military power to be able to protect its interests separately from the United States.[66]

The future evolution of Warsaw's attitude towards the CFSP and ESDP will, to an important extent, depend on the further development of flexible integration in these areas and Poland's position on issues such as *structured cooperation* or *enhanced cooperation* or indeed any other security-related initiatives set up outside the remits of the existing treaties.

5.3 A member of a European leading group?

Poland has traditionally opposed the principle of flexible integration, on the grounds that it would create 'a union within the union' and was likely to serve as an instrument for excluding new member states from vital decisions within the EU. Hence Poland's initial reluctance to endorse the proposals emerging in the context of the Convention on the Future of Europe, which, like *enhanced cooperation*, served to accommodate greater flexibility. Indeed the threat of a 'two-speed Europe' was often used by other member states, Germany in particular, to pressurise Warsaw into accepting a double-majority voting system as designed in the Convention.[67]

As noted earlier, Warsaw also reacted with scepticism towards the prospect of an emerging Franco-British-German *directoire* as a leading group in European security matters. Poland's scepticism towards the notion was apparent in its view of the trio's initiative in Iran, which, according to the Poles, should have also included Secretary-General and High Representative Javier Solana.[68] Warsaw also sharply criticised the trio's internal discussions over the IGC 2003 issues such as those held at the summit on 18 February 2004.[69]

However, Poland's attitude towards the idea of flexible integration or closer cooperation amongst a group of bigger member states began to evolve as soon as it became clear that Poland could actually be one of the 'ins'. Rather ironically, the event that proved to accommodate the change in Poland's attitude was its prominent role in Iraq, which made the Poles believe that they could be able to play in Europe's 'first division'.[70] At the same time other member states, whilst often irritated by Poland's behaviour, came to see Warsaw as a natural member of the European leading group. These two factors combined have prompted a change in Poland's attitude towards the idea of structured cooperation, which became wholly positive as expectations were raised that Poland could be amongst the élite group of member states launching the initiative. Poland also welcomed the Council's suggestion to create 'battle groups'. On 22 November 2004 it was announced that Poland would become the major contributor to a battle group to be formed jointly with Germany, with a smaller troop contribution from Slovakia, to be operational by 2009.

In addition to these formal arrangements, there is also a growing possibility of Poland's involvement in informal arrangements among the group of biggest member states. In June 2004, Nicolas Sarkozy, then France's Finance Minister and likely presidential contender in 2007, stirred controversy by arguing that France must move away from an 'exclusive' dialogue

66 'Transatlantic Trends 2004', German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004.

67 'Flexible Integration in the Area of CFSP/ESDP', p. 20.

68 Confidential interviews, Brussels, October 2004.

69 'Flexible Integration in the Area of CFSP/ESDP', p. 27.

70 Ibid., p. 29.

with Germany and work with other big states including the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Poland.[71] A few weeks later a similar view was also expressed by Edmund Stoiber, the leader of Germany's CSU and Gerhard Schröder's chief opponent in the 2002 elections.[72] Whilst Poland has not officially endorsed these ideas, not least because during the row over the vote-weighing system it portrayed itself as a champion of smaller states, it is none the less readily participating in informal consultations among the six biggest states.

It is, however, important to stress that Poland's general predisposition towards flexibility and cooperation with big member states is likely to be marked by ambivalence in the foreseeable future. This will continue to be the case for two reasons: Poland's size and its economic weakness. With a population of just under 40 million, Poland is the most populous new member state, but in the EU as a whole it is only just a medium-sized power. The difference between 'big' and 'medium' came to play a decisive role during the conflict over the vote-weighing system with the four biggest states, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, having evidently different interests from Poland and Spain. It is also clear that due to its economic underdevelopment Poland will continue to opt for a larger budget for the EU, in which it will find itself in conflict with the richer member states, including the big four. The combination of Poland's size and its economic interests also mean that, unlike the big four, Poland is not a natural intergovernmentalist and a supporter of the stronger Council of Ministers. For example, as far as the EU's budget is concerned, it is the Commission that is Poland's natural ally.

On the other hand, whilst Poland's general predisposition towards teaming up with the big four may be more problematic that it seems, the same does not necessarily apply to second-pillar issues – the CFSP and ESDP – where indeed the prospects of closer cooperation with the big four and Spain are brighter. Much will depend here on Poland's actual military capabilities and its determination to reform its armed forces. So far Poland lacks the necessary strategic airlift capacities that would allow it to act as a 'framework nation' in an EU mission. Although the number of Polish troops based in Iraq (2,500) or indeed in other parts of the world (altogether around 10,000) is considerable by European standards, it is important to point out that in most cases Poland has relied on other countries' transport capacities. The same reason hindered Poland's ability to form its own battle group or act as a framework nation in such an initiative.[73] However, given the public support in Poland for increased defence spending, the Polish government is relatively free to modernise its armed forces should it choose to do so.[74]

The other area which will weigh heavily on Poland's view of CFSP is the EU's ability to play an active role in Poland's eastern neighbourhood and, crucially, in relations with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. Equally, perhaps, Poland's relative importance in the EU as well as in relations with the United State may depend on its ability to carve out a regional niche for itself.

5.4 Eastern policy

Eastern policy is one of the most distinctive and most innovative features of Poland's post-1989 foreign policy. Heavily influenced by the concepts developed during the Cold War by the émigré Jerzy Giedroyc and his associates from the Paris-based journal *Kultura*, the new Eastern policy rests on three pillars: renouncing territorial claims against Poland's eastern neighbours,

71 'Sarkozy questions axis with Germany', *Financial Times*, 22 June 2004.

72 'Szostka zamiast osi niemiecko-francuskiej', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 July 2004.

73 Confidential interviews, Brussels, October 2004.

74 According to recent opinion polls, 41 per cent of Poles are in favour of increasing defence spending, which is by far the highest such proportion in Europe with the next one in line, United Kingdom, registering 28 per cent of the population in favour of increased spending in 2004. See 'Transatlantic Trends 2004', German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004.

supporting independence, state and nation-building in the states between itself and Russia and, last but not least, promoting their integration with the West. Whilst the first of these objectives was achieved immediately after the end of the Cold War, Poland's eastern neighbours, with the exception of Lithuania, have progressed very slowly towards emancipating themselves from Russia and integrating with the West. It is believed in Poland that domestic reforms and the Western integration of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova remain intimately linked and that the West, and the EU in particular, can effectively influence these countries' progress towards democracy and the market economy.

Whilst Poland was successful in securing the stronger engagement of the United States in the area, for example through the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative (PAUCI), the view prevails in Warsaw that the EU is far better suited to play an active role towards its eastern neighbourhood. Like other candidate countries, Poland has had first-hand experience of the effective impact of conditionality on domestic reforms as well as international relations. Warsaw expects the EU to seek greater engagement in the East due to its geographical proximity to the area.

Poland has played an active role in supporting, in particular, Ukraine's closer ties with the EU and its inclusion in various Central European institutions, such as the Central European Initiative, Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) and the regular meetings of Central European presidents.[75]

Lately, Poland has also sought to promote a more active approach by the EU towards Belarus and Moldova. To this end Warsaw proposed the establishment of EU's Eastern dimension as early as 1998 – just as it was embarking on its own membership negotiations.[76] This call was repeated in December 2002 in the Government's 'non-paper' that outlined a comprehensive proposal for the creation of a 'European space of political and economic cooperation within a wider Europe'.[77]

The crucial part of this proposal was the idea of introducing the principle of conditionality in relations with Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Depending on Ukraine and Moldova's progress in their domestic reforms, including democracy and human rights, the paper proposed that they be offered Association Agreements. Such a prospect could also remain open for Belarus should this country move away from its current dictatorial form of government. It was also argued in the paper that, in the more distant future, the EU should offer Ukraine the *prospect* of membership if Kyiv's engagement with the EU and the level of its domestic transformation permitted it. In the meantime, the non-paper suggested that Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus be included in the broad array of policies where joint interests were involved, and in particular in matters concerning cross-border cooperation, justice and home affairs. Should these states prove to be responsive partners, the paper proposed that the EU might consider introducing a more flexible visa regime towards them. In order to promote these states' greater technical capacity and ability to cooperate with the EU, Warsaw also proposed the further extension and development of TACIS and other programmes of technical assistance.[78]

Poland's efforts at developing closer links with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova have not been wholly welcomed within the EU. The current view prevailing in Brussels, both within the Commission and the Council, is that the existing European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is explicitly a non-accession policy, is a sufficient instrument for maintaining the EU's

75 See 'Poland:Eastern Relations', *Oxford Analytica-East Europe Daily Brief*, 8 August 2000.

76 As mentioned in the paper by Foreign Minister Cimoszewicz, 'The Eastern Dimension of the European Union: the Polish View', Warsaw, 20 February 2003; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

77 'Non-paper with Polish proposals concerning policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood after EU enlargement'; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

78 'What Does Poland Have to Offer in the Design of a New EU Eastern Policy' – Think Tank Forum 2003 – The EU's New Neighbourhood Policy for the European Union, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 1 July 2003; http://www.msz.gov.pl.

relations with these countries, and that Poland's proposals are either unhelpful or counterproductive.[79] It is also apparent that most member states, with the exception of the Baltic states, do not share Warsaw's view that the EU should stop prioritising Russia and see Ukraine, Moldova and potentially Belarus as equal partners. For example, despite the regular discussions that Poland maintains with Germany about Eastern policy issues, Berlin is adamant that it continues to see Russia as its strategic partner in the East and rejects the idea of even a remote prospect of EU membership for Ukraine.[80] But even besides this unfavourable climate in the EU, it is not clear whether the countries addressed in the Polish proposals are actually themselves interested in pursuing reforms and integrating in the EU. Belarus, for example, abandoned its nation-building and democratic project in the early 1990s, whilst Moldova continues to be mired by the collapse of its basic public institutions and ethnic conflict in Transnistria. It is really just Ukraine, whose domestic system may still evolve towards liberal democracy and market economy in the foreseeable future, but even there it is not certain whether Kyiv's determination to pursue its proclaimed 'European choice' will be maintained.

Despite these difficulties, it is unlikely that Warsaw would abandon the idea of westernising its eastern environment, which have come to be seen in Poland in terms of *raison d'état*. The most recent Polish initiative, put forward by President Kwasniewski, is to nurture a connection between Turkey's EU membership and the prospect of Ukraine's accession to the EU.[81] So far, however, there are no signs of such a connection being seriously considered or accepted in the EU. On the other hand, the prominent role played by Javier Solana and his close cooperation with President Kwasniewski during the recent presidential election crisis in Ukraine may signify the beginning of a more embracing attitude on the part of the EU.[82] Of course, much will depend on the outcome of the crisis, which at the time of writing was still unclear.

[79] Confidential Interviews, Brussels, October 2004. For the details of the ENP see 'European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper', Brussels, 12 May 2004.

[80] 'Szanse polsko-niemieckiej inicjatywy dla Ukrainy', *Rzeczpospolita*, 12 November 2004.

[81] 'Poland's vision of the EU', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 September 2004.

[82] 'Ukrainian opposition blocks government buildings', *Financial Times*, 25 November 2004.

Outlook: towards a committed European posture

Post-Cold War Polish foreign policy has consistently aimed to maintain a balance between its Atlantic and European dimensions and to avoid prioritising either of them. Poland sees its best interest in the United States and its European partners 'getting on well' and transatlantic relations remaining as harmonious as possible. However, following the events of 9/11 this has simply not been the case, and the radicalisation of American foreign policy has created a situation in which its European partners have not been able to avoid making a choice. Poland chose to support the United States and did so unambiguously and decisively. Subsequently, relations with Poland's European partners were damaged, with Germany and France in particular.

The re-election of President George W. Bush in November 2004 makes the possibility of returning to a more harmonious state of transatlantic relations less likely, although not impossible. The early signs following Bush's re-election are encouraging and suggest Washington's wish to embark on a more forthcoming approach towards Europeans in this second term, not least because of the situation on the ground in Iraq. However, it is still difficult to see why Bush would depart from his general foreign policy style, which most European find unacceptable but most Americans have seemingly just endorsed. The defining features of the Administration's international outlook, such as unilateralism, a disregard for international law and the doctrine of pre-emption, whilst possibly set to be toned down are none the less unlikely to be replaced by a spirit of international cooperation. This opens up the question for Poland and other Europeans of how to react if they are again faced with the necessity of making a choice. One cannot completely rule out that Poland might again decide to side with the United States instead of its European partners, even when its direct interests are not involved. However, such a possibility is increasingly unlikely and, as the effects of EU membership make themselves felt, Poland's view of international relations will become more closely aligned with that of its European neighbours. In other words, with time Poland's Atlanticism is likely to recede whilst its sense of self-identification with the European mainstream is likely to grow.

Whilst Atlanticism continues to dominate Poland's security thinking for the time being, there is also a growing realisation in Warsaw that a stronger and more robust EU is desirable and more able to accommodate its security interests. The reason why Atlanticism came to dominate Polish security thinking after 1989 was to do with the nation's unique experience, its geopolitics and its historically motivated view of international relations. However, these three elements are not constant and have already started to evolve. Geopolitically, Poland is no longer threatened. Germany is now Poland's closest ally in Europe, and Russia, whilst still being 'a state of concern' from the Polish point of view, is just too economically interdependent with the EU and too geographically remote to constitute a 'clear and present' danger. Consequently, the geopolitical and historical considerations that dominated the security thinking of the post-Cold War élites are bound to be of lesser significance for younger generations of policy-makers in Poland.

The other main motive of Poland's Atlanticism was a reaction against being excluded from the European decision-making process in security matters. This was an essential determinant of Warsaw's initial attitude towards CFSP/ESDP. Warsaw's early reticence towards the initiative originated chiefly from its concerns about ESDP's implications for the cohesion of transatlantic relations, but it was only strengthened by the EU's initial decision to exclude Poland and other Central and East Europeans from some vital aspects of the policy. However, once arrangements for accommodating the accession states had been reached in Feira, and as Poland was progressively drawn into the internal working of the EU, particularly in the Convention on the Future of Europe, Warsaw's attitude towards a stronger CFSP and ESDP became more constructive and positive.

Clearly, since joining the EU, Poland's, as well as other Central and East Europeans', status changed, and one of the major rationales for Poland's Atlanticism – its exclusion from West European decision-making bodies – has disappeared. Poland seems to be fitting into the EU more comfortably than was often predicted.[79] Six months after EU enlargement, public support for Poland's EU membership rose to a record level of 75 per cent and the formerly Euro-sceptic parties are either in decline (Samoobrona) or are grudgingly coming round to accept EU membership (the League of Polish Families).[80] Apart from the domestic impact of EU enlargement, other factors that are likely to influence the further evolution of Polish foreign and security policy are the future development of European security structures and the EU's Eastern policy.

Poland supported the institutional strengthening of CFSP, including moderate and qualified extension of QMV, but its position on ESDP was more conservative, focused on enhancing capabilities and in favour of retaining the strictly intergovernmental character of the initiative. Poland is, however, likely to support a flexible approach towards the use of force, being in favour of a more active and potentially interventionist EU. As argued in this paper, Poland is also well disposed towards closer cooperation amongst the six biggest EU member states in security and foreign policy matters, although it remains unclear whether Poland would be able to offer adequate capabilities to join this group in the near future. Should the EU evolve into a more coherent and robust security actor, with Poland's voice being adequately represented in it, it is likely that in the near/medium-term Warsaw would come to see European initiatives as more relevant than NATO in meeting its security interests.

EU's Eastern policy is another area of vital importance for Poland. The existing European Neighbourhood Policy is perceived in Poland as too weak and lacking in effective leverage on developments outside its eastern border, including in Ukraine and Belarus. Until Poland joined the EU its various initiatives (such as the 2002 'non-paper') had a limited impact on the EU's Eastern policy. However, a few months into its membership it is already apparent that Warsaw has become one of the most effective shapers of EU policy towards Ukraine and Belarus. Following the first round of presidential elections in Ukraine and responding to intense pressures from Poland, on 5 November 2004 the European Council expressed its concern about the integrity of the campaign and called for the fair access to the state-run media for all the candidates.[81] Polish politicians have also been active in the European Parliament, where Polish MEPs were elected to head working groups on Ukraine and Belarus – a development which proved to be

[79] Heather Grabbe, 'Poland: the EU's New Awkward Partner', *CER Bulletin*, Issue 34, 2 March 2004.

[80] A major factor influencing attitudes towards EU in Poland has been the clearly beneficial impact of EU membership for the farming lobby, which prior to enlargement was the most Euro-sceptic class in society. See Judy Dempsey, 'Euroscepticism Fades in Polish Countryside', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 November 2004.

[81] 'Sukces Polski: UE apeluje do Kijowa', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5 November 1994.

of major significance in issuing the Parliament's resolutions on the Belarussian referendum (October 2004) and Ukrainian elections (2 November 2004).[82]

In 2005 Poland will experience a major political change, with both parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled. If recent (November 2004) opinion polls prove to be accurate, the current government will be defeated in landslide fashion. The liberal PO (Civic Platform) and the centre-right PiS (Law and Justice) are likely to win and, if they stick by their promises, embark on a thorough overhaul of the state, leading to the end of the post-1989 Third Republic. The new post-2005 Fourth Republic, if it ever comes into being, may be a different state but its foreign and European policy would most likely be marked by continuity. Both PO and PiS supported the Government's Atlanticist choice over Iraq and both were in favour of EU membership. Whilst their attitude towards European integration may have sounded sceptical on occasion – for example in their defence of the Nice voting system or in their (particularly PiS's) critical view of the EU constitution – it is believed here that none of these positions was dogmatic or ideological and could evolve if seen as consistent with the national interest. Even more so than in the past the future government's approach to the EU may depend on the latter's Eastern policy, this time with the focus on energy security.[83] The PO and PiS will be lobbying for the EU's help in weakening Poland's and other countries' in the region dependency on Russian energy. Should the EU prove responsive, Poland's perception of the EU as a security provider would certainly be enhanced and conducive with the national agenda as seen by the centre-right.

This paper has argued that Poland emerged as the United States's key ally and its protégé in the East. The 'instinctive' Atlanticism inherent in Polish strategic culture has meant that Poland's foreign policies have been in close proximity to those of the United States over the past decade. Developments since 11 September initially enhanced this closeness between Warsaw and Washington. In a much divided Europe, Poland has showed itself to be a hawk.[84] Furthermore, in the context of Iraq, a close fit emerged between American and Polish standpoints. However, subsequent disappointment with American leadership in Iraq as well as the lack of tangible benefits for Poland from its role as a loyal ally, have weakened the Government's rationale for its Atlanticist choice.

So far, Poland has strived to reconcile its close relations with the United States with being a 'constructive European' but, as in the case of Iraq, this has not been always possible. Although Atlanticism is likely to guide Polish foreign policy for some time to come, if unilateralism in US foreign policy persists, it is almost certain that its relevance for Poland will become jaded. As argued by Zbigniew Brzezinski in his criticism of Poland's behaviour over Iraq, Poland should never forget where it is and who its closest economic partners are – not the United States but Germany and France.[85] Much of Poland's behaviour in the past was motivated by a feeling of exclusion and of being patronised by its West European neighbours. As long as in an EU of 25 Poland feels like an equal, it is inevitable that Polish foreign policy will come to reflect a stronger sense of belonging to the European project.

82 'Europa potepia rezim Lukaszenki', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20 October 2004.

83 I would like to thank Olaf Osica for drawing my attention to this issue.

84 'European Leaders Divide Between Hawks and Doves', *New York Times*, 31 January 2003.

85 Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski 'Przez glupote i fanatyzm', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 October 2003; see also 'Zbigniew Brzezinski dla Rzeczpospolitej', *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 April 2003.

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