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The nature of Polish-Russian relationships after the year of 1989: the legacy of the past

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The nature of Polish-Russian relationships after the year of 1989 – the legacy of the past

by

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Research Question and organization of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to show that historical precedents still govern the relationships between Republic of Poland and Russian Federation. It is further suggested that a number of historical factors – to be specified below – contribute to animosity between Poles and Russians, on both – governmental and societal levels, and that the Russian Federation asserts superiority in the relationship.

The relationship between two states has been very cool after 1989 and the interactions are marked with many tensions and even crises. The nature of their current affairs seems to have its roots in the past, as well as in the present configuration of international relations. This seems to be especially true of the clash between Russian and Polish governments' views on particular international issues (current examples include April's 2007 crisis in Estonia, "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine, and anti-missile shields project). The first factor, which is the past, leads to the second factor, which is the current relationship between the two countries.

First, this work will present a summary of their common past, starting with the years when Poland was a satellite state of the Soviet Union, which are 1947-1989. This would be a summary of the 'brotherhood' between the two nations, which illustrates the great disparity between actions of the Polish government and expectations of the civic society. History prior to the 1989 (decisive events that had taken place since 966) will be shown to be one of the most crucial factors that shape today's interactions between Poland and Russia. The

remainders of this thesis will focus on the almost twenty years period that has occurred after Poland's transition from communism to democracy, the years from 1989 to 2007. Covered will be the main disputes and agreements, failures and successes, which will allow us to form some conclusions about the nature of the relations between the two. Also, this summary will present how this relationship affects the societies of both countries, and Polish affairs with other post-communist states, as well as with the European Union.

This thesis will also provide data on current public opinion in both countries. This is to show how subjective opinions of the public differ (or not) from the official relations that are taking place between the Russian and Polish governments.

Imperialism theory will play important role, as a framework for the observations. With Russia looking down at many post-communist states, it can be argued that its actions resemble the politics of many former colonizers. Some links may be found between the colonizers'/imperialistic model of the world and Russia's model of post-communist world. Russia's imperialistic ambitions, known very well from world's history, may find their reflection in its modern foreign policy toward Poland.

This work will finally present some of the options for future relations between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation. This will be done by looking at how those relationships have changed over time – whether they have improved or worsened. The extensive discussion of the factors that may have an influence on the nature of those relations may be very helpful in predicting whether or not a change could occur.

The remainder of this first chapter contains two elements: first, it is important to define the most essential terms used throughout the thesis. Second, a discussion of the theoretical approach will follow.

Chapter two will discuss the historical background of the relationship between the two countries. The history of Poland and Russia and their relations will give a broader picture of a very complex and troubled history that contributed or even helped create the difficult current situation. The history between those two states will be divided into two separate sections with the first period lasting from 966 until WWII, the second from 1945 to 1989, which includes 1989, an important date for Poland. The common history of the two nations is very long and complex, but it is it is the main factor explaining the current situation.

Chapter III will discuss the modern relations of both nations from 1989 to present. It will include the joining process as well as membership of Poland in the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The chapter will conclude with a series of current episodes between the two countries and their influence on the relationship. Those will include Ukraine's Orange Revolution, the Estonian crisis of communist symbolism, the Russian embargo on Polish meat, USA's plans for building a Missile Defense System in Poland and Czech Republic, and finally Russian energy politics towards Poland and the other European states. Chapter IV analyzes the relationship and will make some suggestions for the future of those relations and whether there might be any chance to change the current situation.

Definitions of terms and features

Before describing the theoretical background there are several terms that need to be defined. The first term to be discussed is relations. It will be broadly used through out this thesis and, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2007) means "an aspect or quality (as

resemblance) that connects two or more things or parts as being or belonging or working together.” The relations between Poland and Russia, given their borders and proximity, are inescapable, and in simple words they can be bad, good or indifferent. The geographic and geopolitical placement of these two countries has doomed them to maintaining constant relations among each other. The governments and even the system can change, but the geographical placement of both states will not change, therefore it should be crucial for both sides to maintain normal relations.

The next important term to understand is a satellite state. The idea of “satellitization” pattern of Soviet neighbors was initiated by Joseph Stalin. “He sought, first, to eliminate all Western influence from Eastern Europe and, concomitantly, to establish Soviet hegemony” (Rubinstein 208). Alvin Rubinstein quotes Hugh Seton-Watson, whose work “The East European Revolution” gives three different steps of “satellitization”. These are “the genuine coalition, the bogus coalition, and the Communist controlled monolith.” Poland was one of the countries that had to go through painful sovietization as will be shown later in the thesis.

“Colonialism” is another term which will be more thoroughly discussed later and compacted definition is to follow. “Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (Loomba 7). Nevertheless, colonialism is also a cultural or ideological expansion of one country into another (Merriam-Webster). Many times the terms colonialism and imperialism are interchanged. “Imperialism” means “command or superior power” (Loomba 10). For the purpose of this thesis both terms will be used interchangeably.

Finally, the discussion will often include the term of “foreign policy”. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2007) it is “a policy of a sovereign state in its interaction with other sovereign states.” All those terms will be used throughout the thesis and will help in

explaining the complex nature of the Polish-Russian relations. Foreign policy is often presented by diplomacy, which is “the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations” (Merriam-Webster).

Theoretical Background – Imperialism theory

Imperialism as a term describes “the policy, practice, or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation especially by direct territorial acquisitions or by gaining indirect control over the political or economic life of other areas” (Merriam-Webster). The expression itself might be relatively young to the history of empire building. One of the major writers that dealt with imperialism was John A. Hobson. He “stressed the economic aspects of imperialism, but he also recognized that the three P’s – Pride, Pugnacity, and Prestige – were motivating forces of the movement” in the 19th Century (Kohn 5). Johan Galtung, in 1971, stated that in “two-nation world, imperialism can be defined as one way in which the Center has the power over the Periphery nation, so as to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them” (Galtung 83). Ania Loomba, in 2005, discussed imperialism as a direct connection with royalty. She argues that “while royalty were both financially and symbolically invested in early European colonisations, these ventures were in every case also the result of wider class and social interest” (Loomba 10).

Karl Marx did not write directly about imperialism but wrote broadly about colonialism, especially the cases of Great Britain and India. He acknowledged the fact that capitalism was the most brutal form of the system; however he was aware of the fact that it was the next step towards socialism. He stated: “Along with the constantly diminishing

number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class” (Marx 836). Therefore, the advancing capitalism and capitalist imperialism is destructive in its nature, but on the other hand, it is crucial for achieving the higher goal of socialism in the future.

However, imperialism was also a concept widely mentioned by Vladimir Lenin. He often talked about financial or capitalist imperialism, which – what he claimed, was a different concept from political imperialism. The Soviet leader challenged the Karl Kautusky approach towards the concept that stated: “imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large areas of agrarian territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it” (Lenin 91). Lenin claimed that “the characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex not only agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialized regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine)” (Lenin 91). Lenin insisted on the importance of political imperialism and its “striving towards violence and reaction.” Moreover, he proposed the idea of monopoly capitalism which is also called imperialism, and which is a result of capitalism itself, because the market is too small for the capital product, therefore it is a must to find new markets and resources.

Ariel Cohen wrote in 1996 that Soviet Union “was indeed an empire, with one ethnic group (the Russians) dominating the others, simultaneously drawing on non-Russian elites as reservoir of imperial servants” (Cohen 151). Even though the term “imperialism” was hardly used after the collapse of Romanov Empire, the nature of that strategy remained. Cohen explains that “even in Western political science literature, the term “imperialist” had become

a pejorative one reserved almost exclusively for the overseas empires of England, France, and other traditional European colonial powers, and for the trade and investment domination of the United States” (Cohen 151).

Lenin was against imperialist quests but the actions of next subsequent Soviet leaders differed and showed an opposite view. Additionally, Cohen clearly stated that “Lenin’s anti-imperialist tirades could have been easily applied by the Turkmestanis or Ukrainians to their sorry fate.” And on top of that, “in Russian colonies, as in their Western counterparts, brilliant careers were made, environments ruined, locals divided and exploited, and imperial power strengthened “(Cohen 152).

Imperialism or colonialism theory has been applied mostly to Western countries. However, a number of Russians helped develop these theories. Despite its turbulent history and constantly changing foreign policy, it seemed Russia always had to prove its power. The ways of doing so may have changed over time – from assaulting and acquiring the territory or resources by force to imposing political thought or particular ideas – but the urge for dominance remained. At the end of this thesis, it will become clearer that Russia has always had ambitions of becoming a great power at others’ cost, similarly to other colonial powers. Therefore, imperialism theory could be equally applied in the East – to the Soviet Union as well as the Russian Federation today. This will be done subsequently, starting with the next chapter which focuses on pivotal events from the history of Poland and Russia.

CHAPTER II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Major events until WWII

Poland and Russia have long complex history dating from 966, and often, it was very turbulent and violent. Many times there were more factors that divided the two countries than united them. It is important to mention that both nations have their roots in Christianity, which gave them similar character. Also, both were Christianized relatively early and around the same time. However, there is a main difference in the way the process took place.

Poland's Christianization took place in 966 through Bohemia. Russia, on the other hand, Christianized in 988 through Byzantium. This difference turned out to have an influence on the future Polish-Russian relations. It created two separate views of religion, which at that time played an important role, and in turn led to separate political worldviews.

Poland, through Western means of Christianization became a part of what would be "no longer what was named the Western Roman Empire nor even what we call the Franco-Roman Empire become Roman German Empire or, more simply, Holy Roman Empire, but the unitary and resolute Christendom of the entire Christian West" (Sturzo 68). Rome became the center of religious and cultural life in Europe. However, Russia stayed on the periphery of the "Christendom of the entire Christian West". As a matter of fact, the East was following other rules, and separating itself from the West in order to create its own uniqueness and importance. This became Orthodox Christianity.

In Western part, which includes Poland, the Church enjoyed independence from the political rules. On the other hand, it also was the main stimulus for development of cultural

and social life. Waclaw Lednicki wrote: “not only was the Catholic Church organizing the cultural life of the nation through preaching, confessions, theological literature, schools, and numerous religious orders which brought to Poland material civilization but, what was more important, the Church shared with the political powers the task of consolidating the national life” (4). The role of the church in Russia was different and highly associated with Byzantium, where “the church was subjugated to the political power” and “subjugated entirely to the political power, the church supported that power and thus assured its own moral prestige” (Lednicki 8). There was also different a approach towards the character of preaching and educating people. Catholicism put the pressure on didactic aspects of religion. This was done by creating schools, monasteries that would expand academic involvement in daily lives. On the other hand Orthodox Church “was not didactic in the western sense of the word, it did not teach by books, sermons and precepts but by examples” (Lednicki 8).

The idea of political ruling was also different in both nations. Lednicki wrote about the significant distinction for achieving political goals and gaining political power. He noticed lack of a “bloody struggle for political power” in Polish case. As a matter of fact, history shows very little or no cases where there was a literal fight for power. In the case of Russia, the reality was very different and “murders and violent dethronements of the tsars, and emperors became a sort of tradition” (Lednicki 5). This could be one of the reasons for creating in later generation of Russian tsars an imperialistic approach. However, for explaining the Polish question and specific placement of Poland in Russian political and military strategy, we have to look at the concept of Polish messianic role in the World.

“Poland is a historic nation with an indigenous national elite and a powerful sense of distinctiveness and identity” (Prizel 38). This is a short “definition” of Polish nation-state.

Throughout the long history of integration and constant fights and rivalry with the neighbors which included securing the border of Western Christendom against Islam, Poland and its citizens developed a unique feeling of responsibility for protecting Western culture and value. This created the concept of Messianism, widely used in Polish literature during Romantism period of XIX century. Interestingly, against this Polish Messianism there was distinct, but quite similar in character Russian messianic ideology. Its culture, based on the Byzantine values, was centered around the “only protector” of the Orthodox way of life. Lednicki wrote that Russian Tsars and Emperors considered their power as an absolute and given by God. Therefore, “as the ultimate result of these events Moscow represented a type of an Oriental despotism with a tendency towards state control characteristic of these organizations(...)and the equally characteristic tendency towards imperialism based on Byzantine religious and historical premises” (Lednicki 10). It could be expected that sooner or later those two different messianic concepts would clash.

The conflict began because of the territories of Ruthenia and Kiev, which before XIV century were occupied by Kievan Rus, and later were under influence of Tatars. In XIV century the territory was in possession of Grand Duke of Lithuania. Russian princes never gave this territory up; therefore they claimed their right to it. Poland and Lithuania had the same enemy, therefore after series of pacts and union both nations created a personal union followed by Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth in 1569. On the other hand, Muscovite Russian was under control of Mongol-Tatars. However, in 1380 Ivan the Great ended the control and started the idea of getting the territories taken by Tatars back. Ivan IV, who was the first Tsar, led many wars against Poland. Unsuccessful attempts to regain the power in claimed territories as well as desire of getting access to the Baltic Sea must have caused additional

resentment at Poland. Lednicki wrote: “At that moment Moscow under Ivan IV could have been completely subjugated to Poland”. However, “defense came from Rome, which still was dreaming about the union of churches and the Catholicization of Moscow” (14). With the time passing by “most Russians saw the Poles as the spearhead of western aggression, as renegades to Slavdom and the true faith” (Kohn 280). The messianic visions of both nations clashed, therefore negative vision of Poles among Russian and Russians among Poles could be understandable.

During the “time of troubles” in Muscovin Russia, parts of Polish-Lithuanian szlachta (nobel class in Poland and Lithuania) had a plan to use this situation and gain an influence over troubled Russia. With the help of false Dmitri and against the will of Polish king Zygmunt III Waza, parts of magnate groups and forces entered Muscovin territory in 1604 (Evtuhov 148). It is important to mention, that this was a private intervention because the szlachta paid for the forces by themselves. The attack resulted in deaths of half of the group. But it made King Zygmunt III Waza declare official war. Despite occupying the Kremlin and an initial agreement on putting King’s son on the Russian throne, the crisis occurred, because the Polish King wanted to take over the throne himself. Sweden, who was initially on Muscovy’s side also turned against it, placing Russia in very critical political situation. German and Polish occupation of the Kremlin finally ended, because of a successful Russian uprising in 1612. The time of troubles ended with the new tsar Michael Romanov of the new Romanov dynasty, with long-term aversion towards Poland.

The XVIII century was another complicated time for Polish foreign policy as well as independence because Russia was strongly pushing for gradual control over the Commonwealth. The way to keep Poland in check could be seen in 1768, when the Sejm that

was under heavy influence of Russian presence voted on the bill stating: “Russia now guaranteed the constitution and the real ruler in Poland was the Russian ambassador” (Hunczak 159). As a result of this Sejm session, Poles tried to fight the occupying army; however lack of organization resulted in a definite defeat. As a result, Russia started negotiation with Prussia and Austria in order to partition Poland

In 1774 it forced its candidate on Polish throne in the person of Augustus III. In spite of the Polish support of Stanislaw Leszczynski, the Russian candidate was placed by force. Peter III and Catherine the Great had a clear vision of Russian policy towards others. In short it could be characterized by aiming of “winning eastern Prussia and establishing Russia firmly as equal to Austria and France, with Saxony as its vassal and Poland under its control” (Baranovsky 25).

Russia wanted to control Poland and it was a very important element of its foreign policy. The signs of their imperialism were not limited to acquiring the territory but trying to influence internal politics, too. Nikita Ivanovich Panin, who was a head of foreign policy under Catherine II, stated that “we shall lose a third of our power and advantages if Poland is not dependent on us” (Chechulin 208). Russia did not want Poland to regain a status of a powerful nation that existed in XV and XVI Century; therefore keeping Polish magnates under Russian influence was the key. Keeping Polish politics in a very chaotic and a deteriorating state was also another aspect of policy towards Poland in XVIII century.

The first partition of Poland took place in 1772 and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lost around one third of its territory. The reaction of other nations was not satisfactory for Poles because “in England and France opinion prevailed that the Poles themselves were responsible for their misfortune” (Hunczak 160). It was Austria and Prussia

that initiated the partition of Poland, and not Catherine II herself. Austria and Prussia made the move because “Russia’s military and naval successes now appeared as a greater threat than ever to Europe’s major powers” (Evtuhov 278).

Twenty years later in 1791, Poland had a new and progressive constitution, but Catherine II did not support this move claiming it was breaching “their agreements with Russia”, therefore she negotiated again with Prussia and Austria and partitioned the Commonwealth two more times in 1793 and 1795 wiping Poland off the map. Three partitioning powers “vowed not to use the word Poland again. They were convinced that an independent Poland was incapable of establishing a stable government and declared that partition was necessary for preserving the peace and happiness of their citizens” (Evtuhov 280).

Alexander I seemed to be friendlier than his predecessors towards the partitioned nation. Poles were trapped in difficult situation. They had no country and had to look up for help and mercy to other great powers. The first one to create optimistic illusions for Poland was Napoleon Bonaparte. He created the Duchy of Warsaw out of the Prussian partition. However, his “attitude to his Polish supporters was cynical at best” because he “resisted making a firm commitment to help the Poles in their struggle for independence” (Taras 23). The duchy stopped its existence in 1813 and Alexander I used his influence at the Congress of Vienna to bring Congress Kingdom of Poland to life. It was created out of the Duchy of Warsaw territories given to Russia. Alexander I crowned himself a king of Poland and took over Sejm sessions. The next two tsars, namely Nicholas I and Alexander II, did not have any intention of giving independence back to Polish people, who in turn revolted in 1830 and in 1863. This resulted in liquidation of Congress Poland that was “reduced to a Russian

province administered by Russians” (Hunczak 166). To prevent further revolts Russians went further and “the reign of terror instigated by Russian officials was designed to eradicate Polish nationalism once and for all, but the atrocities were so massive and the Russification drive so brutal that world opinion was horrified” (Taras 25). It is worth mentioning here, that in the Prussian part of Poland there was already advanced Germanization of Poles living in there. The messianic mission that was mentioned before intensified even more under foreign occupation (the literature of Romantism of XIX Century is the reflection of the Polish situation) and “many now believed that Poland, like Christ, was destined to suffer in order to redeem the sins of other nations so that they, too, could become worthy of liberty” (Taras 25).

The XX century, brought both positive changes and more tragic events. The World War I paradoxically, was an event with relative good consequences for Poland. The external situation was favorable for Poland – its politics and society. Russia withdrew from war, and a weakened Germany had to acknowledge Polish independence. Additionally, US President Woodrow Wilson called for an independent Poland in his thirteenth point of peace declaration in 1918. Nevertheless, the Polish rebirth has been limited to two things. First of all, Polish people “were far from being the sole architects of their reborn state” (Biskupski 60). Western and Southern borders were drawn by parties that met in 1919 in Paris. The second crucial issue was the creation of the Eastern border, which resulted in a Polish-Bolshevik armed conflict. Poland, with a rebirth of nationalism wanted to push the Soviets further away and regain old territories. Therefore in April of 1920 Jozef Pilsudski initiated a military campaign against the Bolsheviks. Poland managed to repulse the Russians who were

about to enter Warsaw. The conflict ended by bringing the borders back to the state of the second partition.

Despite the opportunities created by the World War I turmoil, the post-war period was difficult for Polish-Russian relations. “The 123-year period of foreign domination and the battle for independence had created a burden of expectations which would have been very difficult to fulfill. The post-war depression and the Great Depression of the early 1930s made it even more difficult for Poland to obtain foreign aid” (Prazmowska 168). It was clear for the new government of Poland, that it needed alliances because of rising powers of the Soviet Union in the east and Germany in the west. Geopolitical location comes in to political play again. Therefore, in the year of 1932, Poland signed with Russia a pact of nonaggression and after two years, this agreement was renewed. However, Russia signed the same type of contract with Germany, which became the famous Ribentrop-Molotov pact. Seventeen days after the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939, Stalin decided to invade Poland from the East, ending the short period of Polish independence.

The plans of Hitler towards Poland were always clear; however Russia’s action was less understandable. When Germany attacked Russia on June 22 1941, the latter “did deny their claims to these territories assured them by their collaboration with Hitler” (Lednicki 28). Therefore 1941 was a year when another Polish-Russian agreement was signed. Poland was represented by the government in exile stationed in London. Nonetheless, the Polish claim for investigation of disappeared officers in Russia was met with Stalin’s “breaking off diplomatic relation”, and “the Soviet authorities, in cooperation with a small group of Polish Communists and left-wing Socialist, proceeded to make plans for a pro-Soviet administration in liberated Poland” (Prazmowska 178). The process was relatively quick and in 1944, with

the help of the Soviets, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) was created, as the only official government of Poland. Moreover, against expectations, Yalta Conference in 1945 did not bring changes for Poles and for many, to this day it has been considered as “the ultimate betrayal by their western allies” (Lukowski 244). Stalin was assured that the previously created government in Poland would stay official government, but the condition was that it would have to be broadened by non communist members. At the end, the “Soviets complied, but only for a while. By 1948 the Communist Party of Poland, supported by the Soviets, was in complete control of the country” (Otfinoski 28).

As has been illustrated above, the mutual history of Russia and Poland until 1945 was complex and difficult. However, there is no doubt that there was never a clear intention on the Russian side to have an independent Poland as a neighbor. By its actions it proved to favor the dichotomous nature of relations. Henry R. Huttenbach (1974) noticed that there is even a clash between two scholars – Polish, Oscar Halecki, and Russian Nicholas Riasanovsky – who tried to explain the reason for the violence of Polish Russian relations. Halecki claimed that the rise of the Muscovy dynasty became an embryo of Russian imperialism, which exists to the present day. On the other side, Riasanowvsky answered that Russian response to the Polish problem was caused by the Polish invasion in eleven century and its intervention during the Time of Troubles. While this might be justification, “it by no means discounted the fact of a long history of Russian expansionism with its own ideological rationales” (Hunczak 19).

1945-1989 and the fall of the USSR

The end of the war not only meant for Poland facing enormous devastation of the country, but also meant becoming a satellite state of Russia. Theoretically, Poland existed as a sovereign state, but in practice, there was hardly any political independence. From the end of 1947 until 1989, there was only one party in the Polish government – United Polish Workers’ Party (PZPR), which was based on the ideals of Marxism and Leninism. The character of political life in Poland has changed significantly in comparison to the pre-war period.. As Ray Taras wrote: “the constellation of political institutions in Poland has engendered oligarchic, centralist, and bureaucratic tendencies” (Taras 44). Stalinist era doomed the Polish dream of sovereignty to misery. As a satellite state, Poland became a prolonged arm of Soviet Union and “new constitution was adopted, a carbon copy of the Soviet constitution” (Otfinoski 28). Additionally, personal freedoms disappeared and censorship was put in place.

Introduction of some of the communist policies was not limited to the borders of the USSR. Poland undertook a similar collectivization campaign, which ended in 1956, only because there was a change in the Polish leadership approach to the thought of Poland as a satellite state of the Soviet Union. Moreover, whatever ideas were especially prevalent and focused on during Stalinist era, started to fade away after Stalin’s death. This was perceived as a relatively advantageous situation for Poland willing to actually gain more control over its own politics. However, despite the changes in leadership of Communist Party, and the short period of stability on the Warsaw-Moscow line, Poland was not able to gain control over its politics. And this was the time, when economic troubles became evident. A series of strikes

occurred throughout the country as “the economy, mismanaged by the Russians for two decades, continued to decline” (Otfinoski 30). Poles’ anger was boiling and many delegated their voices to the Solidarity who represented them in talks with the authorities. However, at the beginning of 1980s, Polish government did not truly engage in talks or interactions with Solidarity. It was noted by Russian author Riasanovsky:

No regular contacts with the Solidarity leadership and the Catholic hierarchy aimed at creating a constructive and meaningful national consensus were initiated by the government. By exploiting its monopoly over the mass media and over the distribution of increasingly scarce food supplies and consumer goods, the government attempted to undermine the position of the opposition while at the same time strongly seconding Moscow’s accusations that Solidarity was attempting to subvert the political structure and international position of People’s Poland (Riasanovsky 554).

This gave a clear message to the Poles that they should and could trust neither the home government nor USSR. This also illustrates, how regardless of changes in leadership in both states, Moscow managed to remain dominant with regards to the internal politics of Republic of Poland.

In December 1981, “Martial law had been declared by General Jaruzelski” (Otfinoski 38). However, as Anita Prazmowska stated: “The most striking feature of the period which followed was the fact that it was not the Communist Party, but the army which was authorized by the Soviet Union to assume control of Poland” (208). Once again, the influence of Soviet politics on Polish every day living was illustrated. The wave of Stalinist times came back, as many people got arrested and control over many aspects of citizens’ lives became apparent. Wojciech Jaruzelski “was the servant of the military interest within the Soviet apparatus, the batman of the Soviet marshals”. Moreover, “he had saved the Soviet Army

from a very unpleasant task” (Davies 495). Until today, nobody really has the knowledge, whether the Soviets would have invaded Poland if Jaruzelski had not stepped in. The explanations for the introduction of the martial law (called “stan wojenny” in Polish language) seem not to be clear either.

The end of the 1980s was different than the years before. The situation constantly changed throughout those years because the political, cultural and economic conditions in the USSR were also facing severe crisis, therefore limiting its ability to influence communist partners. Nicholas Riasanovsky stated:

When Mikhail Gorbachev was named general secretary, his mandate was to address this crisis, first by admitting it publicly. The government and the party spoke openly about economic problems: the slowing of economic growth, the negative effects on the standard of living, the dismal condition of agriculture, the poor quality of manufactured products, the failure to keep up with world developments in science and technology (including computing), and the huge proportion of the gross national product devoured by military needs (more than twice the percentage in the United States (586).

The problems affected society in every single sphere, making reality “black and grey”, which resulted in widespread alcoholism. For instance, an access to most primary products such as milk or bread became a time consuming struggle, while stores were never out of mustard, vinegar and vodka. It occurred that porcelain factory workers got certain number of coffee cups, as an equivalent of their monthly salary. Both Andropov and his successor Gorbachev “tried to create a disciplined and sober work force with a renewed campaign against alcohol” (Evtuhov 787). The Perestroika and Glasnost reforms in Soviet Union were a clear signs for other satellite nations to follow. Poland was not any different.

The military rulings of Jaruzelski left the opposition in a difficult situation, but Solidarity did not give up and continued its road towards freedom. 1989 was a breakthrough year for Poland. Jaruzelski agreed to the round-table talks. The outcome was a success for Solidarity, which was again declared legal, but there was a call for a new election. It was not fully open because 38% of the seats went to the Communists, 35% to Solidarity and only 27% were up for grabs. The Presidency would stay in the hands of Jaruzelski, but the Senate would have all of its seats available in the election. Voting day came on June 4 and became a full success for Solidarity candidates who captured almost all seats. However, it is critical to point that the scraps of the communist regime were still in place leaving success limited. It was crucial for the Poles that “Soviet Foreign Office made an announcement without parallel” that they do not interfere “in the internal affairs of Poland” (Davies 504).

Then, Jaruzelski agreed to shorten his presidency and the constitution was changed. When Balcerowicz introduced shock therapy, and Walesa became the legitimized President, only then Poland became a sovereign country. At the same time, the Soviet Union was facing problems that were enormous, beginning with poor economic performances and ending on citizens’ social problems of every day lives. And although the actual fall of the Soviet Union was a surprise, judging by its performance during last years of its existence, it might have been expected.

Gorbachev’s policies differed a lot from his predecessors. Not only was his attitude towards domestic matters different, but he allowed for more autonomy within satellite states, one of them being Poland. He liberalized foreign trade “and by the end of 1988 most ministries, enterprises, and other organizations were allowed to engage in foreign trade” (Ziegler 153). Nevertheless, economic openness was only the one side of the spectrum.

Along with economic transition, Glasnost was initiated, which “meant to expose the full extent of mismanagement, corruption, and falsification in the economic system, holding both management and workers up to the glare of public opinion” (Ziegler 153). The New Congress of People’s Deputies was created, which was elected by the voters in the election. This Congress had to choose The Supreme Soviet of USSR, which consisted of 500 representatives. With the time passing by, they started to divide into different factions and Gorbachev’s power started to be more virtual than real, despite the fact that in 1990 the Congress elected him as a president. The opposition, on the other hand, called for faster political transformation and in “1990, Russia’s own Congress of People’s Deputies elected Yeltsin head of the Russian Supreme Soviet and thus leader of the Russian Republic” (Evtuhov 793).

The political turmoil in the Soviet Union was perceived as a chance for political changes in Soviet Republics as well as in satellite states. The strong nationalism in most of those countries pose another difficulty for Russia that was deepened in crisis. Gorbachev, aware of the difficult situation at home, as well as outside Russia, finally “accepted the idea of allowing the constituent republics an autonomy verging on independence, and joined forces with Yeltsin” (Longworth 295). The latter became the President of Russian Federation on June 12, 1991. This is what Philip Longworth wrote about following event:

At midnight on 31 December 1991 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Russia’s fourth empire, would cease to exist. He spoke with sadness and with dignity. Not so Boris Yeltsin. He moved into presidential offices in the Kremlin before Gorbachev had time to clear his desk, and threw a party there (298).

This chapter of Russian history was to be closed. But as it will be shown in following chapters, much the legacy of the history is shaping today's relations between Republic of Poland and Russian Federation.

To sum up, the common affairs between Poland and Russia after the WWII were a one-way street. It is hard to talk about any relations when one country is dominating other in every aspect of its existence. The reminiscence of partitions that took place in 1772 and in 1793 was very vivid in every day life. Rusification process that was initiated after the third partition in 1795, in many aspects resembled Stalinization. As a matter of fact, the history of Polish-Russian relation shows turbulent events, but on the other hand, it illustrates constant attempts to interfere in each other's internal affairs. Poland's intervention in Days of Troubles and Russian constant meddling in Polish situation left little room for good partner-to-partner relations. The legacy of the past is visible and present in current events of Polish and Russian politics.

CHAPTER III. CURRENT RELATIONS AND THEIR NATURE

Polish and Russian foreign policy and their characteristics after transitions

Both Polish and Russian foreign policy changed dramatically after the collapse of communism. The change was caused by two different factors. Russia was very nostalgic and wanted to keep up with its status of superpower but on the other hand it faced the tough reality of being stripped of all super-power aspects. Poland wanted to cut ties with its eastern neighbor and turn towards the West and the European Union, as well as the United States.

The paths might be different, however the geopolitics did not change and the reality is that both states do have to cooperate. The relations after the collapse were difficult and still remain so. Therefore next subdivision of this thesis will be devoted that complex bond between Poland and Russia.

During the cold war Poland was subjugated to Russia and in practice foreign policy of Soviet Union became a policy of Poland, despite the fact that Poland was not one of the Soviet Republics but was “only” a satellite state. The situation dramatically changed after the collapse of communism in both countries. The directions, chosen by those two countries differed from one another, and this was rather a natural thing.

Poland, after becoming a fully independent nation became very eager to join the European community. There were many reasons for that, starting with economic help and ending with political stability and strength against other nations, including Russia. Becoming the member of the European Community was considered a privilege to a degree, and joining the elite club requires some sacrifices. Poland was ready to do so and applied for a

membership in the community in May of 1990, which seems to be relatively fast considering the fact that it was still during the Soviet Union existence. However, the formal application for the membership was handed to the EU in April of 1994. Poland joined the European Union on January 1st 2004. For the first time the country could be part of the Europe that has a plan for mutual friendship and economic and social benefits.

Fear of both Germany and Russia was still present in the minds of many Poles, but, Polish “unification negotiations, resulted in two fundamental political accords with the new Germany” (Biskupski 185). One recognized the Odra-Nysa border between Poland and Germany and the second recognized German minority in Poland and became responsible for protecting their rights. Western Europe and United States of the world became crucial for Polish relations. Biskupinski recalled the famous words of 1992 Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski who said that the main goal of modern foreign policy is “integration with West European structures and institutions (with a) strategic objective in the security sphere...to join NATO” (185).

Polish membership in NATO became a priority for policy makers because of the fact that it “provides a link with the United States and an assurance that Germany will remain bound” (Prizel 121). Relations with the US were also put on the Polish agenda, because of the historical role of US in the European continent. United States was supposed to be a balance to Polish European partners who many times were not reliable in their actions (French and Great Britain’s refusal to help Poland in the first weeks after the WWII broke out). Polish geopolitical placement put the foreign policy in difficulty which meant they were seeking constant balance. Poland as first the potential and then an actual member of the EU and NATO was inconvenient for Russia, but their mutual relations during this period will be

described in the next subdivision of this chapter. On the other hand, Polish foreign policy was also very Ukraine-oriented in the East. Polish long relations with Ukraine, which parts used to be home of many Poles played a very important historic, cultural and symbolic role. Ilya Prizel summarized best why Ukraine has been so important for Poland. He said that: “Polish analysts initially envisioned that their country would serve as a bridge between Ukraine and Europe, but many Ukrainian nationalists saw Poland as an escape hatch from Russian domination” (139). Ukrainian-Polish ties could be called cordial. One of the most successful cooperation can be noticed between Ukrainian and Polish NGO’s and academic institutions which “has reached a high level of intensity, and is now one of the few real success stories in Polish Ukrainian relations (Wolczuk 48). However, Ukraine remains outside European Union leaving a question mark whether the strategic partnership with Poland could be further developed. Therefore “Polish-Ukrainian relations tend to be criticized for being long rhetoric but short on substance” (Wolczuk 48).

Polish circumstances and foreign policy changed slightly after joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. The situation became a little bit paradoxical. Poland after reaching the goal of becoming officially a part of the European community seemed to change priorities from Europeans to United States. It joined the US in the war in Iraq, and became the second largest contributor after Great Britain. This happened despite general disagreement about the war within the European Union. The long relationship of Great Britain with United States could be understood, but Polish commitment to support an unwanted war was nothing a question mark within the EU. The hope of advancing the EU to a higher level of mutual cooperation was questioned and halted. Jurgen Habermas and Jaques

Derrida noticed that “the war made Europeans conscious of the failure of their common foreign policy, a failure that has been a long time in the making” (4).

This hard to understand move changed the image of Poland’s place within the European Union. In 2005, when the conservative party “Law and Justice” (PiS) won both parliamentary and presidential election the foreign policy changed again. This time the pragmatic approach that used to be the motto of the policy in last years changed to an aggressive and distrustful policy. Stephen Larrabee described the new Polish policy as the one that “seeks to enhance Polish national interests, which has led to conflicts with the EU and some of Poland's neighbors, particularly Germany” (117) and later Russia.

Russia also went in a different direction after the fall of the USSR. The empire, which according to many Russians was a natural state of reality, suddenly collapsed. Many did not know whether to treat Russia as an empire similar to Soviet Union, as an entity that inherited what used to be Soviet, or rather treat Russia as a new nation and opposite to the imperialistic USSR. For the end of the XX century, the situation was totally new, and most of the actors were not prepared for it.

There was no doubt that the foreign policy of Russia had to be changed, because the Cold War was over, and Russia did not have the tools and strength to continue an imperialistic approach towards the neighbors. For Russians the end of USSR was the end of an era. Something that used to be so natural for them ended shockingly fast and leaving the entire population in some kind of national identity limbo. Bobo Lo wrote: “With the end of the USSR and the simultaneous collapse of state and empire, it faced the immense challenge of developing a post-imperial identity in conditions of chronic political and economic uncertainty, and with no clear model to emulate” (20). Russia did not want to become a

regular country and for the policy makers “more typical is the opinion that Russia, by virtue of its imperial past and identity, simply does not have the option of becoming a nation-state like the others” (Lo 21).

The problem with this approach is that Russia definitely wanted to be treated as the continuation of the Soviet Union in this sense of being a superpower and keeping the privileges associated with the fact. Margot Light wrote: “The problem was the insistence on great-power status frequently alternated with demands for economic assistance, and the combination of being a supplicant for aid while wanting to be accepted as a great power, together with a tendency to indulge in declaratory politics, made Russian foreign policy seem very inconsistent” (229).

The inconsistency of the new Russian foreign policy was not created only by the factor mentioned above. It is also important to mention that the problem was technical in nature. The change within the government included many miscommunications and it took time until all parts of the government involved in making decisions were clear who is responsible for what in making foreign policy. The President as an executive had the privilege of shaping the foreign policy. However, there were also the Foreign Minister and Duma who also had rights to contribute to policy making. This disorganization was many times in the way of making a clear stand on issues.

Slowly, the foreign policy of Russia was developing and became more visible and clear to the outside world. What policy was created can be seen in the table 1 below. Three concepts: Foreign Policy, National Security and Military were adapted in different stages and consisted of different ideas.

Table 1. Russian Federation foreign policy creation process

	<i>Foreign Policy Concept</i>	<i>Military Concept</i>	<i>National Security Concept</i>
<i>Year</i>	Key points	Key points	Key points
<i>1993</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First ever formulation of foreign policy priorities • Assertion of prominent international role for Russian Federation • “near abroad” focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of harsh stance about Russia’s national interests as a response to perceived suspicious Western intensions towards Russia 	
<i>1997</i>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on country’s changing external and internal conditions • Formulation of threats posed by domestic problems
<i>2000</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbalization of hardening foreign policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimization of the internal military intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looser conditions for nuclear weapons usage

The table shows three types of concepts that attempt to define principles and key points of Russian Federation foreign policy. Those are: Foreign Policy Concept, Military Concept and National Security Concept. Each of those doctrines had two versions after the year of 1991, which may indicate two things. First, it may be caused by simple fact that there was a shift in power from Yeltsin to Putin, whose perceptions about Russian foreign policy were not the

same. The initial concepts of 1993 and 1997 were introduced by Boris Yeltsin, but then replaced by Vladimir Putin in 2000. Vladimir Putin took different approach towards foreign policy. Although in the first stages Russia was not reluctant to express its stance, Foreign Policy Concept of 2000 seems to be harsher and very protective of the national interests. In 1993 the “concept portrayed a far less benign view about Russia’s external environment than the rather idealistic and uncritically pro-Western policy Russia was pursuing at that time” (Light 227). The policy of 2000 became more pragmatic. Second issue that may be indicated by changes made can be lack of coherence. Definition of basic concepts was supposed to ease Russian quest for its foreign policy orientation, but there was no agreement on country’s place in the world. “The disparate foreign policy views expressed by the legislature, the military and various presidential spokesmen did not reflect the contents of either document” (Light 227).

But coming back to the most recent foreign policy formulations, it has to be noted that 2000 Concepts included the problems of terrorism and separatism, which did not appear to be accounted for in the ‘90s. For international community, the most controversial change in the policy of 2000 is envisaging “looser conditions under which Russia might resort to nuclear weapons” (Light 227). Igor Ivanon, the Foreign Minister of that time stated: “We do not intend to and will not relinquish our national interests... Therefore, when toughness is called for, there will be toughness. However, this should not be interpreted as confrontation or aggression; it should be seen as the firm, constructive defense of national interests” (People’s daily). New doctrines also took domestic problems into consideration, and “if domestic threats are perceived to have external causes, there is logic to the more assertive foreign policy stance that emerges in the new doctrines and concepts” (Light 228). And

although the “near abroad” focus has appeared in 1993 Foreign Policy Concept, policies of the new millennia are those which “provoked accusations of neo-imperialism” (Light 228). Russian Federation seems to not always be respectful toward political sovereignty and independence of “near abroad”, in particular successor states.

Russian foreign policy has changed, and along with the conceptual changes there have been also technical changes. The difficulties that occurred while Boris Yeltsin was in power slowly faded away during Putin’s presidency. The miscommunications that took place before have been sorted out and improved. Margot Light continued her analysis and wrote: “President Putin’s background, history and personality are very different from those of his predecessor” and “he has a better relationship with his ministers and with the Duma and a very different management and foreign policy style” (229). It ought to be remembered that Russian foreign policy is still changing and we may expect this process to continue in the future as it faces presidential elections in 2008. Russian Federation has been trying to establish its position after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new identity search accompanies the quest for the new place in the international political order. However, there is no doubt that “Putin turned Russian foreign policy around 180 degrees” (Treisman 63).

Polish-Russian relations after 1991

The mutual relations of Russia and Poland after the collapse of communism were difficult. After years of disagreements, fights and subjugation the factors of geopolitics did not help in mutual relations, especially after a long history of disagreement. Poland was perceived as a long-time rebel for Russia whereas Russia was a clear imperialistic power for

Poles. This image is still present and did not change. However, one thing is certain that new relations had to be initiated and a foreign policy shaped because the political reality did not allow for both states to completely ignore one another because of their common border.

While Russia was looking for new ways in the new world order, and tried to find the new identity on the world stage, Poland looked for membership in NATO and the European Community at that time. The first visit to Moscow of Polish president Lech Walesa took place in 1992 and was the very first official visit of the independent head of Polish state. Walesa was not pretentious and therefore relatively successful in making Boris Yeltsin remove Russian troops from Poland, which was again a symbol of the next step in Polish complete independence. Walesa was similar in a certain degree to Yeltsin. Both had difficult positions at that time, because the new environment put both presidents to the test. With no democratic experience on either side, both had to find their way of operating in the new technical environment to become and be a significant part of creating the new ways of communication among the new institutions that were being built.

Yeltsin visited Poland in 1993 and surprised the government by supporting Polish membership in NATO structures. This was a very positive message for Polish officials. However, the euphoria did not last too long, because “this apparent concession triggered a barrage of criticism across the political spectrum in Russia, forcing Yeltsin to reverse himself thereby undermining his credibility and underscoring Russia’s endemic instability” (Prizel 133). Russia became very defensive when it came to the problem of expanding NATO. The loud opposition was understood and taken seriously by the West, but Poland was even more eager to join the treaty. The eagerness could be easily understood at that time because of the fact that Russia did not guarantee its development of successful democracy, and Poland

definitely wanted to avoid becoming trapped again in a situation of not being in NATO and being next to an undemocratic Russia at the same time. Poland however was not ready to join NATO at any cost and the awareness of mutual agreement between Russia and expanded NATO would have to take place. On the other hand loud protests of Russia could again be perceived as trying to influence the politics and foreign affairs of Poland. It seemed that it “has provoked a long and occasionally bitter effort by the Russians to assert their rights to some ill-defined influence over the former Soviet empire” (Biskupski 189).

Russian approach was natural for her officials, because it was inherited from USSR, but Russia was not USSR anymore. The government tried its best to create an opposite picture, in which Russia still has power and the right to dictate its stance. Biskupski wrote: “Until Russia emerges as a healthy, constructive member of the European community, Poland’s only recourse is to look to its own security and avoid provocative actions in the east” (190).

Poland finally joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004, and Russia despite many problems made its peace with that. However, the relationships became harder in the new millennium because of a few situations in which both countries had some interests; despite the fact that President Aleksander Kwasniewski did his best to balance the foreign policy of Poland with west and east (He visited Moscow multiple times along with calls to President Putin). President Vladimir Putin even visited Poland in 2002 giving hope for the observers that the mutual relations will improve. However, next events showed differently.

The very first problem that shattered Polish-Russian relations was the political crisis in Ukraine, known to the world as the Orange Revolution. The Orange Revolution took place

in November of 2004 and lasted until January of 2005. Ukraine was ruled by President Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich who had support of Russia. The country was widely corrupted and controlled by the elite. The reality was that “the oligarchs were able to operate their businesses without fear of independent oversight” (Karatnycky 35). In 2004, when the new presidential election was coming, the charismatic opposition leader and former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko was leading in the polls and was a hope for the better Ukraine. He was backed by the Western countries, whereas Yanukovich was the leader with Russian support. This support was not unofficial and hidden; rather it was public and widely known to people interested in Ukrainian politics. When the election took place, the results were shocking. Yanukovich won by 2 percent despite the fact that the non-governmental exit polls showed that Yushchenko held a clear win by almost 10 percent. For the opposition it was clear that there was fraud. For example, “the OSCE reported that almost 12 percent of polling stations received at least 10 percent more ballots than there were registered voters in their precincts, in contravention of rules stating that no more than 3 percent extra ballots can be issued” (D’Anieri 2004). The result was that opposition organized and did not accept the results. Independence Square in Kiev became the center of opposition that protested massively and demanded new elections under independent monitoring. Russian President Vladimir Putin called and congratulated Yanukovich for his win, which was a clear sign of his support of status quo. Poland along with Lithuania strongly supported the Ukrainian right to fair election. Many politicians visited Ukraine to show support. The biggest contributors were Lech Walesa and Aleksander Kwasniewski. Kwasniewski became a part of the round table negotiating new election.

Russia did not like the fact that Poland actively supported Yushchenko. As a matter of fact, Russia did not like the fact the West united in favor of new, free elections in Ukraine. Andrew Wilson wrote: “As well as fraud (greater than their own) the Russians blamed manipulation from abroad. Those who were more upset and suspicious of the elections “blamed spies and mountains of US money, seeing the US playing the same zero-sum ‘great geopolitical game’, and trying to create a ‘cordon sanitaire’ around Russia” (175). Putin along with Kuchma criticized the idea of repeating the election, despite the fact that the evidence for fraud was visible and very apparent. At the end Yushchenko got his chance to prove the point and won by a wide margin in repeated election on December 26 of 2004. Polish-Russian relations received a blow after Orange Revolution because at the end of 2004 became began the cooling relations between the two countries. Comments such as this one below show how the Russian attitude towards Poland was.

If Ukraine, even if independent, does not have special, allied relations with Russia, its fledgling statehood can easily be turned into an anti-Russian bridgehead, and it will eventually be transformed into a second Poland...a historico-cultural project, which is alien to Russia (Wilson 177).

On the other hand President Kwasniewski was not any different and stated straightforward that “for every great power Russia without Ukraine is better than Russia with Ukraine” (Wilson 193).

The implication of Polish support for Ukraine had a quick response. In November of 2005 Russia imposed an embargo on Polish exported meat and the ban was explained by veterinary certificates that were supposedly made by Polish exporters later shown to be

fraudulent. Poland was surprised by the situation, having had a good experience with exporting meat to the EU at the same time, where standards are very high. Later, it was promised that the problem would be fixed. After investigation, Polish authorities noticed that the falsified certificates were issued outside Poland and were not made by Polish exporters. All traces led to Moscow and participation of Russia secret services. The Polish newspaper "Dziennik" published on November 25th 2006 the article describing the whole situation based on the prosecutors' investigation and pointed to Russia's officials as the ones who initiated the action and refused to help Polish prosecutors.

According to "Moskowskij Komsomolec" the embargo is very political form of punishment for the support of Ukraine in the Orange Revolution as well as electing the Kaczynski brothers who have been very skeptical about Russian intentions (Malczyk). Poland responded by using a veto of EU-Russia negotiations on a new mutual agreement. The Polish veto was perceived very negatively within the EU, but a Russian embargo became a priority for Polish authorities. On November 22nd, 2006 Interfax Central Europe published a letter written by Vladimir Putin to the Financial Times. The letter talked about "creating fresh division lines in Europe" and was perceived as a 'veiled warning' to Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries" (Onet.pl).

The European Union supported Poland in the "fight" over the embargo but resolutions have been limited and rather slow. Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of European Commission, said in May of 2007 that the Russian embargo on Polish meat is discrimination, and presented a widely repeated argument that if Polish meat was not meeting high veterinary standards of the EU it would not be allowed to be exported with the Union. Therefore the Russian stand is not understandable (Wirtualna Polska). The Polish veto is still

valid and the embargo of Russia on Polish meat became the problem of the European Union as a whole.

Another important situation that played an important role in shaping the current Russian-Polish relationship was the crisis in Estonia. In April of 2007 the Estonian authorities removed the monument to USSR soldiers in Tallinn. Following this event the Russian minority in Estonia actively protested on the streets. Because of these demonstrations several people got injured. Russia reacted very angrily and criticized the decision. Exports of Russian oil to Estonia were halted (although it was claimed to be based on technical grounds). The Estonian embassy in Moscow was besieged by pro-Kremlin neo-Nazi youth group forcing the diplomats to go back to Tallinn. Poland supported Estonia claiming that an independent country has the right to remove monuments or replace them. Moreover, the US Secretary of State clearly stated that Estonia had every right to remove monument (Bajerski). President Lech Kaczynski officially called President Toomasam Hendrik Ilves and expressed his sympathy towards Estonian actions. Similar to the case of Orange Revolution Russia did not approve of Polish involvement in this affair. The mayor of Moscow Yury Luzhkov, who is also one of the leaders of United Russia party, called for a boycott of Estonian and Polish products in Russia. He said that “when we see what is done to Russians in Estonia and Poland we should not only limit our actions to protesting but also fixing those problems by real means” (Lead.pl). In the conflict Poland expressed support, which it had every right to do so. Russia also had her chance to express her dissatisfaction. In the eyes of many Poles, Russia tries its best to make everything political and its own way. This does not help in any way to improve the relationship.

Another incident that became very challenging for Russia, is the US plan of making Poland and Czech Republic as part of the Missile Defense system. Poland and Czech Republic agreed to place parts of the system on their territories. Poland would then possess the missiles, and Czech Republic would install the radar components for the whole system. Russia sees this as a threat expanding American defense system next to her borders. The balance of nuclear power, according to Russia, would be changed and would lead to hardening of Russian foreign policy. Roman Joch wrote that modern technology allows intercepting only limited number of missiles. According to Americans, the concept of the defense system is targeted against enemies and unpredictable nations that possess only limited arsenal. The idea is that “in no way this would limit Russian capabilities of fighting force” (Joch 78). Russia is aware of these sentiments but it raises an alarm and may have objections because again, something is being done without its consent. Paradoxically, Russia has not expressed its willingness to talk to Poland about the issue. Officially, it has not refused to talk, but no confrontation regarding this subject has not taken place. Despite the fact that Poland is very interested in cooperation with Russia, Russia will only talk with the US.

The European Union and NATO would like to discuss the situation in an international forum; however this would not intervene in the internal policies of the independent states. The secretary general of NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated that some of the Russian arguments are simply not true. He noted those ten missiles in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic will not have any impact on Russian security. Russian claims that it was not informed of the plans are also incorrect. Russian advisers at NATO were informed by Washington in 2007 (O2). Russia successfully put the case on the international agenda at the

G8 meeting in Heiligendamm in 2007 and made it out of its claims about security. However, Poland and Czech Republic look at the system as gaining some importance on the international stage as well as getting military and perhaps financial aid from the US for supporting the system. In this case both countries are looking at their own interests, and EU and NATO are aware of it.

Finally, the last issue that has had a significant influence on Polish-Russian relations, and which illustrates that Russia behaves imperialistically is the energy policy of Russia. Poland imports 94.5% of crude oil and 84% of gas of total imports from Russia. Despite the fact that Poland's domestic production of natural gas meets 39% of total demand, and there are imports from Germany and Norway, Russia almost has a monopoly over exporting those resources to Poland (Smith 11). Smith wrote that "Poles can cite examples of Russia using its energy monopoly for economic and financial advantage in Poland, but few can provide evidence that Russian pressure has a measurable impact on Polish foreign or security policies" (48). One of the examples of unfair treatment could be building an undersea pipeline that would avoid Poland. When Poland discovered that Russia installed an optic cable along with the Yamal pipeline, Russia convinced Poland to leave the cable for future revenues that would come from building Yamal II next to Yamal I. Unfortunately for Poland, the plans turned out to be different and Russian company Gazprom with support of Putin decided to build an undersea pipeline to Germany. Economically, the plan does not make sense and is highly inefficient comparing to Yamal II, however "Poles are convinced that the undersea project is Putin's way of demonstrating to Poland and Belarus that Russia is prepared to invest large sums of money to display Russia's energy dominance and eliminate

the possibility that Poland or Belarus could use additional pipelines as leverage with Moscow” (Smith 49).

The conflict with Estonia and cut off of oil transport (despite the fact the Russian explained that it was a “technical” problem) to that country show that Russia approach is clear and that it uses energy as one of the tools on the political stage. The Polish parliament aware of the situation, voted a bill at the beginning of 2007 that would increase oil and gas reserves in case Russia should halt exports (Kuligowski). In April of 2007 Russia cut supplies to Belarus, which directly impacted Poland and Lithuania.

The relations of Russia and Poland after the collapse of communism have been very difficult and complex. The diplomatic contacts have been limited to a minimum and it seems that relations are worsening. It is important to notice that Poland is not in a unique position of being badly treated by Russia. Poland has become less important in Russia’s political consideration, since the Russian government continues to show its strength and superiority on every occasion. The cases of Estonia and Ukraine showed that it is incredibly hard for Russia to get over the collapse of Soviet Union. It treats its neighbors as if it forgets that the era of Soviet Republics is over.

Public opinion and Polish-Russian relations

Official relations of the governments and politicians might be deteriorating; however it is interesting to look at the public opinion and its view on the relations. This will give us a clear picture of how average citizens of these countries perceive of those neighboring. First are the relations of Poland and Russia in the Polish public’s eyes. Tables 2 and 3 present

changes in public opinion concerning relation between two countries, and the variation in them over the particular time periods.

Table 2. Polish opinion on Russian-Polish relations in 1990

How do you perceive Polish Russian relations?	May-June 1990
Good	15%
Nor good, nor bad	61%
Bad	14%
Hard to say	9%
Total	99%

Source: OBOP, May/December 1990: "Opinie o stosunkach polsko-rosyjskich", <http://www.tns-global.pl/archive-report/id/1058>, accessed September 11, 2007.

Table 3. Polish opinion on Russian-Polish relations

How do you perceive Polish Russian relations?	IV 2000	II 2002	IV 2005	VI 2005	XII 2005
Good	2%	19%	6%	3%	3%
Nor good, nor bad	47%	66%	55%	33%	41%
Bad	40%	9%	31%	57%	51%
Hard to say	10%	6%	8%	7%	5%
Total	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: CBOS, December 2005: "Opinie o stosunkach polsko-rosyjskich", <http://www.zigzag.pl/cbos/details.asp?q=a1&id=3452>, accessed September 11, 2007.

Table 2 shows that in 1990, a majority of Polish public opinion on Russian-Polish relations considered those relations as neither good nor bad. This indifference may be understood as leaning toward negative feelings, but not strongly negative. Only 14% of the people thought the relations were bad, and 15% believed they were good.

Table 3 shows the responses to the same question; however the poll was conducted 10 years later. Four in ten of the respondents thought the relations were bad, which is a significant increase from 14% in 1990. Interestingly, in February of 2002, after the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Poland, the good opinions jumped to 19% from 2% in 2000. On the other hand, the bad opinions increased from 31% to 57% in just two months in 2005. The reason for that may be the celebration of the end of the World War II in Moscow. The event was perceived as was controversial for Poles, because Poland was not mentioned as one of the allies in defeating Nazi Germany. In general, those two tables show the deterioration of opinion, which would match the general attitudes of both governments.

Table 4 and 5 both show answers to a similar question: “How do you perceive Russian-Polish relations?”, but the poll was taken in Russia. These tables cover the year of 1990 and period from 2000 to 2005. This allows us to observe the variation in the opinion of Russians, and compare it to the answers given by Polish public opinion. Opinion in Russia shows the same trends as in Poland. In 1990 only 16% of Russian thought that the relations were bad, most thought they were neither good nor bad. In August of 2005, every third person perceived the relations as unfriendly. Even comparing to the answers from 2001, it is apparent that more and more Russians perceive Poland as having unfriendly approach towards their country.

Table 4. Russian opinion on Russian-Polish relations 1990

How do you perceive Russian-Polish relations?	May-June 1990
Good	21%
Nor good, nor bad	54%
Bad	16%
Hard to say	9%
Total	100%

Source: *OBOP, May/December 1990: "Opinie o stosunkach polsko-rosyjskich"*, <http://www.tns-global.pl/archive-report/id/1058>, accessed September 11, 2007.

Table 5. Russian-Polish relations

Do you think Poland is friendly or unfriendly towards Russia?	6-7 October 2001	22-23 January 2005	20-21 August 2005
Friendly	57%	47%	35%
Unfriendly	25%	23%	32%
Hard to say	19%	30%	33%
Total	101%	100%	100%

Source: *POF, August 30, 2005: "Russian-Polish Relations"*, <http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/frontier/countries/Poland/ed053415>, accessed September 11, 2007

Table 6 allows us to look at two different kinds of perceptions, which are separate but parallel. One is about Russia as a country, the other about the Russians as the people.

Table 6. Polish perception of Russia**Russian perception of Russians**

What is your feeling towards Russia?	February 2005	What is your feeling towards Russians?	February 2005
Postive	23%	Positive	39%
Negative	18%	Negative	9%
Indifferent	55%	Indifferent	49%
Hard to say	4%	Hard to say	3%
Total	100%	Total	100%

Source: TNS OBOP, February 2005: "Wolimy Rosjan of Rosji", <http://isp.org.pl/files/7341595190709408001117722340.pdf>, accessed September 11, 2007.

According to Table 6, in 2005, the majority of Poles felt indifferent about Russia, and 49% felt the same about Russians as people. Only 23% of Poles felt positive about Russia, but 39% had the same feeling about Russians. Negative feelings towards country of Russia were declared by 18% of Poles, whereas negative feelings towards its people were expressed by only 9%. This is very interesting, because it shows that Poles have more positive feelings towards Russians than Russia itself.

Table 7 shows the same question asked in Russia, illustrating the attitudes of Russians towards Poland as a country. The poll was taken in Russia by the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), which is the non-profit organization operating in Russia. As we see from the poll 40% of the Russians feel positive about Poland, the country, and 51% felt the same about Poles, which is a significant difference. When we combine all negative feelings towards Poland, the country, we get 29%, whereas only 14% of the respondents had negative approach towards Polish people.

Table 7. Russian perception of Poland**Russian perception of Poles**

Comparing your current attitude towards Poland with what you felt about Poland previously, which of the following statements comes closest to your own view?	December 7, 2006	Do you personally like Poles or not?	2005
I have always positive feelings about Poland	40%	Yes	51%
I had positive feelings about Poland before, but I have more negative feeling about that country now	18%		
I had negative feelings about Poland before, but I have more positive feeling about that country now	1%	No	14%
I have always had negative feelings about Poland.	10%		
Hard to answer	30%		
Total	99%	Total	101%

Sources: FOM, December 7, 2006: "Russian, Poland and the EU",

http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/frontier/blocks/russ_europe/ed064824, accessed September 11, 2007.

FOM, August 30, 2005: "Russian-Polish relations",

http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/cat/frontier/international_relations/souzniki/Poland/ed053415, accessed September 11, 2007.

Around third of the people said it was hard to answer. We see that the path is similar.

Russians feel more positively about Poles than Poland itself. Therefore the polls have shown that respondents sympathize with citizens of the countries, but are less positive about the countries of those citizens.

The problems of Ukraine during the Orange Revolution were widely published in the media; therefore there were a variety of polls showing opinions on the Ukraine in both Russia and Poland. Let us examine the differences. Table 8 and 9 will show the attitudes of

Poles and Russians towards Ukrainians who participated in the Orange Revolution. The question asked in the polls, which were done by CBOS and FOM were similar.

Table 8. Polish sympathy

In the last days there were mass protests in Ukraine. Who do you think is your sympathy with?	December 2004
With supporters of Yushchenko (pro Europe)	54%
With supporters of Yanukovich (pro Russia)	2%
Do not sympathies with any sides	37%
Hard to say	8%
Total	101%

Source: CBOS, December 2004: "Reakcje na wydarzenia na Ukrainie", http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2004/K_191_04.PDF, accessed September 11, 2007.

We see that Poles were more supportive of Yushchenko and his supporters than the Russian respondents. More than a half of respondents in Poland (54%) declared their sympathy towards Yushchenko supporters, whereas only 2% felt this way towards Yanukovich supporters. Russian respondents answered differently to Poles. Only 6% of them declared sympathy towards the supporters of pro-European Yushchenko, while 25% of the respondents declared antipathy.

Table 9. Russian sympathy**Who would be a better President?**

Do you feel sympathy or antipathy towards the participants in mass rallies in Yushchenko's support, or are you indifferent about them?	December 23 2004	Which of the candidates would be a better president for Ukraine?	December 23 2004
Sympathy	6%	Yushchenko	7%
Antipathy	25%	Yanukovich	39%
Indifferent	52%	Hard to answer	54%
Hard to answer	17%		
Total	100%	Total	100%

Source: FOM, December 2004: "Ukraine's Presidential Election", http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/dominant/edom0451/edomt0451/edomt0451_1/ed045109, accessed September 11, 2007.

More than a half of Russians (52%) Russians felt indifferent about the topic, and the number could have been expected to be lower, taking under consideration President Putin's involvement in Ukrainian elections. 39% of Russians declared that Yanukovich would be a better president for Ukraine, while only 7% thought Yushchenko would be better Ukrainian president. These numbers show, that Peoples' perspectives somehow reflect tendencies of both governments. Poland supported Yushchenko and the Orange Revolution, and Russia supported Yanukovich.

The problem of Russian embargo on Polish meat was also noticed by both societies; therefore below are presented some polls that touch on this topic. Table 8 shows the opinions of Poles on motivations of Russian government and its embargo on Polish meat.

Table 10. Opinions on embargo

What are the motives of Russians in placing embargo on polish meat?	December 2005
Political and targeted against Poland	73%
Understandable protection of Russian interior market	15%
Hard to say	12%
Total	100%

Source: CBOS, December 2005: “Opinie o stosunkach polsko-rosyjskich”,
[“http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K_202_05.PDF”](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2005/K_202_05.PDF), accessed September 11, 2007.

In Poles’ eyes the embargo was clearly political and it was targeted against Poland. 73% of Poles responded that the motives were political. Only 15% considered the embargo as understandable. Following the decision of embargo, Poland vetoed the negotiations of the EU with Russia. Let us see whether Russian public was aware of this situation. Table 11 presents the opinion of Russians on the negotiations. However, it is crucial to mention that 61% of all respondents did not have any idea that veto was placed on the EU forum, leaving the impression that Poland and the EU is not on Russian citizens’ mind. Therefore, below are opinions of 39% of all respondents, which are those who actually knew that EU-Russia negotiations were vetoed. Table shows, that 12% of total respondents had the opinion of veto being the result of Russian embargo on Polish meat. Interestingly the lowest percentage of

the public thought that the veto was an outcome of “long-standing negative feeling toward Russia”.

Table 11. Russian opinion on Polish veto

In your opinion, why did Poland veto the Russia-EU talks? (39% of the sample responded knew about veto)	December 7, 2006
It is a reaction to Russia’s import ban on Polish meat	12%
It has to do with economic reasons, Poland has its own reasons, profit from them	3%
Poland dislikes Russia, wants to harm us	3%
It has to do with Russia’s export of energy resources abroad	2%
Poland has bad leaders	2%
This is politics, political reasons	1%
Poland did not make this decision independently	1%
Poland has long-standing negative feelings towards Russia	1%<
Other	2%
Hard to answer	14%

Source: FOM, December 7 2006: “Russia, Poland and the EU”, http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/dominant/edominant2006/edomt0648_4/ed064814, accessed September 1, 2007.

Finally, the Defense Missile System was another problem in Polish-Russian relations. Does public opinion in Russia and Poland differs on this issue? This can be checked by looking Tables 12 and 13, which show the opinions of Poles and Russian on the same topic. The poll was taken around the same time in 2007, when the discussion about the Defense Missile System started becoming an important issue. Also, it is worth noticing that the

system is still in the phase of negotiating, therefore there are no final decisions made. The future is to clarify whether defense shields will actually be placed on the Polish territory, and the topic is expected to remain in the center of foreign policy discussions for Poland, Russia and even United States to certain degree.

Table 12. Poles' stand on Defense Missile System

What is your opinion on the Defense Missile System	February 2007
Definitely for	9%
Probably for	19%
Hard to say	17%
Probably against	25%
Definitely against	30%
Total	100%

Source: CBOS, February 2007: "Polacy o tarczy antyrakietowej", http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2007/K_112_07.PDF, accessed September 11, 2007.

Interestingly, in both Russia and Poland more people have negative feelings about placing the Defense System in Poland and Czech Republic rather than supporting the idea. More than a half of Poles are against the system (55%), and only 28% declared support of it. Russians are even more skeptic and 74% of Russian respondents had negative feelings about the defense system. Only 2% claimed positive feelings. It seems that Russians and Poles, the people, do not differ much, when involvement of the United States comes to play into regional geopolitics.

Table 13. Russians on Defense Missile System

Do you have positive, negative or indifferent feelings about U.S. plans to set up missile defense system in Eastern Europe?	May 3, 2007
Positive	2%
Negative	74%
Indifferent	15%
Hard to answer	9%
Total	100%

Source: FOM, May 3, 2007: "U.S. Plans to Set Up a Missile Defense System in Eastern Europe", http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/dominant/edomt0718_3/ed071821, accessed September 11, 2007.

Public opinion showed that both sides think that Polish-Relations are worse than they used to be. Perception in both countries is less positive than perception of people themselves. Russians and Poles differed in sensitivity to the question of Ukraine, as their governments also took a stands on different sides (Poland supported Yushchenko and Russia supported Yanukovich). Poles thought that embargo on Polish meat was highly political, while, those of Russians who were aware of the topic were convinced that Polish veto on EU-Russia negotiations was an outcome of that embargo. Finally a majority of both publics think negatively of placing the defense missile system in Poland and Czech Republic. The most interesting thing that comes out of those polls is that Poles and Russians seem to like each other in general, but the problem starts when asking for government approval; However, it may be judged that since there is not many sources for animosity on societal levels, there should be a room for improvement of the Russian-Polish official relations.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSION

The relationship between Russia and Poland has been very difficult and very problematic since the beginnings of these states' existence. History showed years of conflicts and mutual distrust and as a result of this, modern healthy, partner-to-partner relationship seems extremely hard to achieve. Maria Czekaleva-Demidovskaya wrote: "As a consequence of the lack of clear strategy Poland's attitude toward Russia is determined by unfounded fears and history-based beliefs very often being in conflict with other interest of the country, for example in economic sphere" (6). Whether those fears were really unfounded remains a topic for discussion, but this does not change the fact that the legacy of common history is visible.

Poland may lack clear strategy toward Russia. But as many of the young democracies, a solid, stable and effective institutions resulting in positive outcomes of various policies are threatened by constantly changing governments, for instance. Moreover, Poland has chosen to involve itself with the European Union and United States as a primary focus in foreign policy. Czekaleva-Demidovskaya, in the same paper said:

"Russia, tries to ignore new factors, pretending that nothing has changed since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It means that Russia is focused on the past concerning its relations with Central and Eastern European countries and, consequently, cannot produce and follow a strategy applicable for the future" (8).

Perhaps Russia is pretending that nothing has changed since the collapse of the USSR is the reason why there is no improvement of mutual relations as well as clear and modern strategy

towards each other. Perhaps the fact that Russia seems unable to adjust to the reality in which it does not have an authority to control actions of the former satellite states puts a significant halt on the possibility of creating relationship that would be successful. History left a significant mark on both countries and the legacy is very troublesome for modern and future generations.

The successes of modern Polish-Russian relations are very limited, leaving both countries independent after the collapse of communism is one of the positive outcomes. Poland also considers Russian “concession” about NATO as different a kind of success. The failures are definitely more numerous and usually in the center of attention. The biggest one, causing many other failures to happen, is lack of conciliation and firm approach of both countries toward each other. Lack of trust and fresh start in making new foreign policy are another.

Future of the relationship

The future of mutual relations relies on many factors. The main one is reconciliation and trust that should be built as a base for future cooperation. Nobody expects the two countries to become the best partners on the international stage, but objective and firm policy based on respect could be achieved. In creating policies and decisions, it seems that historical background still plays a significant role, limiting objective approach at the same time. Public opinion shows that average people do not have aversion toward each other. Based on that there should be definitely a mutual campaign creating new image of both countries. Poland should also assure Russia, that the fact that Poland joined the European Union, NATO does

not interfere with creating successful eastern foreign policy. Poland as a new member of the EU should also lead the union in making good policies with the east, but so far it is the only country that vetoes the negotiations with Russia.

There also should be room for bilateral relationship, which ought not to be forgotten. Poland is a part of the EU, but it also a neighbor of Russia, and this fact should finally become an advantage rather than a curse. The geopolitics of Poland may become a benefit rather than fear factor. Legacy of the past is seen in modern relations of Poland and Russia. History was brutal and violent; both nations have every right to claim their losses. However, every day is a good day to start a new history that will overshadow the past that is so unfortunate. It will not be easy, and it will not take months. However, it is possible, and both sides should start with the belief that there is a chance for better relationship in the future.

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