

# Poland in Transatlantic Relations after 1989



# Poland in Transatlantic Relations after 1989.

*Miracle Fair*

Edited by

Małgorzata Zachara

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Poland in Transatlantic Relations after 1989: Miracle Fair

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This book is dedicated to Professor Andrzej Mania who laid the foundation for and continues to be a major supporter of transatlantic bridge building in Poland.



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# MIRACLE FAIR

WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA

Commonplace miracle:  
that so many commonplace miracles happen.

An ordinary miracle:  
in the dead of night  
the barking of invisible dogs.

One miracle out of many:  
a small, airy cloud  
yet it can block a large and heavy moon.

Several miracles in one:  
an alder tree reflected in the water,  
and that it's backwards left to right  
and that it grows there, crown down  
and never reaches the bottom,  
even though the water is shallow.

An everyday miracle:  
winds weak to moderate  
turning gusty in storms.

First among equal miracles:  
cows are cows.

Second to none:  
just this orchard  
from just that seed.

A miracle without a cape and top hat:  
scattering white doves.

A miracle, for what else could you call it:  
today the sun rose at three-fourteen  
and will set at eight-o-one.

A miracle, less surprising than it should be:  
even though the hand has fewer than six fingers,  
it still has more than four.

A miracle, just take a look around:  
the world is everywhere.

An additional miracle, as everything is additional:  
the unthinkable  
is thinkable.

Translated by Joanna Trzeciak in the collection *Miracle Fair: Selected Poems of Wislawa Szymborska* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 119.



## INTRODUCTION

# POLAND IN TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AFTER 1989: MIRACLE FAIR\*

MAŁGORZATA ZACHARA

Deprived of its nationhood and autonomy for much of the twentieth century, Poland has been an actor in transatlantic relations for the past 25 years. The beginnings of the free country were humble: the only period of democratic rule in Poland's 20th-century history was between the First and Second World Wars. Given the fact that earlier there had been no independent Polish state for a period of 123 years, Poles had only 20 years to learn about modern democracy. But this turned out to be enough to pass the democracy test in the last decade of the 20th century. In 1989, the country was flooded with international debt and bureaucracy, and its economy was falling apart. Freedom turned out to be bittersweet, but the country and its people survived, creating the most appealing success story of the region.

This book was meant to be entitled "Back to the Game? Poland in Transatlantic Relations after 1989," as this was the title of the international symposium summing up the research project findings, held in March 2014. At that time, the prevalent notion with regard to Poland's role on the international scene was one of triumph over history. In 2014, Poland celebrated the 25th anniversary of its partially-free elections in 1989, the 15th anniversary of its membership of NATO, and the 10th anniversary of its membership of the European Union. The President of the United States Barack Obama highlighted the significance of these events in his Warsaw speech: "Twenty-five years ago today, we witnessed a scene that had once seemed impossible, an election where, for the first time, the people of this

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\* The title of the book is inspired by the poem "Miracle Fair" by Wisława Szymborska.

nation had a choice. The communist regime thought an election would validate their rule or weaken the opposition. Instead, Poles turned out in their millions. And when the votes were counted, it was a landslide victory for freedom ... It was the beginning of the end of communism, not just in this country, but across Europe ... Thanks to the courage and determination of so many Poles displayed over the decades, the idea of a free and democratic and prosperous Poland is not a dream anymore, it is a reality.”<sup>1</sup> Global media gushed with appreciation for the country on this occasion. *The Economist* announced a new Golden Age, stating that “For the first time in half a millennium, Poland is thriving.”<sup>2</sup> Mitchell A. Orenstein opened his Foreign Affairs analysis with a revealing line: “Anyone who knows Polish history cannot help but marvel at the country’s emergence from the ashes of its traumatic past.”<sup>3</sup>

During its long history, Poland had been a playground rather than a player in international politics, but the successful free market transformation, dedication to its pro-Western orientation, and persistence in building a stable economy seemed to have laid foundations for this country to finally turn into a player on the international scene.<sup>4</sup> Around 2013, when the symposium title was conceived, Poland was indeed “back to the game.” However, shortly after, the situation turned dramatically for Poland. The Ukrainian crisis was a symbol of the renewal of aggressive Russian policies, and changed the global and regional security landscape. The political course undertaken by the conservative government elected in 2015 raised questions about the maturity of Poland’s legal and democratic institutions.<sup>5</sup> It seems ironic that Poland has recently been pushed into one

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<sup>1</sup> Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama at the 25th Anniversary of Freedom Day—Warsaw, Poland,” June 04, 2014, accessed July 4, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/04/remarks-president-obama-25th-anniversary-freedom-day-warsaw-poland>.

<sup>2</sup> “The Second Jagiellonian Age,” *The Economist*, June 26, 2014, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21604684-first-time-half-millennium-poland-thriving-says-vendeline-von-bredow>.

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell A. Orenstein, “Poland. From Tragedy to Triumph,” *Foreign Affairs* 93 (2014): 23.

<sup>4</sup> The most recognized history of Poland on the international market is *God’s Playground* by Norman Davies. See also, “Playground Turned Player,” *The Economist*, June 28, 2014, accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21604688-poland-carries-new-clout-international-stage-playground-turned-player?zid=307&ah=5e80419d1bc9821ebe173f4f0f060a07>.

<sup>5</sup> Reporters Without Borders say that in 2016 Poland fell 29 places (to 47) in its global media freedom index, which polls media experts and lawyers to assess

of the most brutal political and philosophical divisions in its history, reflected in different lifestyles, ideologies, religious and, above all, political choices. The foundations of liberal democracy are being questioned, tens of thousands of Poles are demonstrating in the streets, the political system is being reshaped, and questions about national identity are being asked.

The case of Poland can be seen as an interesting point of reference for transatlantic relations. At a time when the dominant narrative of Poland—the shining example of post-Communist success and European integration—has been interrupted, several other leading narratives of the Western world also seem to be in danger as Western values cannot be considered universal, the message of globalization has lost its power, and the structure of the international order is described in increasingly vague terms.

“Poland in Transatlantic Relations after 1989: Miracle Fair” brings together a variety of scholars from different disciplines to examine the phenomenon of the transformation of Poland in the context of regional and global power relations, focusing in particular on analyses of the country’s political and social development within the area of transatlantic relations.

The study sheds light on Poland’s performance on the regional scene and tries to stimulate discussion about the lessons that may be learned from the Polish experience by other states facing the challenges of transformation. It is argued that insufficient attention has been paid to Polish achievements, given the fact that chaos and instability are the main features of today’s global security landscape. Weak states—and, judging from the situation of the country 25 years ago, Poland could have been one of them—cannot exist in isolation; they cannot remain distant from areas of peace and prosperity and create threats to world order. Preventing states from weakening and resuscitating those that are struggling to keep control over their social and economic spaces are now strategic imperatives of the international community. The case of Poland, which managed to offset its historical burdens over the course of two decades, creates an important perspective in this context.

The intention of this book is to provide a key resource for scholars and students of transatlantic politics with a special interest in Central Europe and Poland. Too often scholarly work on the role of Poland in international relations is overly region-specific, moralistic in tone, or too unequivocally pessimistic or optimistic in its evaluation. By contrast, this volume assembles scholars from a variety of backgrounds and associations within the critical fields for a deep diagnosis of Central European politics,

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pluralism, censorship, and transparency. See, Henry Foy and Zosia Wasik, “Poland: an Inconvenient Truth,” *Financial Times*, May 1, 2016, accessed July 13, 2016, <https://next.ft.com/content/4344ca44-0b94-11e6-9cd4-2be898308be3>.

including Sociology, History, Cultural Studies, American Studies, and Security Studies. This approach not only capitalizes on the diversity inherent in international relations scholarship but utilizes the differences in methodology and approach as a way of providing a balanced perspective and sophisticated insight. The volume examines different areas of transatlantic relations through the perspective of Poland in terms of the constantly evolving relationship between political interests and ideas, in which identity, public opinion, values, rivalries, and political powers are in continual flux. By focusing its attention on Poland, the volume is able to examine radically different areas of transatlantic relations without conforming to one point of view or one scholarly approach. In fact, the use of this focal point allows the book to explore the contradictions, errors, disadvantages, and power relations inherent in the very nature of the transatlantic alliance.

This book is important for several reasons:

- It provides a different perspective on the current dynamics and future perspectives of the transatlantic alliance. For more than fifty years, the transatlantic alliance has been the cornerstone of the free world, the incarnation of “the West.” Its success in managing the Cold War and bringing it to a successful end was an impressive historical accomplishment proving the strength of cooperation among nations and their ability to link values with interests. The last 25 years of Polish history represent the unquestioned success of this political concept. Poland has become an independent actor able to take responsibility for its own future thanks to the favorable configuration of global powers and the support provided by international leaders. Was this merely a historical episode that created an opportunity for one actor? Can this scenario be repeated? Under what conditions?
- It explains Polish “instinctive Atlanticism,” adding to the literature exploring the phenomenon of projecting American “smart power.” In the late eighties, Washington fiercely supported democratic changes in Eastern Europe, which remained behind the Iron Curtain, before becoming the patron of the Eastern enlargement of NATO. At the time, the United States, as the leading force of the Alliance, was welcomed by Central and Eastern Europe as a liberator from Soviet control, so it was fully justified that Poland regarded close links with the United States as an important guarantee of security and sovereignty. Twenty-five years later, although it is a member of the European Union and a far stronger



international actor, and although it has experienced severe disappointments from the United States, Polish diplomacy still attaches particular importance to its relations with the United States.

- It reveals that Polish perceptions of the global security sphere, neglected by the United States and European partners, proved to be perfectly correct. Until 2014, the Polish long-term foreign policy concept was seen as rooted in its long history of aggression and instability. Global powers neither agreed with the view that Russia should still be perceived as a potential threat to the region, nor understood why the “Fortress Europe” syndrome had such a strong impact on the Polish political imagination.
- It puts Poland’s desire for strong transatlantic leadership in the wider context of the global balance of power. The Russian approach to Ukraine has changed Europe’s political and security landscape and presents a test of the transatlantic community of values. Eastern European history is a particular point of reference for the role of transatlantic partners that waver between partnership and rivalry when they are confronted with issues beyond their bilateral agendas.

The modern history of Poland can be analyzed from many perspectives. It may be seen as a saga of persistence in the spirit of freedom, which emerged when Poles took their chance in 1989. The independence of the country was born of the effort of Solidarity—an independent opposition movement with a membership of 10 million people. But the story of Poland is also one of solidarity on the Western international scene, and of the involvement of global leaders—especially Germany and the USA—which helped bring Poland back into Europe and supported its development so that a new, important international player could be born, backed by the international community. American commitment to Eastern Europe mattered enormously to the Polish opposition and, later, another profound domestic change was made in response to European norms and regulations.

Research on international institutions and relations has focused for a long time on questions of how and under what conditions international order is established and becomes durable. There are two basic standpoints in the literature regarding the issue, represented by rationalist and constructivist institutionalist approaches. The first explains compliance through the use of positive and negative incentives, which constrain or empower countries and domestic actors by allocating differential costs to

alternative courses of action, while the latter places stress on processes of international socialization, in which domestic actors change their identities and performance as a result of imitation or argumentative persuasion. Both concepts provide useful theoretical guidance for the study of the international performance of Poland. The eastern enlargement of the EU was of particular importance to the European powers, aiming to prevent the emergence of an unstable power vacuum at the Eastern EU border. As the Norwegian Nobel Committee highlighted when granting the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union, the EU “helped to transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace.”

In the midst of a global security crisis, the transatlantic alliance has to once again be tested on its significance and credibility. The political course taken by Russia has renewed uncertainty over Central and Eastern Europe’s stability. After the annexation of Crimea, and the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine, the line of division splitting Europe indicates once again that geography is merciless. Poland’s Eastern frontier divides the safe and predictable part of the continent from the authoritarian space of political activities that are inconsistent with Western values; a space where motives are unclear and attitudes are hostile. This may not be a new Cold War, but some traces of the past are likely to drive the global political scene in the long-term perspective. Russia’s current reckless political course has reopened old questions in the transatlantic debate and created new points of reference for Polish foreign policies. This situation brings with it crucial dilemmas that Washington, and the European capitals, including Warsaw, must manage together in what is a highly dynamic and rapidly changing security environment. Poland’s role in the regional and global picture is going to change again.

## Structure

The recent events will undoubtedly mark both the European-Russian and the US-Russian relationships for years to come. It seems that the crisis in Ukraine—just like past crises in Iraq, Libya, and Syria—has revealed persisting foreign policy disagreements between NATO and the EU. Members of the transatlantic alliance have competing security interests and different views on the terms and conditions of power distribution on the international scene. This time of challenging events on the regional level and in the EU area marks a new opening in the transatlantic relations, which should be observed and analyzed.

The introductory sections bring to the fore some key themes in the contemporary transatlantic relations, providing a framework for further

analysis. The historical role of the alliance is discussed: the vision of the “West”, based on common security as well as the strategic and economic interests which helped to effectively develop the multilateral architecture that emerged from the Second World War, as reflected in the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods systems. Today’s challenges connected to the popular notion of the “Transatlantic gap”, consisting of the issues on which Americans and Europeans no longer share the same view, set a background for other themes examined in this volume.

Marcin Fataliski takes up this line further and deepens the historical perspective by presenting the period in which Poland entered the global political scene and became a serious issue in the relations between great powers – the Soviet Union and the United States. The social mobilization in dismantling the communist regime in Poland, the Solidarity movement, Martial Law introduced in 1981—these factors mark the Polish road to independence and they are still influential within the political culture of the state.

Moving on to the contemporary role of Poland on the international scene, we come to the discussions of the tools, effectiveness and strategies undertaken on the regional and global scene. Though it is argued in a number of chapters that Poland has legitimized aspirations to play a leading role in its immediate international space (see the chapters by Reeves, Zachara, Tanski), its actual performance still depends more on the configuration of the global power than on the Warsaw government’s initiatives oriented on the clearly defined aims. Consensus and determination that guided the Polish foreign policy before its admission to the European Union, have melted away in historical disputes, putting religious and patriotic slogans at the centre of the political scene. This undoubtedly dismisses Poland from realizing its full potential as a regional leader. But it is worth noticing that the orientation of a middle-size player like Poland is shaped by many factors responsible for the dynamic of the transatlantic relations. The alliance is actively searching for a new format for the relationship, trying to overcome differences and distrust. The chapter by Grabowski and Pugaciewicz, which analyzes the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership idea, puts the perspective of common interests in the global context, making another major free trade agreement—Transpacific Trade Partnership—a point of reference. The TTIP, as a major project aimed at revitalizing the transatlantic relations, provides significant insights into the partners’ ambitions, approaches and obstacles they encounter on the way to reach the consensus.

Apart from providing prosperity for nations on both shores of the Atlantic Ocean, the alliance has always been aimed at shaping the

common security domain. Chapters by Szymański and Michnik bring the conclusion about the convergence in this aspect of the relations. Marcin Szymański analyzes the features of the Polish-American defense cooperation, proposing the concept of “security franchising” in reference to the mechanisms that enabled Poles to assume the role of the regional security provider. Wojciech Michnik, on the other hand, investigates the perspective created by reactions in the face of the Crimea crisis—one of the crucial events defining the orientation of the Atlantic Alliance in recent years.

The next part of the volume reaches to the sphere of a Transatlantic community of values and actions shaped by the realization of the values which have bound Western Europe and the US at a deeper level, reaching beyond political boundaries. Vilfred Fluck looks at the changing perceptions of American culture in Europe in the period after 9/11, adding to the ongoing debate on the ability to conceptualize the transformative power of the US culture in Europe. Though it is now commonplace to question the assumption about the influence of supranational identities compared to that of the national ones, chapters by Jolanta Bartyzel and Garry Robson provide examples of the cosmopolitan spirit accompanying lifestyles and cultural choices of the Europeans in general and the New Europeans in particular. While Robson observes the ways in which Polish immigrants in the UK are undertaking and creating new patterns of transnational living, Paweł Ścigaj analyzes the events of April 2010, the Smolensk plane crash tragedy that still remains on the forefront of the country’s politics, causing bitter divisions and nationalistic resentments. The importance of the national mythologies is revealed as are mechanisms of deep social divisions: winners and losers of Poland’s economic transformation, pro-European and anti-European, traditional—often associated with Catholic faith—and modern, oriented at participating in the globalised world. This debate reveals how the past is remembered, evoked, and deployed in ways to reinvent the portrait of the nation. This is an important element of the group identity influencing how national interest is perceived and what strategies are used to defend it. Shannon Tanski and Danielle Piatkiewicz conclude the volume, offering an insight into important categories of modernity and democracy: economic development of Poland and the impact of the civil society in the period after 1989.

# CHAPTER ONE

## SETTING THE SCENE: TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS IN TRANSITION

MALGORZATA ZACHARA  
JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, KRAKOW

The notion of the transatlantic world belongs to the most powerful political narratives of the 20th century and the dynamics of transatlantic relations have been one of the leading driving forces on the global scene. Constructed on the vision of the “West,” a community based on common security and strategic and economic interests, they have effectively developed the multilateral architecture that emerged from the Second World War, as reflected in the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods systems. The foundation of institutionally-wielded power formed shared ideals of individualism and a democratic market society which were pressed into service as legitimizers of political projects. The transatlantic world served as an organizing principle behind different perspectives of global relations; a point of reference for division between well-developed and underdeveloped worlds, democratic and undemocratic societies, “the West and the Rest.”

The position of the transatlantic world and the ability of its members to influence the global course of events occurred as a result of the concentration of unprecedented power. In the middle of the 20th century America emerged with the world’s largest economy, gold reserves of more than 20,000 metric tons, and the world’s most advanced commercial infrastructure. For a brief time America was also the world’s only nuclear superpower.<sup>1</sup> The elements of its power: demographics, economics and innovation, natural resources, cultural reach, and, last but not least, its military potential enabled the United States to be actively involved in

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Kaplan, “The South China Sea Is the Future of Conflict,” *Foreign Policy* 188 (2011): 83; *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, September 8, 2011.

global affairs and to play a prominent role in influencing the other actors on the international scene. This role however involves responsibility and risks so the vision of transatlantic relations, strengthening US position and, at the same time, sharing its burdens, has been long present in the political debate:

What if the United States could find a partner it could count on as it faces the demands and opportunities of this new era in world affairs—a rich and powerful one that shared the American belief in political and economic freedom? What if this partner's interests matched America's: a growing world economy, integrated by free trade, expanding to the east and the south, safe from threats to its energy supply and from despots deploying terrorists and weapons of mass destruction? ... If this partner was also known and trusted, the United States would surely want to make the most of the partnership, perhaps even giving it a central place in American foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

The special political relationship between the United States and countries of Western Europe was born against the Soviet Union, but proved to have enduring features even when the Cold War was over. The bond has a well-established tradition—countries on both sides of the Atlantic have been long linked together through trade networks, diplomatic ties, and social interactions. Under the conditions of the global confrontation of the communist and the democratic empires, both sides of the Western world were mutually interdependent, and so acted together and continued to deepen their relations. Security, governed by the United States and its nuclear preponderance, was the main theme of the time, and the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) served as the main platform of cooperation.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the attention of the partners began moving towards economic relations. A single European market was created, the EU emerged as the United States' most important partner in terms of trade and investment, and economic integration became the central pillar of transatlantic relations. Circumstances were favorable: the 1990s witnessed a period of unrivalled Western pre-eminence. Western material power—both economic and military—was matchless compared to other regions. So despite the absence of an external threat, the two parts of the transatlantic dialogue continued to share enduring vital interests. Nevertheless, the Balkan Wars and other crises of the 90s demonstrated

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<sup>2</sup> David C. Gompert, "Introduction: A Partner for America," in *America and Europe. A Partnership for a New Era*, ed. David C. Gompert and F. Stephen Larrabee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

that the immediate concerns of America and Europe were increasingly diverging.

Globalization was the leading theme of the following decades, seen as an opportunity for the West to expand economically and politically. Notably in the 1990s, US President Bill Clinton organically linked the narrative on globalization to that of US primacy.<sup>3</sup> The United States positioned itself as a hegemon that could create and enforce the basic rules of international legitimacy. Its mission was to spread Western values so they could become universal norms.<sup>4</sup> The United States was then described as a driving force of worldwide modernization through technological progress, economic interdependence, and political approximation to Western standards within the frames of globalization.

Europeans carved out a distinct role for themselves in this narrative—the deepening integration and, later, the enlargement of the European Union were emphasized as a contribution to globalization or as adaptation to this greater interdependence. When analyzing the transatlantic landscape at the end of the century, it is worth noticing that the European Union and the United States established diplomatic relations as early as 1953, but this cooperation was formalized in 1990 for the first time—earlier, transatlantic dialogue had been seen as an indispensable requirement for global security and had been maintained almost automatically. The Transatlantic Declaration on EC-US Relations from November 1990 was accompanied by great hopes on both sides for the success of transatlantic cooperation in the new global era. American policy makers disputing various policy options that the United States could pursue to strengthen its global reach, highlighted Europe’s role. In *The Grand Chessboard*, first published in 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski evaluated:

...a long-range American geostrategy for Europe will have to address explicitly the issues of European unity and real partnership with Europe. An America that truly desires a united and hence also a more independent Europe will have to throw its weight behind those European forces that are genuinely committed to Europe’s political and economic integration. Such

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<sup>3</sup> “The New Transatlantic Agenda, 1995,” accessed June 15, 2016, <http://www.eurunion.org/partner/agenda.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> See for example: Gilford John Ikenberry, *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition: American Power and International Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); Michael Cox, “Empire? The Bush Doctrine and the Lessons of History,” in *American Power in the 21st Century*, ed. David Held and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 21–51; Bradley A. Thayer and Christopher Layne, *American Empire: A Debate* (London: Routledge, 2004).

a strategy will also mean junking the last vestiges of the once-hallowed U.S.-U.K. special relationship.<sup>5</sup>

“A real partnership” however was only possible under the condition of European willingness to widen its influence and engage in global affairs to a greater extent. The shortcomings were clear and made up the main topic of the discussion. *The Economist* wrote for example: “the EC’s illusion of privacy within the international system, of living in a charmed circle bounded entirely by its own problems and preoccupations can no longer hold.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1995, the United States and the EU developed further the framework of relations with the signing of the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) proposing joint action in four major fields:

- promoting peace and stability, democracy, and development around the world;
- responding to global challenges;
- contributing to the expansion of world trade and closer economic relations;
- building bridges across the Atlantic.<sup>7</sup>

The document reflected the transatlantic partners’ devotion to globalization (the “big idea” of the time) and transatlantic cooperation was oriented at deepening world-wide interconnectedness and at the transformation of the actors’ powers and the context in which they operated.

The profound changes in the global security environment of the beginning of the 21st century brought about the reconfiguration of the relations within the transatlantic sphere. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center buildings in New York, the Pentagon, and other targets, which triggered the global War on Terror, produced both unifying and divisive pressures on transatlantic relations. *Le Monde*’s September 12 proclamation “Nous sommes tous Américains,” illustrates how strong the European public opinion’s solidarity with the wounded empire was. Nevertheless, the US reaction to the terrorist attacks caused the imperative of a strategic change. The United States found itself at risk and was forced to address the inescapable challenges of fundamental transitions in governance and new social, cultural, and religious dynamics across the

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<sup>5</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 49.

<sup>6</sup> “United in Rivalry,” *The Economist*, July 11, 1992, S27.

<sup>7</sup> Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 52.



world. Threat perception was shared by the European side of the partnership, but the opinion on the required reaction differed radically. Opposition to the war amongst Europeans was at least partly rooted in the perception that the United States was acting unilaterally and without reference to international opinion. The George W. Bush Administration openly rejected the rules of the multilateral game when it invaded Iraq without receiving a Security Council Resolution authorizing war.<sup>8</sup>

In consequence, common relations entered a phase in which, despite shared values, the transatlantic community could not agree on shared policies. Henry Kissinger even concluded that differences over Iraq have “produced the gravest crisis in the Atlantic Alliance since its creation”<sup>9</sup> and Robert Kagan in his article “Power and Weakness,” famously diagnosed that Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.<sup>10</sup> The roots of the transatlantic rift were to be found in strategic orientation and differently defined aims. Kagan argued that Europe represents and favors a stable, civilized world order reflecting the main thesis of Immanuel Kant’s “Perpetual Peace.” The actions of the United States are driven by a different logic demonstrated in its massive defense budget, capacity to launch military operations around the world, and willingness to take unilateral action. In Kagan’s view America still belongs to the Hobbesian, anarchic world.

While the initial phases of the War on Terror left scars on the relations between the governments in the transatlantic alliance, the subsequent Iraq war caused divisions not only between the United States and many allied governments but also among European governments. The UK had been acting as a bridge between the United States and Europe but, at the same time, tried to maintain its traditional “special relationship” with Washington. In Germany, Gerhard Schroeder successfully fought an election campaign

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<sup>8</sup> The difference in approaches towards multilateral institutions is clear when comparing the view of the American and European public. Asked whether their country should have UN approval before using military force to deal with international threats, Americans are almost evenly divided on the question, with 45% saying that the United States should have UN approval while 44% saying this would make it too difficult to deal with threats; in contrast, solid majorities in the four Western European nations surveyed, including about three-quarters in Spain (74%) and Germany (76%), say their country should have UN approval before it takes military action. See, “The American-Western European Values Gap,” Survey Report 2012, accessed July 19, 2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>.

<sup>9</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, “Role Reversal and Alliance Realities,” *Washington Post*, February 10, 2003, A21.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review* 113 (2002): 3–28.

based on his opposition to the war in Iraq. France's refusal to support the war in the Middle East gained rare national consensus and was applauded from one end of the French political spectrum to the other. Central European countries openly declared support for US actions, even at the price of weakening their image in the eyes of their Western European allies. The transatlantic rift contributed to a greater extent of self-identification of the transatlantic partners and in the following years, dialogue was structured on differences rather than on similarities. In Europe there has been an increase of distrust towards American intentions, Americans themselves met the limit of their power in Iraq and Afghanistan; Fareed Zakaria coined the vision of the "Post-American World," which in the eyes of many observers suited the state of global affairs well. The financial recession of 2008 further eroded the cooperation, as the neoliberal model of Western economics was severely wounded. The term "turbulence" has been increasingly used with respect to the processes shaping global challenges that needed reactions of both the United States and the EU.

The partners' reactions to these waves of political uncertainty were mixed. Grand policy visions were undermined by mistrust and the lack of a firm, common perspective. The paradox of this situation is best reflected in the main topics of the news coverage in 2013. The most attention was paid to the negotiations for a comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the National Security Agency (NSA) Prism scandal which erupted after the revelation that Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone had been tapped.<sup>11</sup> So, potentially the most advanced project of transatlantic cooperation happened to be accompanied by the most serious crisis of confidence in relations between Berlin and Washington since 2003. On such a background, the 2014 Russian military deployments in Ukraine could only serve to demonstrate the further divergence of European and American interests, as well as the necessity for both parties to cooperate.

The general conclusions drawn from this selective survey of transatlantic relations after 1989 are straightforward. The two continents, on account of historical reasons and sharing contemporary power, are closer to each

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<sup>11</sup> TTIP is seen as part of an ambitious 21st century transatlantic agreement aimed at reducing tariffs and lowering regulatory hurdles that currently impair trade between the EU and the United States. It is designed also to be a tool for strengthening the transatlantic alliance's role in the global economy. Analyses indicate that the EU's proportion of global GDP is in decline (from 18.6% in 2013, to 10% in 2030), but this is the case for the United States, too (from 32% to 21% over the same period).

other in global affairs than to any other part of the world. They are connected by values and interests but, at the same time, strongly divided over a number of issues. The strengths and weaknesses of transatlantic cooperation may be analyzed within three areas: the internal position of Europe, issues situated between Europe and the United States, and the area that reaches beyond the Atlantic and contains factors influencing both partners.

### **The European perspective**

The growth of the EU in the second half of the twentieth century has been one of the most important phenomena of modern world history. The EU is an advanced experiment in the building of a supranational or supra-state system within the modern international relations environment. The EU model enables cooperation among previously rival states, providing a venue for dialogue, which is permanent although frequently riddled with conflicts and contradictions. The success of the European Union brought hopes for a more coordinated vision of European affairs in relations with the United States; however these failed to materialize.

What is striking in this tempting vision and at the same time, what makes is unrealistic is the fact that the imagined “partner” is an entity in a meaningful sense, able to develop a cohesive political orientation and execute it, whereas cohesion in foreign policy is something the EU is still looking for. Relations with the US fit partly into “post-modern,” “extra-national,” or “post-Westphalian” foreign policy models developed by the EU and at the same time are built through bilateral channels.<sup>12</sup>

In consequence the configuration of the interests within the EU realm, as well as within the transatlantic space, is changing constantly. The strategic perspectives in some European capitals may be similar to those in Washington, but attitudes continue to transform in the course of events. Common values among the transatlantic partners lead to common interests, but not in a coherent and unified way. The sources of political orientation always lay in internal affairs and these are widely disputed in the case of the United States, Germany or Great Britain, but rarely when the smaller states are regarded. This creates a situation in which nearly a half of the continent struggles to make its motivations within the foreign

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Smith, “The Framing of European Foreign and Security Policy: Towards a Postmodern Policy Framework?,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10 (2003): 556–575.

policy field understood. It is also important to stress that some of the differences that have arisen are not caused just by domestic or international structural factors; they are constructed by actors for specific purposes, often as a tool in domestic political campaigns. This factor is particularly visible now, when populist and extreme forces are on the rise in Europe. In a growing number of European countries which have been drained by the economic recession of 2008 and disappointed with the performance of their political systems, citizens tend to vote for populist parties to express their protest.<sup>13</sup>

The fragmentation across Europe is an obvious consequence of the fact that European nations are diverse in their worldview. This assumption, somewhat simplistic yet revealing, can be easily demonstrated by different interpretations of Russia's revisionist foreign policy throughout the continent. The annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Western Ukraine are assessed very differently throughout the continent. In the Baltic and Eastern European countries Russian revisionism is perceived as the gravest challenge to the European order in over half a century, while Mediterranean countries are rather concerned with the migration crisis and the recession. Opinions also differ in the case of other fundamental issues shaping transatlantic cooperation: for France the political and strategic role of NATO remains controversial so the EU is promoted as the most appropriate framework for strategic disputes. The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU in 2016 sets the stage for long-term uncertainty and influences the preservation of strong bonds between the two shores of the Atlantic.

In the transatlantic context, Europeans have long positioned themselves as the counterweight to American power, which is considered to be out of control. The deepening of the differences between the partners has led many in Europe to look for alternatives to the existing structure of transatlantic relations, but these are hardly possible to find. What Europeans fear is that American unilateralism and hegemonic behavior may become the norm in the relationship. Europe has never been seriously oriented at reestablishing itself as the superpower it once was, Europeans

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<sup>13</sup> Parties such as the Front National in France, Sweden Democrats, and the Austrian Freedom Party gather large and durable levels of support. In Poland the Eurosceptic Law and Justice party (PiS) became the first party to win an outright majority in parliament in 2015. In Hungary, Jobbik (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, Movement for a Better Hungary), is the most successful far-right political party following the Cold War. The tendency is clear even in the relatively big European countries, as well as among some of the most economically secure and highly educated societies.

have never ultimately decided if their continent is to be seen as a political entity possessing unique political, economic, and military tools enabling them to strengthen their position at a global level. The future role of Europe in global affairs is unclear; its vision is constantly swinging between fears and aspirations.

During the first decade of the 21st century European integration entered an intensive phase aimed at turning the European Union into a counterbalance to American power and influence. Europe has become a global player because of the integration processes which were, with a few exceptions, supported in Washington. US policy makers highlighted the fact that a united Europe would provide a growing market for US goods and generate conditions for cohesiveness allowing Europe to share US responsibilities.<sup>14</sup> The first of these expectations was fulfilled, while the second is still under debate. On the other hand since the turn of the millennium American approaches towards Europe have been more divisive and are increasingly seen as representing attempts to define what Europe is, or should be, about. This practice, however, does not provide any substantial effects as Europe is further along in the processes of fragmentation and paradigm change—from openness to the “fortress Europe” model; from multiculturalism to distrust; from social and economic safety to permanent anxiety.

Numerous tensions on the transatlantic link reflect different assumptions about the roles that the USA and the EU have to play in the world and about the accepted means for achieving these goals: the United States expects European countries to take a larger share of security responsibilities. At the same time in the United States, a country actively involved in the reshaping of Europe and enforcing the continent in the past, European support is too often taken for granted and concerns on the European side

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<sup>14</sup> The administration of George Bush proclaimed that it had gone beyond America’s “historic ambivalence” towards a united Europe: “We believe a strong, united Europe means a strong America.” George Bush, “Remarks at the Boston University Commencement Ceremony in Massachusetts, May 21, 1989,” in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, George Bush January 20 to June 30, 1989* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), 583. On the other hand, as J. L. Harper reminds: “When Bonn and Paris entertained the idea of a European Community—a controlled defense caucus that would speak with a single voice within the alliance, Washington warned them in no uncertain terms to abandon the idea. It was the kind of a structure Washington feared, that would prove incapable of acting in an emergency; an unspoken fear was perhaps that it might eventually work all too well.” John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 340.

of the Atlantic are routinely ignored. On the European side there is a growing conviction that the US-led international state system does not have the resources and support which could guarantee its governance over global dynamics. The crisis of 2008 and the deepening of instability in the larger Middle East have proven that the United States' impact on other players' behavior is weaker than expected. Transatlantic power, even when united, does not necessarily allow actors to exercise control over increasingly complex global issues. In consequence: "In both shores of the Atlantic, the issue is how to manage national economies, not how to manage the end of the west."<sup>15</sup>

## **Between Europe and the United States**

The most important issue that lies between Europe and the United States, and that continues to influence the shape of the cooperation, is the vision of shared global risk. The history of the transatlantic relationship involving cooperation in the field of global security often exposes the gap between European rhetoric and its willingness to take action. Every time EU states fail to show concrete signs of willingness to bear a bigger part of the security burden, frustration towards them in the United States grows, undermining the concept of common goals.

The perceptions of security and strategic culture, and the ways of achieving goals in these areas, differ profoundly between the two shores of the Atlantic. In Europe there is a common perception that states are increasingly unable to provide security on a national basis because of the nature of the threats and the challenges they face. Some European states are oriented at maximizing both their influence and security through cooperation, the use of soft over hard power, and the interdependence that gives priority to multilateral institutions over national or bilateral ties. This rather experimental view on security is not universally shared in Europe, as the various nations' strategic cultures represent approaches that proved to be successful in the past. So, not all European member states are willing to experiment in the sensitive area of security, while some of them also shape their strategic orientations based on negative historical experiences with collective security.

On the contrary, US strategic culture remains national rather than post-national. Since the founding, Americans have seen themselves as

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<sup>15</sup> Sergio Fabbrini, "After Globalization: Western Power in a Post-Western World," *Global Policy Journal* (2010), accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/articles/global-governance/after-globalization-western-power-post-western-world>.