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## UKRAINE AND POLAND: CHALLENGES TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Throughout the 1990s, in the bilateral documents, official statements of Ukrainian politicians, and in the provisions of the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine *The Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy*, nearly two dozen countries were called "strategic partners" of Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the 21st century, the former approach of the Ukrainian state leadership to such an important tool of foreign policy as "strategic partnership", gave a way to a more balanced one. As a result, in the speeches of presidents and ministers of foreign affairs, only few countries were distinguished as strategic partners, mainly the United States of America, Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland.<sup>2</sup> In our opinion, such changes proved "maturation" of the Ukrainian diplomacy in outlining the true priorities of authorities in Kyiv in Ukraine's foreign policy. The Ukrainian-Polish special partnership accurately corresponds with the definition of "strategic partnership" proposed by Ukrainian political analysts Vladimir Manzhola and Ihor Zhovkva.<sup>3</sup>

The Ukrainian-Polish partnership has often been the subject matter of research for both Ukrainian and Polish scholars. In Ukraine, Victoria Hevko, Oksana Znahorenko, Vitalii Motsok, Sergii Stoyetskyi and some others<sup>4</sup> devoted their scientific works

<sup>1</sup> Стратегічне партнерство України з іншими державами: підходи та оцінки, *Національна безпека і оборона*, 2000, № 12, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Манжол, В. – Жовква, І, Стратегічне партнерство у зовнішній політиці України, in: *Polska – Ukraina: więcej niż sąsiedztwo*, ред. М. S. Wolański – Ł. Leszczenko, Wrocław 2006, 178–179.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, 172–173.

<sup>4</sup> Гевко, В., Основні тенденції політичного українсько-польського співробітництва в 1993–1996 роках, in: *Наукові записки*, Серія: Історія, ред. М. М. Алексієвця, вип. 3, Тернопіль 2003, 364–369; Гевко, В., Історичні та геополітичні передумови формування нової моделі українсько-польських політичних відносин, in: *Науковий вісник Чернівецького університету: Збірник*

to this issue, focusing either on the subject as a whole or on some particular aspects. Among the Polish scientists, these issues have been thoroughly analysed by Katarzyna Yendraszczyk, Piotr Kuspys, Beata Surmacz, Krzysztof Fedorowicz and some others.<sup>5</sup> We, in turn, in the framework of the proposed scientific research, tried to analyse factors complicating and slowing the evolution of the Ukrainian-Polish relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

It should be emphasized that the path passed by Kyiv and Warsaw politicians from establishing the first international contacts to acknowledging the relations as strategic partnership was quite long and not easy. This statement can be supported by the facts listed below. It is a well-known fact that on 2nd December 1991, the Republic of Poland was the first to recognize Ukraine as an independent state. A few months later, Ukraine and Poland signed the key document regulating bilateral relations between the two countries: *The Agreement on Safe Neighbourhood, Friendly Relations and Cooperation*.<sup>6</sup> All in all, the first years of independent Ukraine were marked by intense contacts between authorities in Kyiv and Warsaw: systematic

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наукових статей, Історія. Політичні науки. Міжнародні відносини, вип. 229–230, Чернівці 2004, 110–114; Знахоренко, О. М., Співпраця у галузі вищої освіти – складова українсько-польського стратегічного партнерства, in: *Проблеми розвитку та управління інтеграційними процесами на міжнародному ринку вищої освіти і науки. Матеріали міжнародної наукової конференції 15–17 жовтня 2003 року, Ужгород 2004*, 31–35; Знахоренко, О. М., Нова східна політика Польщі та українсько-польське стратегічне партнерство, in: *Вісник Львівського Університету, Серія Міжнародні відносини*, вип. 12, Львів 2004, 44–52; Моцок, В., Польський вектор зовнішньої політики України (деякі аспекти стратегічного партнерства), in: *Науковий вісник Чернівецького університету: Збірник наукових праць*, Історія, вип. 73–74, Чернівці 2000, 218–227; Моцок, В., Розширення НАТО та українсько-польські відносини: еволюція взаємодії, in: *Науковий вісник Чернівецького університету: Збірник наукових праць*, Історія. Політичні науки. Міжнародні відносини, вип. 123–124, Чернівці 2002, 252–261; Стоєцький, С. В., Польща і європейський вибір України: стратегічне партнерство в дії, in: *Дослідження світової політики: Зб. наук. пр.*, вип. 26, Київ 2004, 225–240; Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004; Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010; Kuspys, P., *Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1991–2008. Polityka. Gospodarka. Wojsko. Sektor pozarządowy*, Kraków 2009; Surmacz, B., *Stosunki Ukrainy z Polską*, in: *Ukraina w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, red. M. Pietras – T. Kapuśniak, Lublin 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Договір між Україною і Республікою Польщею про добросусідство, дружні відносини і співробітництво, in: *Міждержавні відносини України та Республіки Польща: збірник документів*, ред. П. Сардачук, Київ 2011, 15.

high level contacts laid the ground for extensive institutional and legal cooperation.<sup>7</sup> However, after the signing of the above mentioned document, it took four years to determine the relationship between the two countries as “strategic partnership”. Initially, the term “close partnership” was used in the bilateral documents.<sup>8</sup> Yet, only in the framework of the *Joint Declaration* of 25th June 1996 the statement about the “strategic partnership” was added by the Presidents of Ukraine and Poland.<sup>9</sup>

Such situation seems somewhat strange at first glance. The following example may prove it. The term “strategic partnership” in relations between Ukraine and the USA was first used 19th September 1996 in a joint communiqué on the establishment of the *Intergovernmental commission on cooperation between Ukraine and the USA*. The similar formularization of relations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation was initially used in the basic *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership* on 31st May 1997.<sup>10</sup> However, the document was drafted in February 1995.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact, the House was practically ignoring official Kyiv during the first years of Ukraine’s independence and the fact there were confrontational relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation,<sup>12,13</sup> Ukrainian-Polish relations as “strategic partnership” were recognized three months before similar Ukraine – USA statement and a year before the one with Russia.

<sup>7</sup> Гурак, І, Початки формування інституційно-правових засад українсько-польського міждержавного діалогу, in: *Історико-політичні проблеми сучасного світу: Збірник наукових статей*, т. 29–30, Чернівці 2015, 233–234.

<sup>8</sup> Such formulation, as well as assertion, that “existence of independent Ukraine has a strategic dimension for Poland” was stated in the *Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine and Poland about Principles for the Formation of Polish-Ukrainian Partnership* on 21st March 1994, see: Декларация міністрів закордонних справ України та Республіки Польща про принципи формування українсько-польського партнерства, in: *Міждержавні відносини України та Республіки Польща: збірник документів*, ред. П. Сардачук, Київ 2011, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Спільна декларація Президента України і Президента Республіки Польща, in: *Міждержавні відносини України та Республіки Польща: збірник документів*, ред. П. Сардачук, Київ 2011, 45.

<sup>10</sup> Парахонський, Б. – Яворська, Г., «Стратегічне партнерство України». Аналітична записка. [online: <<http://www.niss.gov.ua/articles/600/>>, cit. 2011-10-28]; Стратегічне партнерство України з іншими державами: підходи та оцінки, *Національна безпека і оборона*, 2000, № 12, 3–4.

<sup>11</sup> Karpusiak, T., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 235.

<sup>12</sup> Since 1992, in relationship between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has crystallized a number of controversial moments with a high degree of conflicts. Foremost among them, is the problem of belonging of Crimea and separate the city of Sevastopol, the Black Sea fleet, Ukrainian participation in the military cooperation within the CIS, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Mironowicz, E., *Polityka zagraniczna Ukrainy 1990–2010*, Białystok 2012, 50–51; Gibas-Krzak, D., *Ukraina między Rosją a Polską*, Toruń 2006, 77–78, 80–81.

Defining the relations between Ukraine and Poland as “strategic partners” was postponed due to a number of factors, some of which find their roots in the times when the Ukrainian lands were the compliant part of the USSR.

The end of the epoch of bloc confrontation, stagnation and gradual disintegration of the “Eastern Bloc”, trends of decentralization in the Soviet Union cleared the way to a new geopolitical reality. It was the period when Ukraine and Poland gained the opportunity to enter the international arena hand in hand. Poland as a state, gradually getting free from comprehensive Soviet Union trusteeship and pursuing its own path, whereas Ukraine was making first steps on the international arena still as a Soviet republic.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, Poland’s foreign policy priorities were enhancing ties with democratic, economically developed Western countries and participation in establishing European security system, the key priority being improvement of the relations with the leading Western European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, as well as traditional Western partners.

Quite interesting was the approach of the Warsaw foreign policy representatives towards the Eastern countries. On the one hand, it was undoubtedly based on theoretical principles elaborated by the representatives of the *Kultura*<sup>14</sup> and other supporters of Ukraine’s independence.<sup>15</sup> However, at the same time, Polish scholar Piotr Kuspys noted the relationship with the Soviet Union was a determinant for Poland in 1990.<sup>16</sup> His colleague Krzysztof Fedorowicz pointed out that during that period, the Soviet Union had no concept regarding Central and Eastern Europe; therefore, Poland along with Czechoslovakia and Hungary found themselves within “the dead field of the Soviet policy”.<sup>17</sup> This statement can be interpreted in different ways, nevertheless, there is one thing for sure: the Kremlin officials had little interest in the region at that time. This offered the Polish people extensive opportunities for realization of their aspirations for independence in their foreign policy. However, it was utterly important for Warsaw that Moscow did not interfere with the growing rapprochement between Poland and the Western countries. Furthermore, the Soviet troops on

<sup>14</sup> *Kultura* (*Paris Culture*) is a leading Polish-emigrant literary-political magazine, published from 1947 to 2000. *Kultura* played a major role in Poland’s reconciliation with Ukraine, as the first independent Polish intellectual circle openly advocated, in the 1950s, recognizing Poland’s postwar eastern borders.

<sup>15</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 48–49.

<sup>16</sup> Kuspys, P., *Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1991–2008. Polityka. Gospodarka. Wojsko. Sektor pozarządowy*, Kraków 2009, 86.

<sup>17</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 27.

the territory of the country could not be ignored by Poland while defining the Eastern policy.<sup>18</sup> Possible risks coming from uncontrolled processes in some Soviet republics generated additional concern. According to the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of “independent” Poland, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the Polish people were deeply worried following the decentralization trends in the Soviet Union and were aware of its collapse. Warsaw was concerned about the calamity for Central and Eastern Europe, especially for Poland, such a course of events might bring to.<sup>19</sup>

The international situation was totally different for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The leaders of the Soviet Ukraine, taking into consideration the Baltic and South Caucasian Soviet republics’ course for independence, decided to follow suit. Ukraine encountered quite a number of difficulties on its path which were mostly of geopolitical nature. For the United States and Western Europe, Mikhail Gorbachev was the only Soviet partner who deserved full support.<sup>20</sup> The statement of the US President George W. Bush during his visit to Kyiv in 1991, proved the “procentralization” sentiments of the West. Addressing the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on 2nd August 1991, George Bush unambiguously expressed his disapproval of Ukraine’s independence.<sup>21</sup>

Representatives of German political elites also demonstrated their negative attitude towards decentralization processes in the Soviet Union. This might be explained by Mikhail Gorbachev’s favourable position towards the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany and withdrawal of Soviet troops from German states.<sup>22</sup> Great Britain shared this view. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, during her visit to Ukraine in 1990, compared the relationship between the Soviet Union and Ukraine to that of the US and Texas.<sup>23</sup>

Western countries adhered to this position till the end of 1991. Vivid is the fact that independence of Ukraine was recognized by officials in Washington only on the very day when Mikhail Gorbachev, the first and only Soviet President, announced

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<sup>18</sup> Kuspys, P., *Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1991–2008. Polityka. Gospodarka. Wojsko. Sektor pozarządowy*, Kraków 2009, 86–87.

<sup>19</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 26–27.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 26–27.

<sup>21</sup> As part of the notorious *Chicken Kyiv speech* Bush urged deputies to support the signing of a new union treaty and cautioned against the “suicidal nationalism”, see: Kapuśniak, T., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 169–170.

<sup>22</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 111.

<sup>23</sup> Kapuśniak, T., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 202.

his resignation as the President of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, there was a fragile balance between factors which, on the one hand, enhanced Ukrainian-Polish relations, and on the other hand, were quite an obstacle to the dialogue between Kyiv and Warsaw. As a result, the so-called “double track” policy emerged. It was outlined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland under the direction of Krzysztof Skubiszewski in the early 1990.

The essence of the “double track” policy was to preserve somewhat transformed relationship with the Soviet Union while establishing and deepening contacts with the Soviet republics at the same time. In practice, this meant willingness to recognize the republics’ right to self-determination and assist them, however, only in such a that did not discontent a Kremlin leadership.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that it was almost impossible to achieve this goal. For certain reasons, neither Moscow nor republics could accept it. Western countries also expressed their dissatisfaction with “double track” policy, reasoning that it weakened the position of Michael Gorbachev.<sup>26</sup> Polish politicians themselves viewed such policy as controversial,<sup>27</sup> nonetheless, it was carried out till the last days of the Soviet Union. Most resonantly it was manifested in December 1991.

The day after the referendum on the issue of Ukrainian independence, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Poland made a formal statement recognizing Ukraine as an independent state and agreed to establish diplomatic relations.<sup>28</sup> However, very soon, on 5th December, Polish President Lech Wałęsa, in the interview to the Moscow Ostankino, supported the concept of building a new Soviet state devised by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, which consequently caused the respond from the Ukrainian politicians. On this occasion, Foreign Minister of Ukraine Anatolij Zlenko (1990–1994, 2000–2003) made an official statement in which he expressed the opinion that while recognizing Ukraine as an independent state, Poland should not concurrently favour Soviet reintegration.<sup>29</sup>

After declaration of independence, both the leadership of Ukraine and the political elite of Poland were aware of the need to find new mechanisms for

<sup>24</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 28–29.

<sup>26</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 116.

<sup>27</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Gibas-Krzak, D., *Ukraina między Rosją a Polską*, Toruń 2006, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 22.

protection from external threats and full implementation of strategy of national security. Geopolitical situation drastically affected the security strategy in the region, which was determined by the views of Western countries, the Russian Federation and international organization.

Additional impact on the vision, how to realize national security interests of both countries, had the configuration of political leaders of Ukraine and Poland. It should be emphasized that starting points for realization of opportunities were different in Warsaw and Kyiv. This was determined by the domestic political situation, as well as the world leaders' attitude towards them.

When the representatives of *Solidarity* came to power in Poland, compromise on the priority vector of the foreign policy was reached at the state level. Warsaw unambiguously regarded integration into the Western structures as the key objective. EU and NATO welcomed this policy, confirmed by signing the *European Agreement* by Poland and European Community in December 1991, which gave Poland status of associate membership.<sup>30</sup> As far as NATO is concerned, in December 1991, North Atlantic Cooperation Council was set up with the aim of developing cooperation between the Alliance and post-socialist countries. Poland was invited to participate in its activities. In October 1993, the NATO defence ministers met to discuss the issues on creating trust between NATO and European countries, and the perspectives for membership of the countries able to "promote the principles of the agreement and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic Area."<sup>31</sup> This statement encouraged Poland to apply for membership in NATO, and in the second half of 1992, Poland officials launched the course for NATO.<sup>32</sup> Geopolitical conjuncture in relations with influential international players was favourable both for Poland and leading Western countries. In August 1991 Germany initiated the so-called *Weimar Triangle*, which united Poland, Germany and France.<sup>33</sup>

The pro-Western course of Warsaw was accepted with understanding and support in the USA. The following facts showed the interest of the US leaders in Poland. In November 1989, the leader of *Solidarity*, Lech Wałęsa, visited Washington. During

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<sup>30</sup> *Polityka zagraniczna 1989–2002*, red. R. Kuźniar – K. Szczepaniak, Warszawa 2006, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 72–73; Zięba, R., *Implikacje stosunków polsko-amerykańskich dla polityki zagranicznej Polski, Przegląd Polityczny*, 2015, nr. 2, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Grodzki, R., *Polska Polityka Zagraniczna w XX i XXI wieku. Główne kierunki – Fakty – Ludzie – Wydarzenia, Zakrzewo* 2009, 215.

his visit on 5th November, he delivered a speech at the joint session of both houses of Congress. In this manner, Lech Wałęsa, not being the head of the state, became the third foreigner in American history who was given such an honour. The US position concerning Poland's debts to international creditors was vital for Warsaw. In 1991, Washington annulled 70 % of the Polish debt to the US, which was about 2,5 billion dollars. This step, in its turn, led to the reduction of the state debt of the Republic of Poland to the Paris and London Clubs.<sup>34</sup>

Russia had little interest in Central and Eastern Europe during the short period of the Kremlin pro-Western policy.<sup>35</sup> It gave Poland a wide field for maneuvering in various spheres. In case of Ukraine, the situation was different. The referendum on the *Act of Declaration of Independence* was held in Ukraine on 1st December 1991. An overwhelming majority of 90 % voters approved the *Declaration*. Right after the referendum, Ukraine was globally recognized as an independent state and valuable player in the world community. However, all of a sudden, Ukraine found itself in an extremely difficult international situation. Unwilling to lose influence in the region, Russian Federation put fierce pressure on officials in Kyiv. Russian gas, oil and nuclear fuel were used for leverage. At the same time, at various levels in Russia, different issues were raised offending national interests of Ukraine: the issue of the legality of the transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954; the affiliation of the Black Sea Fleet to Ukraine was questioned; statements about Sevastopol being a Russian city. In order to strengthen its position, Kremlin used the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine.<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, in the international arena, Kremlin tried to show Ukraine as a "seasonal" country that had no chance of continued existence because of its internal discord.<sup>37</sup> It should be mentioned that such an activity of the Russian Federation, along with other factors, led to the formation of unfavourable international conditions for Ukraine. In the early 1990s, the United States, a key global player in the international arena, viewed relations with Russia as a priority in relations with states of the former Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> The European Community (European Union) was preoccupied with establishing the Common Market, introducing Economic

<sup>34</sup> Zięba, R., *Główne kierunki polityki zagranicznej Polski po zimnej wojnie*, Warszawa 2010, 141.

<sup>35</sup> Surmacz, B., *Stosunki Ukrainy z Polską*, in: *Ukraina w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, red. M. Pietraś – T. Kapuśniak, Lublin 2007, 207.

<sup>36</sup> Orzechowski, M., *Stosunki Ukrainy z Federacją Rosyjską*, in: *Ukraina w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, red. M. Pietraś – T. Kapuśniak, Lublin 2007, 181–182.

<sup>37</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 161.

<sup>38</sup> Kapuśniak, T., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 170.



and Monetary Union, preparing for a large-scale expansion eastward.<sup>39</sup> Under such circumstances, Brussels paid very little attention to post-Soviet countries. By and large, the countries of the united Europe viewed the whole post-Soviet space from “Moscow centralized” positions. As Central and Eastern European countries were afraid of negative reaction from the Russian Federation, they did not hurry to improve relations with Ukraine, either.<sup>40</sup>

The difficult political situation, lack of reforms in Ukraine and the above mentioned factors were the reason why Ukraine found itself in isolation in the international arena. The situation for the authorities in Kyiv became even more dramatic with the case of Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. Increasing pressure from the Kremlin, the Western viewing Eastern Europe through the prism of interests of Russian Federation and the lack of even minimal guarantees caused a kind of defensive respond on the part of Ukrainian state leadership. From the second half of 1992 on, there was a positive change in the mindset of Ukrainian political elite regarding new trends and methods of security insurance – the initiative on suspension of the nuclear disarmament process.<sup>41</sup> In July 1993, the Parliament of Ukraine did not ratify the Lisbon Treaty, signed by the Ukrainian government on 23rd May 1992.<sup>42</sup> On 19th October 1993 Ukraine adopted the defensive doctrine in which Ukraine was positioned as a nuclear state.<sup>43</sup> This led to the increasing pressure on Ukraine. The Western countries tried to force the state to fulfil its commitments.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Dumala, A., *Stosunki Ukrainy z Unią Europejską*, in: *Ukraina w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, red. M Pietraś – T. Kapuśniak, Lublin 2007, 323.

<sup>40</sup> Kapuśniak, T., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 201, 228–229.

<sup>41</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 31–32.

<sup>42</sup> The document anticipated that “Ukraine as a state – owner of nuclear weapons – will go to the non-nuclear status and will reduce gradually nuclear weapons located on its territory on the condition of obtaining reliable guarantees of its national security in which the nuclear weapons states commit themselves not to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine; do not use conventional forces against it and do not resort to the threat; respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Ukraine; refrain from economic pressure in order to resolve any disputes”. The Protocol was ratified by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine only on 18th November 1993, in: *Постанова Верховної Ради України «Про ратифікацію Договору між Союзом Радянських Соціалістичних Республік і Сполученими Штатами Америки про скорочення і обмеження стратегічних наступальних озброєнь, підписаного у Москві 31 липня 1991 року, і Протоколу до нього, підписаного у Лісабоні від імені України 23 травня 1992 року»*.

<sup>43</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 35.

<sup>44</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 82–83.

In such geopolitical situation, the Ukrainian leadership struggled for finding the way out of stalemate the country found itself in. The true partner, the “door” hypothetically leading to Western countries could be Poland.

Among the circumstances that led to the rapprochement of the two neighbouring countries were the following: short-term pro-Western course of Russia, the result of which was little interest in relations with the countries of the former socialist camp; the immediate recognition of independence of Ukraine by Poland; the extended contacts at governmental levels and between oppositional political parties from both states; political deadlock in which Ukraine was in 1992 and Ukrainian leaders’ search for external support; pro-Polish sentiments of Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and his political advisers; disorientation of Western political environment and the lack of political tools and awareness, necessary to estimate the essence and level of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.<sup>45</sup>

In practice, the above mentioned factors were transformed into a rather intense dialogue between Ukraine and Poland. The cooperation during 1992 and the first half of 1993 was one of the most fruitful periods in Ukrainian-Polish relations. During a short phase, series of official visits were paid to the partner countries, laying the grounds for the institutional and legal framework of Ukrainian-Polish intergovernmental relations.<sup>46</sup>

Kyiv tried to use systematic contacts at the political level for further participation in the integration process in Central and Eastern Europe. An interesting initiative in this respect, became an idea of inviting the Ukrainian state to join the Visegrad Group. This issue was regularly raised by Ukrainian politicians at various meetings with Polish colleagues. However, unexpectedly for Ukraine, Warsaw authorities showed reluctance to strengthen cooperation with Ukraine in this format. Hungary and Czechoslovakia did not welcome the Visegrad Group expansion either,<sup>47</sup> as it was primarily established to coordinate steps of the member states in the process of European integration. According to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the accession of Ukraine, whose economic and political development was considerably lower, might change the very nature of the Group and slow down movement towards their strategic objective – integration with the EU.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 26–27.

<sup>46</sup> Гурак, І., Початки формування інституційно-правових засад українсько-польського міждержавного діалогу, in: *Історико-політичні проблеми сучасного світу: Збірник наукових статей*, т. 29–30, Чернівці 2015, 234.

<sup>47</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 25, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 29; Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 124.

Ukraine, in its turn, made an attempt to develop the idea of non-alignment and created a “third way” of ensuring security.<sup>49</sup> Such initiatives were first put forward for consideration during the international forum *Ukraine's Path to Europe* in Yadvisyn in February 1992 and were officially introduced by President Leonid Kravchuk during his visit to Poland in May 1992. The concept included mutual consultations and creation of anti-crisis headquarters with the participation of Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Ukraine. In fact, the main objective of the committee was to create a regional security system in Central and Eastern Europe which would rely on the military alliance of Ukraine and Poland.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that this idea was not new to Poland. During some period, Warsaw officials considered the possibility of creating an alternative collective security system, the proof of which might be the concept developed by Lech Wałęsa which included the creation of the so-called “NATO-bis”,<sup>51</sup> a kind of regional security in Central and Eastern Europe, which would work closely with NATO.<sup>52</sup>

On 28th April 1993, at the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe* in Prague, Ukraine once again suggested considering the establishment of the collective security zone in Central and Eastern Europe with the participation of Eastern European countries excluding Russia. Such concept was called *Plan of Kravchuk* and was to be implemented as one of the principles of CSCE program. Individually, the corresponding draft was proposed to Poland during Lech Wałęsa's official visit to Kyiv on 24th–26th May 1993. However, the Polish President rejected the proposition to participate in the *Plan of Kravchuk* implementation. In his speech, he stressed that it was more reasonable to use existing structures and systems of collective security as there was no need in creating new ones.<sup>53</sup> Unexpected and unfavourable position of the President of Poland towards Ukraine was provoked by changing the priorities of the Polish security and setting the course for NATO.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, any discussion on alternative NATO projects could be considered

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<sup>49</sup> The way an alternative to NATO and Russia.

<sup>50</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 122.

<sup>51</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 71.

<sup>52</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 122.

<sup>53</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 34.

<sup>54</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 71.

against strategic interests of Warsaw. Thus, controversial and disadvantageous idea of “NATO-bis” did not appeal to Poland at that period.

In this strained situation, Poland’s aspiration to join NATO became a new challenge in relations between Ukraine and Poland. Kyiv feared that with NATO expanding eastward, Ukraine would become a buffer country located between the Member States of the Alliance and signatories of the Tashkent Treaty. In perspective, it threatened Ukraine by increasing pressure from the Russian Federation.<sup>55</sup> Ukrainian leadership was cautious about NATO’s expansion eastward and Poland’s accession to the Alliance. The second President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005) expressed his concern about the rapid pace of the expansion. In December 1994 in Budapest, at the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, L. Kuchma emphasized that revolutionary accession of Central and Eastern Europe to NATO was extremely dangerous as it could split Europe.

In order to prevent the growing uncertainty between countries, the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, several times throughout 1994–1995, addressed the colleagues from Poland urging to undertake joint discussions and develop a common position on the matter. Moreover, in spring 1995, Ukraine appealed to Poland with the initiative to start the conversation on the subject of “triangle of interests”, inviting Germany as well. The leadership of Ukraine was interested in participating in Weimar Triangle. However, the Polish leaders were rather interested in Russian Federation’s participation in such a talk format.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, at the beginning of 1995, in the relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland in the security sphere, problems seemed to be piling up and the solution was extremely difficult to be found.

The situation was aggravated by peculiarities of Poland’s internal political situation and Ukraine’s economic situation throughout 1993–1995. As a result, the left-wing political forces won in the parliamentary elections in Poland in September 1993. The representatives of the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People’s Party played the key role in the Parliament of Poland. They criticized the previous governments for “neglecting contacts with Russia” and advocated the strengthening ties between Warsaw and Moscow.<sup>57</sup> On the whole, the new government, which was formed mainly by the “left” politicians, introduced disharmony and new trends

<sup>55</sup> Chojnowska, A., *Stosunki z Ukrainą*, in: *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 1996*, red. B. Wizimirska, Warszawa 1996, 136–137.

<sup>56</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 135–136.

<sup>57</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 118.

in the Eastern policy. This was due to different views on priorities in the Eastern policy carried out by the “left-wing” Cabinet of Ministers, on the one hand, and the “presidential” Minister of Foreign Affairs, who together with Lech Wałęsa defended priority of relations with Ukraine, on the other.<sup>58</sup> Pro-Russian attitude of some “left” leaders could be clearly observed. Thus, in 1994, one of the leaders of the Democratic Left Alliance and Marshal of the Sejm Józef Oleksy,<sup>59</sup> turned to his Russian colleague with the proposition for the State Duma representatives to cooperate with MPs of Weimar Triangle Parliament. Later, as the Prime Minister of Poland, he actively promoted the idea of so-called “Warsaw Triangle”, which had to unite Moscow and Berlin through mediation of Warsaw.<sup>60</sup>

Internal political situation prompted new trends in relations within the triangle Warsaw – Kyiv – Moscow, which emerged in mid-1993. The following events had a significant influence on the interaction within the triangle. During the official visit to Warsaw, Russian President Boris Yeltsin noted that Moscow appreciated aspiration of Poland to pursue NATO membership. He also stressed out that this did not jeopardize the interests of any state, including Russia.<sup>61</sup> It is also worth mentioning that in September 1993, Russian troops were withdrawn from the territory of Poland.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, in September, Poland and Russian Federation signed an agreement on building the gas pipeline Yamal – Frankfurt, bypassing Ukraine. Leonid Kuchma, the Prime Minister of Ukraine at that time, called the agreement, which was signed after the preceding approval of the route through the territory of Ukraine and the Czech Republic, an “anti-Ukrainian act”.<sup>63</sup> Hence, the second half of 1993 was marked by a number of positive aspects for Poland in the relations with Russia. When considering strained relations between Kyiv and Moscow, the situation contributed to Ukrainian growing distrust in Ukrainian-Polish relations.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, 140.

<sup>59</sup> During 1993–1995 he was the Speaker of the Sejm, 1995–1996 Prime Minister of Poland.

<sup>60</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 140.

<sup>61</sup> However, the Russian press and representatives of the Russian authorities quickly launched a campaign of reinterpreting the words of Boris Yeltsin. In particular, the Minister of Defence of RF Pavel Grachev noted that “the accession of countries of the former Warsaw Pact to NATO wouldn’t be a good step because it will push Russia to be in more isolated position”. Instead, according to Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, NATO cooperation with Russia “is much more important for European security than the rapid increase in NATO by joining Poland or Hungary”.

<sup>62</sup> Bartkiewicz, J., *Stosunki z Rosją, Ukrainą i Białorusią*, in: *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 1993–1994*, red. B. Wizimirska, Warszawa 1994, 127, 128–129; Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 132–133.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem.

The trial over Ukraine Security Service officer Anatolii Lysenko became an additional irritant in relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Poland. He was arrested in August 1993 on suspicion of espionage. Despite protests from Ukraine, there was a show trial. As a result, Anatolii Lysenko was found guilty: he had allegedly been reading Polish newspapers for intelligence purpose and trying to recruit Polish citizen. It should be noted that even the Polish researchers questioned Lysenko's guilt, and the interpretation of the case by Poland aroused a lot of questions. It goes without saying that for the countries maintaining friendly relations, such issues should be resolved without further publicity. In this particular case, everything was different. And Ukraine had every reason to suspect Poland in supporting Kremlin's concept *pax russica*,<sup>64</sup> in return of Russia's withdrawal of its troops from Poland and approval of Poland's joining NATO.<sup>65</sup>

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, former republics encountered immense economic problems. They were caused by previous close ties within all-union manufacture. It was very difficult for independent states to maintain economic cooperation at former level. Ukraine was even more vulnerable in this case because of the dependence on Russian energy resources. Significant reduction of Ukrainian production, hyperinflation and growing arrears to Russia<sup>66</sup> demonstrated an internal weakness of Ukraine and generated doubts concerning the confirmation of its political independence. Economic crisis, lack of reforms and corruption did not show Ukraine as an attractive partner in economic sphere. The slow rate of market mechanisms development in the Ukrainian economy comparing to significant progress in the Polish economy demonstrated growing disproportion in the development of the two countries. Therefore, the economic sphere was the weak point of the Ukrainian-Polish dialogue. In 1993, the trade turnover between the countries made up only 400 million dollars.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, the triangle Warsaw – Washington – Brussels was not favourable for the Ukrainian-Polish relations either. Apart from the above mentioned "Russian-centric" position of Western countries concerning the assessment of the events in the former Soviet Union countries, there were other negative aspects closely related to this problem. There was a discrepancy in the foreign policy orientations in both

<sup>64</sup> Foresaw the recognition by Russia for exceptional political influence in the space of the former Soviet Union.

<sup>65</sup> Kamiński, A. – Kozakiewicz, J., *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie: raport*, Warszawa 1997, 38–39.

<sup>66</sup> Kuspys, P., *Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1991–2008. Polityka. Gospodarka. Wojsko. Sektor pozarządowy*, Kraków 2009, 209–210.

<sup>67</sup> Bartkiewicz, J., *Stosunki z Rosją, Ukrainą i Białorusią*, in: *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 1993–1994*, red. B. Wizimirski, Warszawa 1994, 133; Surmacz, B., *Stosunki Ukrainy z Polską*, in: *Ukraina w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, red. M. Pietraś – T. Kapuśniak, Lublin 2007, 207.

Poland and Ukraine. While Poland was actively moving towards Western structures,<sup>68</sup> Ukrainian leaders could not or did not have an opportunity to make distinct accents in the country's foreign policy orientation given burdensome geopolitical situation. In this regard, in key Ukrainian documents outlining foreign policy, the confirmation of the country's neutral status was declared.<sup>69</sup> In the second half of 1993, there was an increasing disharmony between Poland and Ukraine. Poland signed the *Association Agreement* with the European community in 1991, formed the Weimar Triangle<sup>70</sup> with Germany and France and clearly expressed its aspiration for joining NATO. As for Ukraine, the relations with the USA and Western European states remained frozen because of the suspension of the nuclear disarmament.<sup>71</sup> Without any doubt, Poland striving to become an integral part of the EU and NATO, had to consider the disagreeable rhetoric of Washington and Brussels.

Therefore, in the mid-1990s, a great deal of problems accumulated between Kyiv and Warsaw. Their solution often did not depend on the will of both parties and seemed impossible to be found in the near future. However, positive trends in international relations emerged since 1994 which gave reasons for optimistic forecasts. First of all, they were mostly related to Ukraine. First and foremost, and to everybody's relief, the problem of the Ukrainian nuclear weapons was solved in 1994.<sup>72</sup> It definitely enhanced the revitalization of relations between Ukraine and

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<sup>68</sup> Skubiszewski, K., *Perspektywy polityki zagranicznej RP w Europie*, in: *Rocznik polskiej polityki zagranicznej 1993–1994*, Warszawa 1994, 25–27.

<sup>69</sup> Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 63.

<sup>70</sup> Grodzki, R., *Polska polityka zagraniczna w XX i XXI wieku: główne kierunki – fakty – ludzie – wydarzenia*, Zakrzewo 2009, 215.

<sup>71</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 161.

<sup>72</sup> On 14th January 1994 in Moscow, the presidents of Ukraine, the USA and Russia signed trilateral statement. On 16th November 1994, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the *Law of Ukraine On Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons from 1st July 1968*. On 5th December, in Budapest, presidents of Ukraine, the USA, together with Russian and British Prime Ministers signed the *Memorandum of Security Assurances in Relation with Accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. According to above mentioned documents, Ukraine pledged to get rid of all nuclear potential in the replacement of security guarantees from these three countries. The practical result of these documents was a removal of all nuclear warheads from the territory of Ukraine by 2nd June 1996 located in the territory of Ukraine from Soviet times, see: Єлєцьких, К., *Без'ядерний статус України – добровільний крок або результат міжнародного тиску*. [online: <<http://nato.pu.if.ua/journal/2009/2009-14.pdf>>, cit. 2009-06-30]; *Ядерне роззброєння України*. [online: <<http://mfa.gov.ua/ua/about-ukraine/international-organizations/npt-participation>>, cit. 2013-05-17]; *Закон України «Про приєднання України до Договору про нерозповсюдження ядерної зброї від 1 липня 1968 року»*. [online:

the West. In June 1994, the *Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation* between Ukraine and the EU was signed in Luxembourg. The *Agreement* defined the legal norms of relations between Kyiv and Brussels.<sup>73</sup> In the same year, the Ukrainian state leadership began to take steps to improve the dialogue with NATO. On 8th February 1994, Ukraine was the first among post-Soviet countries to start cooperation with NATO within the framework of the program *Partnership for Peace*.<sup>74</sup> A year later, Ukraine became a member of the Council of Europe.<sup>75</sup> Then, the so-called *Temporary Agreement* was signed which regulated the relations between Ukraine and the EU prior to the *Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation* coming into force in 1998.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time, the cooling in relations between the Western countries and the Russian Federation was observed. Russia's methods and tools concerning "near abroad" (post-Soviet states) and the Kremlin's increasing political and military dominance in the CIS area (Commonwealth of Independent States) were not acceptable and generated discontent.<sup>77</sup>

At the same time, some positive trends were marked also in Ukraine. In October 1994, new President of Ukraine announced the new strategy of economic reforms, which included liberalization of prices, limiting of the state budget deficit, the implementation of free domestic and foreign trade, compliance with tight monetary policy, extensive large-scale privatization and realization of agrarian reform. In November 1994, Leonid Kuchma issued the *Decree*,<sup>78</sup> which foresaw solving three major provisions of land reform – privatization, evaluation and land market. The

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<<http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/248/94-вр>>, cit. 1994-11-16]; Меморандум Про гарантії безпеки у зв'язку з приєднанням України до Договору про нерозповсюдження ядерної зброї. [online: <[http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/998\\_158](http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/998_158)>, cit. 1994-12-05]; Трестороння заява Президентів України, США та Росії. [online: <[http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/998\\_300](http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/998_300)>, cit. 1994-01-14].

<sup>73</sup> Копійка, В., *Розширення Європейського Союзу та Україна: Монографія*, Київ 2008, 248–250.

<sup>74</sup> *Співробітництво Україна – НАТО у рамках програми «Партнерство заради миру та безпеки»*. [online: <<http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/ua/ukraine-nato/Partnership>>, cit. 2012-01-13]; Романчук, О., *Україна-НАТО: по кому подзвін*. [online: <<http://www.chasipodii.net/article/2322/>>, cit. 2007-06-12]

<sup>75</sup> *Співробітництво між Україною та Радою Європи*. [online: <<http://www.mfa.gov.ua/coe/ua/4544.htm>>, cit. 2015-05-11].

<sup>76</sup> Присяжнюк, Ю. – Галяс, А., *Історичний шлях співпраці України та ЄС. Основні перешкоди на шляху євроінтеграції України*, in: *Вісник Львівського університету. Серія міжнародні відносини*, вип. 12, Львів 2004, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Каруśniак, Т., *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Lublin 2008, 172, 175.

<sup>78</sup> *On Urgent Measures to Accelerate Land Reform in Agricultural Production. (November 1994)*



first steps towards market reforms and privatization were welcomed by the leading Western countries, especially the United States. Within a short period of time, Ukraine ranked the third, following Israel and Egypt, among the countries that received financial assistance from the USA. Apart from that, Ukraine received assistance from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Despite being managed ineffectively sometimes, foreign financial aid contributed to the financial revitalization of the country.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, during 1994–1995, Ukraine managed to overcome international isolation and enlist the support of the Western countries due to a number of various factors. These changes, directly or indirectly, positively influenced the Ukrainian-Polish interstate relations.

In the second half of 1995, revitalization of Ukrainian-Polish relations was under way. In September, after a long break, the long-awaited Consultative Committee of the Presidents of Ukraine and Poland was held. The parties discussed the ways of utilizing the potential of the two countries and step up bilateral intergovernmental contacts. In December 1995, representative of Democratic Left Alliance Aleksander Kwaśniewski succeeded Lech Wałęsa as a President. The election of the “left-wing” candidate generated concern in Ukraine. There were fears that during his presidency, the dialogue between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation would intensify. However, it did not happen. International initiatives of the new President showed his commitment to Kyiv. In late May 1996, Ukraine became a member of the Central European Initiative thanks to its lobbying.<sup>80</sup> Poland supported the NATO-Ukraine bilateral agreement, similar to that of NATO-Russia, and proved to be Ukrainian best advocate in front of the West. Aleksander Kwaśniewski publicly initiated signing the *Charter Ukraine – NATO*<sup>81</sup> in his speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London in October 1996.

There were other changes in the leadership of Poland that appeared to be favourable for Ukraine. The scandal with Prime Minister Józef Oleksy who was accused of having links with Russian intelligence services, and the government crisis led to the election of the new head of Polish government, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz.

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<sup>79</sup> Соціально-економічний та політичний розвиток України середини 1990-х – початку 2000-х років: стабілізація і реформи. [online: <<http://ubgd.lviv.ua/moodle/mod/page/view.php?id=7431&inpopup=1>>, cit. 2013-04-26].

<sup>80</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 169–170, 173–174.

<sup>81</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 79.

Together with newly elected Foreign Minister Dariusz Rosati, he was upholding President Kwaśniewski's Eastern policy.<sup>82</sup>

It should be emphasized that officials in Kyiv reconsidered its position regarding NATO's enlargement. In December 1995, both Presidents of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Yevgen Marchuk demonstrated understanding of Poland's aspirations to enter the North Atlantic Alliance. In particular, Leonid Kuchma stated that NATO's enlargement eastward did not threaten the security of Ukraine, and the existence of the military-political bloc was in fact a stabilizing factor in Europe. For some time, the issue related to non-placement of nuclear weapons in new NATO countries, including Poland, remained unsolved. Yet, the case was settled when the North Atlantic Council announced that Alliance had no intention to place its nuclear arsenal in Central and Eastern Europe<sup>83</sup>.

Military cooperation between Poland and Ukraine had another positive impact on intensifying interstate dialogue. On 5th October 1995, Ministers of Defence of Ukraine and Poland reached an agreement to create a Polish-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalion. Although the appropriate agreement was signed only in November 1997, the first joint training started in June and then in October 1996.<sup>84</sup> Aldona Chojnowska, the secretary of the Consultative Committee of Presidents of Ukraine and Poland emphasized that "it was the mutual military project that enhanced the political dialogue in the interstate relations".<sup>85</sup>

Efforts in implementation of economic reforms, financial assistance from the Western states and international institutions contributed to improving the economic situation in Ukraine. This, in turn, enabled the increase in Ukrainian-Polish trade turnover. Although the Ukrainian-Polish trade met certain obstacles, in 1995, the trade turnover between the countries increased by more than twice compared to 1993 and amounted to 1 033 million dollars. Later in 1996, this figure rose to 1 396 million dollars.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, the second half of 1995 brought positive dynamics in the Ukrainian-Polish relations. The results were immediately visible in several areas. This laid the foundation for the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership, which was confirmed

<sup>82</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 172, 178.

<sup>83</sup> Стоєцький, С. В., *Україна в зовнішній політиці Республіки Польща: євроатлантичний та європейський інтеграційний виміри. (Історико-політологічне дослідження)*, Київ 2009, 80–81.

<sup>84</sup> Kuspys, P., *Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie 1991–2008. Polityka. Gospodarka. Wojsko. Sektor pozarządowy*, Kraków 2009, 373.

<sup>85</sup> Chojnowska, A., *Stosunki z Ukrainą*, in: *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 1996*, red. B. Wizimirski, Warszawa 1996, 135.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, 142–143.

in *Memorandum* and signed by representatives of *People's Movement of Ukraine* and the so-called *Movement Hundred*. The document was signed by Leonid Kravchuk, Lech Wałęsa, former Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Anna Suchocka, former Deputy Prime Minister Mykola Zhulinski, chairman of *People's Movement of Ukraine* Viacheslav Chornovil and other influential politicians. The documents stated that the ultimate goal of the Ukrainian-Polish strategic partnership should be close and continued cooperation between the two countries, contributing to the establishment of stable independent Ukraine, and Poland's international advocacy in favour of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe in the process of European integration.<sup>87</sup>

A few days later, on 25th June 1996, during the visit of President Leonid Kuchma to Warsaw, both Presidents of Ukraine and Poland signed the *Joint Declaration* in which the leaders of both countries stated that "Ukraine and Poland confirmed their determination in pursuing the course for the development of strategic partnership".<sup>88</sup>

To sum up, after a year and half of intensive dialogue between Kyiv and Warsaw, when the foundation of institutional and legal framework for interstate constructive dialogue was laid, there was stagnation in relations between Ukraine and Poland from the mid-1993. It was due to biased attitude of the Western powers towards Ukraine orienting themselves on Russia in their assessment of the processes in Eastern Europe till the mid-1990s. Authorities in Warsaw, whose key foreign policy goal throughout the 1990s was European and Euro-Atlantic integration, could not but take this factor into account. Furthermore, the leaders of Poland "inspected" the position of Moscow on that while conducting the dialogue with Kyiv in certain periods. Difficult financial and economic situation in Ukraine and increasing influence of the Polish left-wing forces on Poland's foreign policy in the first half of the 1990s were among other factors that slowed down the Ukrainian-Polish interstate dialogue.

The situation changed considerably in the mid-1990s. The settlement of the Ukrainian "nuclear" issue, non-acceptance of new trends in Russian foreign policy by the West, launching economic reforms by the new leadership in Ukraine and Ukrainian-minded politicians' coming to power in Poland – all this fuelled the Polish-Ukrainian interstate dialogue starting a new phase in the relations between the

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<sup>87</sup> Fedorowicz, K., *Ukraina w polskiej polityce wschodniej w latach 1989–1999*, Poznań 2004, 180; Jędraszczyk, K., *Strategiczne partnerstwo ukraińsko-polskie. Polska w polityce niepodległej Ukrainy*, Poznań 2010, 153–154.

<sup>88</sup> Спільна декларація Президента України і Президента Республіки Польща, in: *Міждержавні відносини України та Республіки Польща: збірник документів*, ред. П. Сардачук, Київ 2011, 45.

two states. Due to this improving climate, the year of 1996 marked the beginning of a true strategic partnership for the two nations.

## ABSTRACT

### **Ukraine and Poland: Challenges to Strategic Partnership**

*Ihor Hurak*

The official Warsaw implemented the “policy of two ways” in the East *at the turn of the 1980s – 1990s*. However, already on 2nd December 1991, Republic of Poland recognized Ukraine as an independent state. A dynamic Ukrainian-Polish dialogue, initiated at a time when Ukraine was a part of the USSR yet, opened up opportunities for signing the *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership* between the countries in May 1992. In subsequent years the diverse perceptions of Ukraine and Poland by the leading countries of the world; the different approaches of Warsaw and Kiev concerning foreign policy priorities; the miscellaneous ways of the ensuring security of two states, difficult economic situation in Ukraine, staying for a certain period of time in power of pro-Russian political forces in Poland and other factors led to stagnation in the bilateral dialogue. Since 1994, the situation has undergone the significant changes: the issue on Ukrainian nuclear weapons has been solved, the reforms in the Ukrainian state have been started, the dialogue between Ukraine and the EU, NATO, the USA has intensified, the relations between the Western countries and the Russian Federation has become complicated, Poland’s leadership has been changed. These and other reasons determined the signing of the *Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Ukraine and the President of the Republic of Poland* by the leaders of the two countries on 25th June 1996. In the document it was stressed that “Ukraine and Poland confirmed their determination in pursuing the course for the development of strategic partnership”.

**Key words:** Strategic Partnership, Ukraine, Poland, International Relations, Foreign Policy.

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