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*“The Polish Vision of the European Security”*

My task is to present Polish vision of the European security. And being an academic researcher I have the privilege to be completely politically irresponsible. So I would like to stress the fact that it will be a Polish vision and not the Polish vision of European security. And I will try to be as politically incorrect as possible.

First I would like to convince you to five main thesis. The first one is that Poland is quite a normal state, is not led by historical thinking, is not overrun by historical point view on international relations with our neighbors and that we shape our foreign Policy ourselves and are nobody's Trojan horse. Then I would like to convince you that Polish perception of threats is based on experience. As our French partners usually like to stress their devotion to the tradition of enlightenment I think that experience is much better base for policy planning than visions. One of the British politicians said that when you have visions you should see your doctor. So it is what we remember, what we know. I think what is crucial is to stress the fact that the task of politicians is to detect the problems, to name the problems, the challenges and then to find the instruments to solve them. And not to invent ideas and then to force the people to fit into the ideas.

Of course the Polish perception of threats means Russia. I think we agree – all of us – with that opinion. So I would like to present to you our or my perception of Russia and some critics about illusions that exist among our western partners as to the nature of Russian state.

And finally of course I would like to propose some solutions based on NATO and European Union. Namely I would like to assess the usefulness of both those organizations as instruments to cope with the problems.

Please remember that when Maastricht criteria for eurozone were decided, they were decided mainly under the pressure of Germans who remembered quite well the sad experience of hyperinflation of the 20s. When the problem of Macedonia was put on the European agenda, it was Greek historical sentiments that influenced the solution. When the *Invocatio Dei* in the European Constitution was debated, it was the French historical tradition that influenced the main stream of the debate. So I can find no reasons to say that the Poles are strange in remembering their own history. Our historical experience is not more ancient than Greek historical experience with Macedonia or French historical experience with enlightenment and French revolution.

What is our historical experience? Our historical experience is that we need powerful allies who have moral and material capacity to act. Please remember that we still have in our minds the fact that Poland was abandoned in 1939 in spite of having powerful allies but the ones that were not ready to act. Therefore we are not afraid of American power. If Americans are ready to act, wherever they want to act, it's not our interest to create the international system which would tie their freedom of action because we don't expect they will act against our interests. There was only one such an accident after the Cold War namely when President Bush senior tried to convince Ukrainians to vote in favor of the preservation of the Soviet Union. But apart of that fact usually our interests are more or less common.

So when we are proposed to recognize the power of United Nations Security Council or OSCE as the Russians propose (the Russians proposals of the 90s were to subordinate NATO to United Nations Security Council's decisions or OSCE) that of course means that we would not be able to act without the consent of such well known champions of human rights, democracy, international law as the politburo of the Communist Party of China and the former KGB officer Mr Putin. It's rather unconvincing for us. So this is as far as our way of thinking about historical experience as base for decisions is concerned. I think it's worth to remember: we are not afraid of powerful allies ready to act.

Then as far as the independence of our decision making process is concerned. I will consume some time for that but it is interesting and worth knowing. Please remember that – there is a joke – at those times it was Poland who decided who will be NATO member and who not. I mean the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century when Polish, Lithuanian, Belorussian, Ukrainian forces under the Transilvanian duke Istvan Batory of the Hungarian origin stopped Russian Ivan the Terrible invasion on what is now Latvia and Estonia. For the first time in our history we were accused of being a tool of Pope. Then in 1794 when collapsing Poland fought its last war of insurrection we were accused of being a tool of French jacobites. Then in 1830 when there was uprising in Poland because of Franco and Belgian revolution and our army was intended to be sent to fight them by Russians, we were accused of being French and Belgian servants. Of course earlier we were servants to Napoleon. Then in 1863 we were the agents of Garibaldi because you know the wars of Risorgimento created the inspiration for Poles and again we were not fighting in our own interest but it was Garibaldi who inspired us of course against Russia. Then we were the dog of Entente in 1920 and we stopped Bolsheviks. Then we were used by

Britain for a plot against the Third Reich when we decided to resist Hitler and Stalin. And then of course after 1945 we became servants to American imperialism. So we had a lot of time to get used to this type of accusations from the east and it's rather something that is compromising people who use that tool. Because if somebody is pleased to be in the company of Ivan the Terrible or Nicolas the First or Stalin, Hitler or Trocki – I think it's not our problem. So please remember: our political decisions are made here and according to our understanding of our interests.

Then about Russia. Shortly speaking my opinion is that Russia knows only two kinds of states: the enemies and the vassals. And one can choose. And therefore the real and stable compromise is not possible. It is not the problem: how to convince Russians. Because we should not take this as a truth that Russian decision makers live in illusion that is created by Russian authorities as a tool for internal and international politics. As far as Russian interests their image is more or less maybe unreal but it's not based on the assumption that they will be invaded soon by everybody.

Then please remember that the main tool of Russian foreign policy is an export of destabilization. Russia is a center of the competitive pattern of post-communist transition. Then the European Union is. We could observe this in Yugoslavia where Russia was the main political ally of Serbia. And please remember that Yugoslavian wars were ended not in cooperation with Russia but in spite of Russian action with the famous Pristina raid of the mechanized battalion as the best demonstration for that.

We have heard a lot about vital Russian interests in that region till 1999 and never since that time. Where those interests are now? They disappeared. The same is in other areas like in Transnistria, Caucasus, Belarus... What is the main question? You have said that we should cooperate or we cannot solve the problems without Russia. The Balkan wars showed us that we can solve problems without Russia. And that entire situation provokes question: what is the interest of Russia to solve problems. When the problem is solved, Russian influence is reduced. So what is our base to expect cooperation? I think it is baseless. Unfortunately. So we have to face the reality and to say that unfortunately Russian political aims are contradictory to ours and we have to cope with that situation and we should not be conducted by wishful thinking. The problem is not how to convince Russians. The problem is rather how to create the tools to solve problems in spite of Russian opposition.

And the last problem. Namely: how we can use the structures that we have – NATO and European Union – to deal with that threat. First I think that the situation is a dynamic one. Between August 1991, the Yanayev *coup d'état*, and August 2008, the Georgian war, we could think that the military action from Russian side against a foreign state is highly improbable. Russia was too weak, especially in the 90s. And NATO enlargement... I would stress – not expansion because it's Russian point of view to stress that it was old NATO which inspired the action while that were the candidate countries, the new member states now which wanted to be incorporated into NATO and not NATO which wanted to enlarge. The trigger was rather in the Central Europe and in the old NATO member states.

But this situation, this relatively stable and peaceful situation in spite of two Chechen wars has been ended by Georgian conflict. And the ideas about Russia that are in some European countries like in Germany or in France for example are based on their historical experience. Especially in Germany with the experience of the end of the First World War which in some psychological sense was similar for Germany to the end of the Cold War for Russia. That means the army was never defeated, the country was not occupied... Defeat was not a convincing one. That created legend of the betrayal of the civilian politicians like Gorbaczev and Shevardnadze in Soviet Union and now in Russia. There are a lot of Russian minorities around the boarders, no democratic tradition and from time to time deep economic crisis that can inspire the extreme political movements in the countries.

The main idea is that large nations should not be humiliated because this can produce frustration and then lead to catastrophe. I would like to stress that it is a false point of view. Because the threat that was created between the wars was created not due to the frustration but due to the hope of successful revenge. After 1945 the humiliation was even more profound but the result was completely different. So the main task for us is to deprive Russian political class any temptation, any illusion about the possibility to recreate the Empire.

So it is not the policy of appeasement, of recognizing Russian ambitions on post-Soviet area that can help us to avoid that threat of neo-imperial policy. It is rather a clear demonstration that such a policy is an illusion. Whenever European Union or NATO respect Russian ambitions in post Soviet area it acts against their interests. It's an inspiration. Recognition of Russian ambitions gives fuel to fulfill those ambitions.

I don't believe in democratization of Russia but if somebody believes, the first condition, *sine qua non*, of democratization of Russia is western, I mean westernized Ukraine, westernized Belarus and so on. All the countries that were dominated by Russia should be put into such a political construction that would demonstrate to decision makers in Kremlin that the reconstruction of their Empire is impossible. From that point of view of course American presence in Europe is the basic one. And this is the source of our transatlantism or proatlantism. We still think that since only 20 percent of humanity lives in democratic system and we are a part of that community, it is senseless to try to compete within this community. We still face the challenges of the nature "the West and the rest". So the solidarity, transatlantic solidarity is the backbone of our image of European security construction.

As far as European Union is concerned, it's rather a structure of soft security that should not be overestimated. Sometimes we can hear that it's a young organization. But please remember: the Maastricht treaty took place in 1991. If we make a comparison to the League of Nations we are in 1938. That is almost the end of the story. So we cannot still say that maybe in the future, we are still young. No. Therefore European Union can be useful in long range project. And not the juridical structure of the organization is important.

We had a discussion before our session that Lisbon treat – in my opinion – has nothing to do with the problem. Because if we have a head of European diplomacy it would be just an official, in fact being a spokesman of the European Council and not a real decision maker. From the Polish point of view it's far better to have foreign policy under the competence of presidency because we can expect Polish presidency,

Lithuanian presidency, Estonian presidency and so on. If not, if there is a neutral transnational official, he will be much more inclined to deal with global warming or with storms in Pacific than with Russia because this is not a political actor that can produce any resistance to the efforts.

So the main problem of European Union is rather the lack political will, the lack of capacity to sacrifice something, especially to win the public opinion support for sacrifices in order to achieve the goals than the political structure. This political structure is sufficient. And we cannot change this second factor, namely political support of public opinion, by changing political structures. Creating European directorate would rather contribute to the split within Europe between those who perceive the threat from the east and those who perceive the threat from the south – the immigration for example, the unstable situation in the Mediterranean.

So the main and last conclusion is: we should be aware that there are 27 member states with different not maybe interests but priorities. We wish to everybody all the best but of course it's not a surprise that the Spaniards invented Barcelona Process and the Finns invented Northern Dimension. This is geographical determination and one cannot change this. So we have to learn how to live with those differences, how to use the mechanism but we cannot say that this will be the main tool of dealing with Russia. Unfortunately. And this is why the transatlantic security is the basic concept of Polish vision of European security architecture.