The Quest for Leadership in post-1989 Central Eastern Europe:

Poland's Rise to the Middle

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ABSTRACT

It is of great importance to analyze alternative sources of leadership within the international system given the increasing interdependence between states and the decreased willingness or capacity of hegemonic leaders to exert their influence in shaping and maintaining international stability and order during times of change. Middle powers have a much greater capacity and potential to influence the international system today than ever before. This thesis seeks to outline the emergence of Poland as a middle power in Central Eastern Europe during the period between its gaining independence in late 1989 and its admission into the European Union.

Utilizing a behavioral approach to middle power analysis, this thesis demonstrates that Poland was able to overcome what was historically a disadvantageous geostrategic position and turn this position to its advantage. This required Poland to depart from its past self-perception as a great power. By acting as a catalyst, facilitator, and manager in its diplomatic behavior towards other states in CEE, Poland was able to forge beneficial relations with its neighbors and present itself as a middle power. Poland's middle power behavior also garnered it membership in NATO and the EU where Poland will continue to be a significant source of influence in the international system well into the future.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

World order very simply refers to the relationship between states within the international system. World order implies that states within this system are arranged in a particular order based on some particular set of criteria. This hierarchical paradigm naturally results in one or two states occupying the top spot within the system acting as the hegemonic world leader. Hegemonic stability theorists have consequently taken a top down approach by emphasizing the need for the presence of the one state at the top of the international system that is capable enough to extend its influence beyond its own borders to shape the international system as a whole.

This line of reasoning maintains that an all powerful state is necessary to shape and maintain the overall stability of the international system. The focus on hegemonic leadership inherently subjugates the role of other states within the system to becoming mere adherents of the international order promulgated by the hegemonic authority (ies). This focus of attention detracts from other sources of leadership within the system. It also fails to account for the maintenance of order within the system when no apparent hegemonic leader is present to exert its influence. More attention must be paid to these other sources of leadership as providers of stability and order within the international system.

Bernard Wood (1990) appropriately asserts that many opportunities have become available to middle powers due to the increasing interdependence of the international system and the diminished willingness of hegemonic leaders to play a major role in shaping the world order. Consequently, middle powers have "much greater capability and potential influence in the international system than is commonly recognized" (Wood 1990, p.71-72). Wood also affirms that middle powers are the states which are most likely to benefit from the increasing multi-lateral cooperation between states. The concept of middle power is certainly

problematic and it is indeed difficult to classify a state as such in any precise manner. However, the realities of the international system demonstrate the need to take into consideration the influence that middle powers have in creating world order and maintaining stability in the international system. The situation in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) after the fall of communism provides a good illustration of the important role middle powers have to play in the international system

The Cold War epoch offered a system in which states were bound within the limited framework of the diametrically opposed ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union. The European continent became the central area of contention between these two spheres of influence. The CEE region became the figurative and literal dividing line between what was essentially two different world orders. The rapid decline of the Soviet Union near the end of the twentieth century brought many uncertainties with regard to the future regional and world order. There was to be no Marshall Plan type aid for the region as there had been for the rest of Europe after the WWII. With the sudden absence of hegemonic leadership for the states formerly under the dependency of the Soviet Union the conditions were ideal for the emergence of a middle power within the region during this time.

Due to the significance of the CEE region in the overall stability and order of Europe during this period, it is essential to explore the sources of leadership that contributed to the positive outcomes that were achieved there. In most analyses of "middlepowermanship" the states chosen for evaluation have been self-identified middle powers and never has the theory been analytically applied to the CEE region. It can be argued that Poland stood apart from the other CEE states as a probable candidate to emerge as a middle power. Poland occupied a position of extreme geostrategic significance between Western Europe and the then crumbling Soviet Union. Poland is also prominent in relation to other states within the region given its considerable size and significant population. Establishing Poland as a middle power

is of continued consequence as it and the rest of CEE are now a part of the enlarged European Union with Poland positioned to make continued contributions to European stability and order.

Therefore, the question this thesis seeks to answer is whether Poland was able to emerge as a middle power between 1989 and its membership in the European Union. Did Poland demonstrate the characteristics of a middle power as outlined by the existing literature on the topic? What impact did Poland have on creating stability and order within the region? What are the lasting affects of this influence for Poland and the rest Europe and the world? Chapter one of this thesis will analyze the theory of middle power and trace the many variations the theory has taken over the years in the existing literature. This exercise will demonstrate how the theory of middle power has evolved from measures based on position, geography, and normative qualities to a behavioral approach of assessing middlepowermanship. The behavioral approach will be used to analyze Polish foreign policy during the period following the collapse of communism in 1989 until roughly its membership in the European Union. Chapter two will next investigate Polish foreign policy from a historical perspective in terms of national interests and consider how these national interests have developed and changed over time according to changes in the international system. It will be shown that Poland's post-1989 foreign policy and concept of national interest was a major divergence from its previous incarnations.

Chapter four, five, six, and seven will be individual case studies of Poland's foreign policy actions toward its neighbors based on the behavioral approach to middle power theory which broadly states that middle powers act as catalysts, coordinators, and managers in their diplomatic behavior towards other states. Chapter four will show how Poland took initiative with Germany and worked to resolve historical disputes in order to forge an affable relationship that would afford Poland the confidence to pursue there rest of its diplomatic

objectives. Chapter five examines Poland's participation in the Visegrád Group and illustrates how this cooperation with other Central European states enabled Poland to cast of the vestiges of communism and successfully achieve its goal of returning to Europe. Chapter six and seven will explore the many challenges that Poland faced in conducting its eastern policy. These chapters will reveal how Poland was able to overcome the difficult task of maintaining good relations with Russia while at the same time encouraging the independence and democratization of the former Soviet Republics. Based on the findings of this analysis it will be shown that Poland was able to emerge as a middle power during the post-1989 time period and has consequently positioned itself to have a continued influence in Europe through its current position in the European Union.

CHAPTER 2:

TOWARDS A THEORY OF MIDDLE POWER

Middle power theory is a very elusive and a seemingly arbitrary attempt to analyze the foreign policy of states within the international system that are not considered to be great powers nor small powers. Some go so far as to state that middle power theory is neither a theoretical framework nor a methodological approach which can link state type to foreign policy behavior. Rather, "middle power theory was developed by statesmen to describe the status, international role, and foreign policy behavior of their states" (Neack 1995, p.224). Furthermore, a precise definition of middle power remains illusive as "Nobody has quite overcome the serious difficulties of providing an entirely satisfactory definition of the type of power that is neither great nor small" (Holbraad 1984, p.2). Cooper et al. (1993) recognize that, "The idea of middle power, as a distinctive category of actor in contemporary international relations, is… problematic." However, the idea of middle power is readily evident in that the world has easily identifiable great powers and numerous powers that can be reasonably identified as small. This does not leave a black and white world of great and small powers. Many states fall somewhere in the middle of this power continuum. Many different theories have been developed that attempt to define middle powers based on a number of different methods.

Carsten Holbraad (1984) observes that throughout history many references have been made to middle powers, but there has not been a continuous body of work dedicated to the subject. The concept of middle power has reappeared sporadically throughout history. Its definition has varied with the particular perspectives of the authors and the coetaneous international environment of their time. The interest in middle powers has consistently been rooted in their relationships vis-à-vis the great powers, and only recently have middle powers been considered a distinct category of actors in the international relations literature.

2.1: Positional, Geographic, and Normative approaches

One of the first known references to middle power was presented by Giovanni Botero in 1589. In his *Ragion di Stato,* Botero articulates that power and size are the determining factors in deciding the position of states within the international order. Botero observes that "a middle-sized dominion has sufficient strength and authority to stand on its own without the need of help from others." Botero believes that middle-sized states are most lasting given that they are "exposed neither to violence by their weakness nor to envy by their greatness, and their wealth and power being moderate, passions are less violent, ambition finds less support and license less provocation than in larger states. Fear of their neighbors restrains them, and even if feelings are aroused to anger they are easily quieted and tranquility restored (Botero 1956, p.8)." Botero also introduced the importance of the ability of a state's leadership to recognize the limitations of being a middle power when he contends that a middle power's longevity may be jeopardized if leaders "are not content but wish to expand and become great, and, exceeding the bounds of mediocrity, leave behind also those of security (Botero 1956, p.8)." Botero's sixteenth century reference to middle power highlights the need for "sufficient strength" for middle powers, but gives no indication of what factors contribute to this strength, or how this strength might be measured. Botero does recognize that middle powers are limited in their actions by their middle power status but does not elaborate the potential role of a middle power in the greater international system.

In 1831 German political theorist Karl von Clausewitz brings the concept of middle power a step further when he introduced the pertinence of geopolitical setting in the identification of middle powers. Clausewitz ascertains that a middle power must posses specific "geographical, political and strategic qualities" that make it "reliable and of a friendly disposition towards its neighbors." Furthermore, he believes a middle power must

be militarily capable enough to "afford some protection" to its neighbor, and must "be able to defend itself" in the event of outside hostility (Holbraad 1984, p.23).

In 1831 a hypothetically sovereign Poland might have been considered a middle power due to its geographical situation between the great powers Austria, Prussia, and Russia; implying that Poland would serve as a 'buffer state' against aggression from any of these great powers towards another. However, during Clausewitz's era, the Polish nation was in its fourth decade of partition between the aforementioned powers. Warsaw's recent rebellion against this external repression had been decidedly quelled. In the interests of Germany, Clausewitz actually opposed Polish independence observing that there is "no people toward whom the Poles have displayed more contempt than the Germans" and "no nation with which Poland would have a more enduring conflict of interests than Germany" (Clausewitz 1992, p.381). The limitations of geopolitical location would leave Polish aspirations "sacrificed on the alter of the balance of power" (Clausewitz 1992, p.370) until the last decade of the twentieth century.

Clausewitz's definition of middle power implies a direct relationship between middle power status and a state's geographic position within the international system. Power is still an essential characteristic in Clausewitz's definition of middle power, but more so in a state's relationship with its neighbors rather than for the middle power itself. Presumably, a middle power would be the immediate neighbor of a great power in this situation and would be on fair enough terms with the great power to afford it protection in the event of hostility toward the great power. Though this definition of middle power is limited in its scope, we will see that the geopolitical location a potential middle power does have serious implications in explaining the foreign policy behavior of that state. If geopolitical relations were influential in the nineteenth century they would become even more characteristic of the international system in the next century.

The early decades of the twentieth century brought two brutal World Wars to Europe. These conflicts left the Europeans, and the rest of the world, seeking a lasting solution to the devastating nationalist conflicts that had plagued the continent for much of its recent history. The result was a blossoming of newly independent states across Europe. Each of these new states brought an independent foreign policy agenda to the theater of international relations. For some however this independence would be short lived as the Soviet Union extended its reach into Europe and created a stable of satellite states in the heart of the continent. Outside the Soviet sphere of influence the United States took the reigns as the hegemonic leader of the Western world and a great deal of debate took shape over what it meant to be a great power. In the Western sphere of influence, the states that might be considered middle powers were naturally the most vocal.

In an address to the United Nations on June 22, 1948, R.G. Riddell of the Canadian Department of External Affairs assumed that, "The middle powers are those which, by reason of their size, their material resources, their willingness and ability to accept responsibility, their influence and their stability are close to being great powers (Mackay 1969, p.138)." The Canadians, like many others, felt that they, by reason of their size and influence deserved the recognition afforded to great powers. They felt that their willing support of the allies during the war, their respect for international law, and their continued stability had earned them the rights granted to great powers, most notably within nascent international institutions such as the United Nations. Middle powers, like great powers, undoubtedly possess certain traits that enable them to influence others. They have also demonstrated their ability to be responsible players within the international system. So what differentiates a middle power from a great power?

Holbraad (1984) clarifies that great powers are unique in their greatness based not solely on military might or economic superiority, but because they enjoy a "certain status"

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and belong to a "special class in international society" (Holbraad 1984, p.75). He further elicits that great powers have expressed the "collective solidarity" and the "sustained common interests" that have ensured their recognition throughout history and have distinguished them from the smaller powers. To differentiate between middle and small powers Holbraad (1984) believes one must consider the "total force" of a state and suggests that the overall power and influence of a state is an amalgamation of many factors including "military, economic, and moral" components. Holbraad concludes that GNP appears to be a good indicator in attempting to quantify the power of particular nations. It is his belief that GNP tends to reflect most of the capabilities characteristic of power including "population, area, location, resources, organization and leadership" (Holbraad 1984, p.78). In defining middle power Holbraad divides the world into regions, ranks each nation based on GNP (1975), and draws a line at the most reasonable cut off in each region. He ends up with a list of eighteen middle powers. Of these, he refers to the top five as "other great powers" or "secondary powers." These powers included Japan, West Germany, China, France, and the United Kingdom (Holbraad 1984, p.90). Poland falls solidly in the middle of Holbraad's initial list.

Similar lists that attempt to rank states according to power and position relative to other states within the international system had previously been created by other researchers. One such list compiled by Cox and Jacobsen (1973) created a composite index of GNP, GNP per capita, nuclear capability, and prestige in the years 1950, 1958, 1960 (Cox and Jacobson, 1973). As Bernard Wood (1990) points out, these composites of power closely match lists ranking power based on GNP alone and he therefore concludes that such an approach to creating a preliminary list of middle powers is useful. The major advantage of such a quantitative approach to assessing middle powers is the objectivity of such approaches

(Wood 1990, p.74). However, Wood also recognized the that basic rankings of power overlook the important differentiation between power and influence.

2.2: A Behavioral Approach

Bernard Wood (1990) quotes Cox and Jacobsen (1973) who maintain that, "influence means the modification of one actor's behavior by that of another…Power means capability; it is the aggregate of political resources that are available to an actor…Power may be converted into influence, but it is not necessarily so converted either at all or to its full extent. Although those who possess the greatest power may also exercise the greatest influence, this is not logically necessary (Cox and Jacobsen 1973, p.3-4)." Therefore, just because a state falls somewhere in the middle of a quantitative power ranking does not make it a middle power. It is very possible that though a number of states might qualify as middle powers based on their capabilities, it would require a detailed analysis of that state's behavior to determine whether that state actually converts this power into influence thereby wielding a middle power influence in the international system (Wood 1990, p.77). Robert Cox reiterates this point about the role of middle powers when he states that "Possessing middle-range capability (military or economic) is a necessary condition of ability to play this role; but it is not an adequate predictor of a disposition to play it (Cox 1996, p.244)." In other words a state must behave like a middle power in order to be considered a middle power. Such a behavioral approach is the foundation of most contemporary analyses of middle power diplomacy. It is also important to keep in mind that state behavior is most affected by the very nature of the international system in which the state functions. Significant changes in the international system result in changes in a middle power's behavior within the system.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the independence of states formerly within the Soviet Bloc markedly altered the dynamics of the international system and changed the foreign policy environment in which middle powers were to operate.

Within the context of this new world order, Cooper et al. (1993) attempt to "relocate'" middle powers under the assumption that the uni-polar order that replaced the bipolar order of the Cold War era is now being replaced by a multi-polar world order. With the presence of a world leader in question, Cooper et al. (1993) pay particular attention to the essential role of followers within the international order. "Under waning conditions of hegemony there is a need to pay much attention to other sources of leadership (Cooper et al. 1993, p.12)," and it is "the changing nature of leadership and followership in the contemporary international system" that makes the study of middle power so important (Cooper et al. 1993, p.16).

In taking a step forward in the analysis of middle powers, Cooper et al (1993) eschew traditional methods of defining middle power in such ways as: Position, the use of quantifiable measures such as area, population, or GNP; Geography, the physical location of a state on the map; or Normative approaches that base assumptions on states "deserving to be" or "earning the right" to be considered middle powers. (Cooper et al. 1993, p.17-18) Their theory favors a "behavioral" approach which asserts it is what states "do" in the contemporary international relations environment that determines whether or not they are considered middle powers.

Cooper et al. (1993) acknowledge that the characteristics of middle power behavior manifest themselves in three distinct forms. Middle powers act as *catalysts* by initiating particular foreign policy objectives. Middle powers break new ground and encourage other states to follow their lead. Middle powers also act as *facilitators* by seeking out "like-minded" states to form coalitions and associations. This collaboration with other states that demonstrate similar interests enables middle powers to present a stronger voice in achieving the common goals of the group. Lastly, middle powers play the role of *managers* by initiating the formation of organizations, institutions, and associations. Middle powers create acceptable principles and standards. Middle powers build confidence and create an

environment of trust and legitimacy that encourages others to follow them down the reputable path. These efforts also create the means by which to settle disputes and resolve the "misperceptions and misunderstandings" that so often occur between states (Cooper et al. 1993, p.24-25).

Andrew Cooper (1997) suggests that it is the entrepreneurial ability and practical expertise of middle powers that separate them from small powers, and it is also what determines what they do in their given international environment. Furthermore, it is a middle power's limited ability to influential multiple policy outcomes that distinguish them from the great powers. Middle powers "cannot be everywhere" and "do everything" so they must practice "niche diplomacy" whereby they choose between policy alternatives and concentrate their efforts in the areas in which they have the skills and ability to achieve results that are most beneficial to the state (Cooper 1997, p.6).

2.3: Applying Middle Power Theory

The evolution of middle power theory has thus progressed from the limited approaches based on characteristics of position (Botero and Holbraad), geography (Clausewitz), and normative qualities (Riddell) to a dynamic behavioral approach presented by Cooper et al. (1993). It is evident that even though theories of middle power based on position or geography may indicate the prerequisite potential for a state to be a middle power they by no means predict such an outcome. Since middle power capability does not necessarily translate into middle power behavior, it is best to assess a potential middle power based on what that state actually does to influence the international system rather than merely where that state is located within the hierarchy of the international system.

As Andrew Cooper (1997) points out, middle powers are inherently limited by their ability to influence a broad spectrum of policy issues in the international system. Middle powers must focus their foreign policy efforts toward initiatives deemed most beneficially to

them and where they are most likely to achieve success. This situation provides the underlying condition of what Robert Cox (1996) calls "middlepowermanship." Middlepowermanship defines a state's role in the world. Being in the middle provides both the initiative and restraint by which such middle powers must operate. Such a position requires middle powers to identify their national interest in terms of their relationships to other states and work towards creating and maintaining a world order that is both predictable and binding to all (Cox 1996, p.524-525).

Therefore, an analysis of middle power behavior must begin with an assessment of the national interests of a potential middle power. A middle power will recognize its position within the international system. It will recognize the limitations of its own capabilities and work in areas where it considerers it will be most successful in influencing the international system in its favor. The middle power will exhibit behavior that will find it acting as a catalyst, a facilitator, and a manager in its foreign policy towards other states. The middle power will exhibit an inclusive multilateral approach to gain the confidence of others in the international system. The observed middle power behavior of a state exercising its middle power capability to influence the creation of a stable and orderly international system based on its own national interests will be indicative of a state being considered a middle power.

It must also be emphasized that the exhibition of middle power behavior by a state during a given period does not forever make that state a middle power. Robert Cox states that a theory of middle power cannot be considered a "fixed universal." Middle power theory is "something that has to be rethought continually in the context of the changing state of the international system (Cooper, p.8)." Therefore, middle powers must be continually reassessed given their behavior within the international system as well as their place within that system. Changes in the system result in changes in national interests and changes in middle power behavior.

CHAPTER 3:

NATIONAL INTEREST AND FOREIGN POLICY

The manifest obstacles of history can not be ignored when analyzing the complex foreign policy challenges faced by the Third Polish Republic. Post-Cold War Poland might easily have assumed an irredentist posture by forcibly seeking redemption for what it might have perceived as past injustices. A better understanding of why Poland choose not to pursue such a path must be viewed in light of its historical experiences and the limited options it was allowed in pursuing its national interests in the past. The change in the perception of Polish national interests after 1989 was to a great extent influenced by significant changes in the international system which allowed Poland to pursue a foreign policy not afforded to it at any other point in the history of the state.

3.1: Pre-1989: Realist vs. Idealist debate

Poland's pre-1989 history is dominated by the burdens of its unfortunate geographic position at the center of the European continent. Geographically, Poland has been a great expanse of flat territory situated between two of Europe's perennial great powers, Russia and the different variations of a German state. In deed, "Geography has prevented the Polish nation from taking the position of a middle power, which by virtue of its human and material resources it could have expected to attain" (Bromke 1967, p.1). The geopolitics of this situation has left the Poles without a state for much of their modern existence, or more appropriately, non-existence. The borders of the Polish state, when it has appeared on the map, have shifted from east to west. These shifts were accompanied by a number of different variations in the makeup of the Polish citizenry and left lingering debates as to what it meant to be Polish and where exactly the boundaries of the Polish state should be drawn. Partition between the great powers during the late eighteenth century lasted until after the First World War. After a brief period of independence during the inter-war period Poland was again

sacrificed by its great power neighbors during the Second World War. After the war, Poland regained statehood but fell under the domain of the Soviet Union which afforded the Poles virtually no independence in their own external policy. This disappointing history, and the precariousness of Poland's position between two powerful and threatening neighbors, has left mere survival of Polish independence at the top of the list of national interests.

This situation has routinely led to foreign policy becoming the fundamental issue of Polish politics. Furthermore, the usual discrepancy between Poland's actual and potential place in the international system has historically led to an intellectual split in the Polish elite as how best to secure and maintain Poland's independence (Bromke 1967, p.2). The conflict arises between those who view Poland's place in the international system in terms of where it actually is as compared to those who see things in terms of where it ought to be. This has led to the traditional split between political realist and political idealists attempting to sway Polish foreign policy in line with their own reasoning. Though both lines of thought are prevalent throughout Polish history, the years leading up to the First World War and the inter-war period provide a good example of the contrast between the two.

Poland's political realists have taken a more pragmatic approach to Poland's place in the international system. They view the geographic situation as unchangeable and see the preservation of Poland as a nation as the primary objective. Early political realists even viewed foreign rule as inevitable and felt strides towards independence would only further weaken the Polish nation. The focus was therefore more on strengthening the moral, economic, and social well-being of the Polish nation and a turn away from political action (Bromke 1967, p.12). Bromke (1967) points out that this strategy was actually counterproductive. As the nation strengthened economically and socially there was an increasing demand for political aspirations as well. An increase in political desires at the turn of the century found an outlet in the National Democratic movement, led by Roman

Dmowski which began to have a significant impact on Polish politics prior to the outbreak of World War One.

Dmowski's philosophy was a mixture of both political realism and political idealism. He felt it was most important to further strengthen the social and economic lot of the nation while still striving to regain an independent Polish state. However, Dmowski's did not see independence occurring in the future. He felt that the best way to advance Poland's cause would be an alliance with one of the occupying powers, specifically Russia. Dmowski did not support the idea of a pre-partition multinational union. He felt that an ethnically unified state, centered in the Western provinces, allied with Russia against Germany was Poland's best change for future independence (Bromke 1967, p.15-17). Dmowski's reasoning was realistic. He realized that Poland was not in a position to improve its position beyond striving for independence. He also recognized that an alliance with a greater power was the best way to further these chances. However, an opposing view of Poland's future course would prevail when Poland actually regained its independence after the war.

Political idealism in Polish political thought is rooted in the idea that Poland was once a great power and the partitions of the eighteenth century robbed the state of its due place within the European system (Neumann 1992, p.121). Furthermore, idealist see full independence of Poland and the restoration of her rightful place in international politics as the only acceptable goal and view military action and insurrection as acceptable means to achieve that outcome (Bromke 1967, p.3). Neumann (1992) finds that when Poland regained its independence after the First World War there seems to have been a psychological need within the ruling elite to feel on par with their former aggressors and a need to regain Poland's former prestige. The large territorial size and population of inter-war Poland combined with the weakening of both German and Russian power as a result of the war further added to this misperception (Neumann 1992, p.123). This romanticized view of

Poland's place in the international system would prevail during the inter-war period under the leadership, then dictatorship, of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.

Unlike Dmowski, the Pilsudskiites saw Russia as the principle threat to Polish independence and sought to regain pre-partition lands to the east. This brought Poland into direct military conflict with Russia at the end of World War One. While at war with Russia in 1920, Pilsudski's stated that the ultimate goal for Poland was "to turn back the clock of history, so that the great Polish Republic would emerge as the strongest military as well as cultural power in the entire east" (Bromke 1967, p.39). The Pilsudski regime not only expounded a romanticized version of Polish history, but of their place within it. They seen themselves as the liberators of Poland and viewed Poland as a great power. This view lasted right up to the eve of the Second World War. As late as 1939, the former Polish ambassador to Moscow and Paris, Juliusz Lukasiewicz, wrote a pamphlet entitled *Polsk jest Mocarstwem* ("Poland is a Great Power") (Neumann 1992, p.123). In this pamphlet Lukasiewicz praises Pilsudski as the "creator and redeemer" of the Polish state and concluded that Poland is "the cornerstone of political order in Central Eastern Europe…The fate of contemporary Europe depends on the policies of Poland no less than on those of other great powers" (Bromke 1967, p37-38). Such delusions of grandeur however did not reflect the reality of Poland's situation.

The re-establishment of Poland after World War One left it in border disputes with Lithuania over the city of Vilnius, with Czechoslovakia over the Teschen region, and with Germany as the Polish Corridor cut East Prussia off from the rest of German territory (Neumann 1992, p.127-129). Though Pilsudski sought to achieve some sort of union between the states of Central Eastern Europe which also endured constant threat from Germany and Russia, little ground was made in this regard. Further adding to Poland's inter-war difficulty was its ethnic heterogeneity. In 1931 ethnic Poles made up roughly only two-third of the population with Ukrainians representing 13.9%, Jews 8.7%, Belarusians 3.1%, and Germans

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2.3% (Davies 2005, p.299). The gravest danger to Poland however was still it location between two greater powers. In late 1939 Poland was again wiped from the map of Europe as first Germany and then Russia invaded, and Poland once more lost its independence.

Poland reemerged as a state after the Second World War fully under the influence of Soviet hegemony. Membership in the Eastern Bloc groupings such as the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance made independent foreign policy unthinkable. Paradoxically the fate of Poland after the war did result in some fortuitous benefits. Poland became territorially compact and it borders were now more favorable in terms of a defendable western front and the nation-state became 97 percent ethnically homogeneous (Sanford 2003, p.190). Rapid industrialization during the Soviet period also served to modernize Poland and develop an unified infrastructure that was lacking during the inter-war period due to previous partition between three different powers.

Furthermore, the experience of Nazi occupation during, and Soviet domination after the war, also had an enduring affect on Polish foreign policy. The Poles were forced to accept the reality of their political situation and surrender there historical tradition of great power self-perception (Sanford 2003, p.187). Despite this unmistakable reality Polish intellectuals still sought independence during the communist era and developed a rational national interest by which to guide future foreign policy when the international system would allow. This necessary change came with the collapse of communist regimes in Central Eastern Europe in 1989.

3.2: Post-1989: A Historic Opportunity

The foreign policy actions of the Polish leadership immediately following Poland's democratic revolution in 1989 demonstrated a forward-looking approach that served to buttress Poland's ascendance to middle power. The conscious effort to overcome history and the patent determination to establish substantial associations with former enemies, long time

neighbors, and newborn states highlight the enlightened political thought of the *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych* (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs / MSZ) during this period. To use a term coined in the early 1990s by then Polish finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, who introduced Poland's economy to shock therapy, Poland was in a period of "extraordinary politics." In other words, Skubiszewski had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to chart the future course of Polish foreign policy. Temporary pain was to be expected in the short-term, but opposition today could not be allowed to jeopardize the potential rewards of the future. Though pioneering in practice, much of Skubiszewski's foreign policy philosophy was derivative of the political thought produced much earlier by Polish intellectuals exiled during the era of Soviet communism in the Paris-based journal *Kultura.*

The liberal influence of Jerzy Giedroyc's editorship and the forward-thinking philosophies of *Kultura's* writers played a substantial role in shaping post-Cold War Poland's international relations grand strategy (Snyder 2003, p. 225). The fundamental tenants of this grand strategy were put forth by one of the most prominent of *Kultura's* contributors, Juliusz Mieroszewski, whose prescription for sovereign Poland's foreign policy included rapprochement with former enemies (Germany and Russia), cooperation with other Central European states (Czechoslovakia and Hungary), and developing relations with the western republics of the Soviet Union (Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine), which Mieroszewski rightly predicted would eventually break free of Soviet domination (Kostrzewa, 1990; Tyrmand, 1970). The MSZ under the leadership of Skubiszewski would categorically maintain this course that had been set by Mieroszewski and *Kultura* decades before Poland actually achieved its independence.

Much of the MSZ's foreign policy success can be attributed to the progressive philosophy of Krzysztof Skubiszewski who led the Polish foreign ministry from mid-September 1989 to November of 1993. Skubiszewski brought to the MSZ a formidable

resume including a Harvard Ph.D. in International Law and an internationally recognized reputation as a legal academic (Spero 2004, p.42) . He recognized the significant role Poland was to play in the changing European environment and developed a Polish *raison d'etat* based on placing state interests at the forefront while keeping nationalist emotions in check. Through his efforts to subdue nationalist sentiments and the corresponding historical animosities they brought, Skubiszewski was able to establish critical links with neighbors which Poland clearly shared troubled pasts. These linkages proved to be pivotal in determining middle power Poland's future position in the developing European order.

Post-1989 Poland was characterized by a united elite consensus on the national interests of the state and its position in the international system (Sanford 2003, p. 178). Skubiszewski would set a course that would be maintained by him through four governments and by all his eventual successors. The national interest was defined in terms of maintaining Poland's sovereignty, achieving membership in European organizations, and the development of regional links with her neighbors (Sanford 2003, p.182). Skubiszewski commented on the important role he envisioned for Poland in the changed Europe during an address to the North Atlantic Assembly in late November 1990. After acknowledging that "Poland's position is an objective fact which in contemporary history has put her more often than not, at a disadvantage," Skubiszewski went on to say that he hoped that "Poland's geopolitical and geostrategic importance could and should be turned into an asset for the country itself and for Europe as a whole." (Skubiszewski 1990, p.1)

The following chapters explore the difficulties and triumphs of middle power Poland's post-Cold War foreign policy. Evident throughout this analysis are two distinct facets of Polish foreign policy. First is Poland's explicit commitment to "return to Europe" and establish their place within western institutions, specifically the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). The second outcome is Poland's

demonstrated behavior as a middle power based on the theoretical framework of Cooper et al. (1993). These chapters confirm that Poland acted as a catalyst in negotiations with its great power neighbor Germany, as a facilitator in its associations with the Central European states of the Visegrád Triangle, and manager in balancing between diplomacy with Moscow and promoting democratic ideals and independence in the newly sovereign states to its East.

CHAPTER 4:

GERMANY: AN ANCHOR TO THE WEST

The historic Roundtable Talks between the communist government of Poland and *Solidarnosc*, the Polish trade union turned icon of democratic freedom, lead to the partially free elections in June of 1989. In August of 1989, Poland fashioned the first non-communist coalition government in the Soviet Bloc in over 40 years. On 9 November 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall signaled the imminent unification of Germany thereby presenting the nascent democracy in Poland with its first significant foreign policy challenge. Poland moved quickly to establish harmonious relations with Germany exhibiting a clear set of objectives and keen awareness of the profound importance an amicable relationship with Germany would portend. Rapprochement with Germany would anchor Poland to the West and create the necessary foundations on which to successfully pursue the MSZ's yet inchoate *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy).

Poland's task of establishing productive diplomacy with its western neighbor was fraught with difficulties given the bitter history shared between the Poles and Germans over the past two centuries. Most recently Poland had been sacrificed by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 which essentially split Polish lands between Germany and Russia during the Second World War. Poland's post-war borders were ultimately decided by the great powers in the Potsdam Agreement of 1945. The Poles lost substantial portions of their eastern territory (*Kresy*) while being compensated with an extension of their western boundary at the expense of Germany. The Oder-Neisse Line became the official divide between the two states. The border was however a source of apprehension for Poland as the divide had been disputed by the West during the Cold War and it was uncertain what German reunification would mean with regard to the line. Consequently, one of the main focal points of the MSZ's early foreign policy became obtaining official German recognition of the present borders.

Poland began to delineate this policy officially on 23 August 1989 in one of the first acts of the Polish Sejm. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact the Polish Parliament condemned the agreement as a violation of the "fundamental principles of international law," and the Senate followed suit on 30 August 1989, declaring that in order to maintain "the peaceful contemporary European order" it was necessary to maintain the present borders of Europe (Spero 2004, p.104).

Poland and Germany were rapidly headed toward meaningful reconciliation as Skubiszewski and the Federal Republic of Germany's Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, addressed the Polish-German state of affairs during meetings at the United Nations in late September 1989. Skubiszewski declared that Poland supported German unification as long as it occurred within the present borders of the two states, and said he felt the conditions of German unification required the involvement of leaders from multiple states, including Poland. For his part Genscher reiterated previous statements that Germany harbored no desire to reclaim any part of its pre-war territory (Spero 2004, p.111).

Soon after these statements at the United Nations it was announced that German Chancellor Helmut Kohl would visit Warsaw in early November. The timing of Kohl's visit could not have been more inauspicious, since on the evening of Kohl's arrival in Poland on 9 November 1989 he learned the Berlin Wall had been breached. Kohl was forced to return to Germany to tend to the ensuing situation. On his return to Poland a few days later, he signed a joint agreement calling for political and economic cooperation between Poland and Germany as well as agreement to protect minorities living in each other's respective states. (Spero 2004, p.111) However, this visit failed to produce any official recognition of the Oder-Neisse border as the MSZ had desired.

Over the ensuing year Kohl understandably turned his attentions to developments in Germany and evaded the Oder-Neisse border issue in order not to hinder his reelection

campaign in the run up to German elections in the fall of 1990. Kohl regularly reiterated that he was bound by constitutional law and avowed that only a unified German Parliament could officially recognize the border. Skubiszewski, being an accomplished student of international law, understood this and realized official recognition of the border would take time, but he still pressed for recognition of the border before the unification of the two Germanys. In response to Kohl's "Ten Point Plan" on German unification, which failed to mention the Oder-Neisse border, Skubiszewski delivered a speech to the Sejm in December of 1989 articulating Kohl's quandary by explaining the complexity of the legal requirements needed for German recognition of the border and called for patience on the part of Poland (Spero 2004, p.114).

In this same speech Skubiszewski declared that "history does not know cases of confederations, not to mention federations, where the members are part of different alliances and different military organizations" (Spero 2004, p114). Skubiszewski knew that Germany could not simultaneously be a member of NATO and the still extant Warsaw Pact. Thus Poland became the first state to call for unified Germany's membership in NATO. This position was in stark contrast to that of the USSR, and was made even before key NATO members began to discuss the subject of unified Germany's admission into the alliance in early 1990. Poland was certainly acting in enlightened self interest. Sanford (1999) observed that a Germany bound by European security structures was by far safer for Poland and the entire region than a neutral Germany left open to pursue alliances with whomever it desired. Skubiszewski stated, "we must be thinking today…about new European structures and about a new European security system" (Spero 2004, p.117). Poland undoubtedly feared another German-Russian accord that might again sacrifice Polish sovereignty. Most significantly Poland seized the opportunity to act as a catalyst by quickly taking position on German reunification and regional security issues.

Poland's willingness to act as an ostensible catalyst in the region was demonstrated even earlier when Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki declared before the Sejm on 12 September 1989 that "We desire to open Poland to Europe and the world," believing this required "genuine reconciliation" with Germany. He further articulated that the Polish-German rapprochement would be "commensurate with that achieved between the Germans and French," in shaping the future of European unification. (Spero, p.104)   Spero (2004) observes the significance of this statement as it was the first time in the post-World War II era that a non-Communist government in Central Eastern Europe openly declared their intentions of Western integration.

A major triumph for Skubiszewski and the MSZ team came in July 1990 with Poland's invitation to take part in the "2 + 4" negotiations on German unification. The invitation was in part accomplished by letters sent by Skubiszewski to his United States, French, and British counterparts explaining the MSZ's willingness to compromise by allowing German recognition of the border at the outset of unification rather than before unification as their previous position held (Spero 2004, p119). Skubiszewski was further exalted as the doctrine he had expounded over the past year was included in the final text of the documents finalizing German unification. In a statement following the "2 + 4" negotiations, the Minister stated that the Germans ought to recognize the advantage of having "the Polish state, a strong, rich one with a democratic system, functioning well, being a stabilizing factor in a rich Europe… situated between themselves and Russia" (Spero 2004, p.121).

On 12 September 1990 the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany" was signed in Moscow. Germany officially unified on 2 October 1990, and on 14 November 1990 the "Treaty on the Confirmation of the Polish-German Border" was signed. This treaty marked the successful completion of the first major foreign policy challenge faced by the

MSZ. Polish-German coalescence over the next year brought the treaty on "Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation" on 17 June 1991, codifying efforts to ameliorate minority issues and overcome historical Polish-German divides. The Poles offered a great symbolic gesture in this reconciliation by awarding the "Order of the White Eagle" to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the first German to receive this honor since the end of the Second World War (Pond 2002, p.126).

Elizabeth Pond (2002) defines the Polish-German friendship as "the bedrock of peace and stability in Central Europe." Germany was to become Poland's greatest ally in its bid for European integration. In 1992, the newly appointed German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, traveled to Poland and affirmed that "on the way to Europe, Poland can build on our support and solidarity…Poland has already taken important steps on the path to Europe." The Polish Prime Minister at that time, Hanna Suchocka, advocated a parallel role for Poland vis-à-vis Germany stating that German policy in the East could be built through Poland (Spero 2004, p.129).

The Polish-German rapprochement has been put on par with the Franco-German rapprochement many years earlier. Both have been vital in creating the conditions for genuine European unification, and it may be argued that the Polish-German rapprochement is of an equal order of importance as it brought together not two markedly Western states but effectively moved Western Europe farther east. In terms of Poland's middle power behavior, the Polish-German rapprochement demonstrated Poland's ability to act as a catalyst in its diplomatic efforts. Middle powers often provide the intellectual and political energy to trigger initiatives and take the lead in efforts to gather followers around a particular cause (Cooper et al. 1993, p.24)

It is most certain that German unification would have gone on with or without the participation of Poland. However, no matter the significance of Poland's contribution to the

process, what is important in this middle power analysis is what Poland actually did. Poland quickly supported German unification with the stipulation that it be done under terms acceptable to Poland. Furthermore, Poland was the first to openly declare the fact that unified Germany must be a part of NATO. By taking such positions, along with a proactive effort by Skubiszewski, secured the Polish presence at the 2+4 talks on German unification.

The importance of Poland's presence at these talks cannot be underestimated. Participation in the process brought Poland to the same table with the United States, Britain, France, the Soviets, and Germany. Meeting with the irrefutably great powers undoubtedly vindicated Poland's presence as an important participant in the international system. It also surely gave the MSZ a significant boost of confidence towards achieving its further policy objectives. Poland undeniably made reconciliation with Germany its highest foreign policy priority. This preoccupation came at the expense of other rapidly developing interests in Central Europe. Once Warsaw established its Western foundation with Berlin the MSZ was able to quickly shift focus to other pressing concerns in the region.

CHAPTER 5:

THE VISEGRÁD TRIANGLE

Poland became the first state in Central Europe to cast off the yoke of Soviet Communism in August 1989 when Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first leader of a noncommunist government in the region since the communist coups of the late 1940s. Poland's Central European neighbors soon followed suit as revolution swept across the region in the fall of 1989. From the outset Poland shared with the budding democracies in Czechoslovakia and Hungary the mutual aspiration of what Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel coined "the return to Europe." This pursuit would see the close collaboration of these Central European states in their efforts to obtain integration into Western economic and security institutions, as well as disentangling themselves from the vestiges of Soviet domination. The shared historical experiences of these states furnished them with the common regional and international concerns that fostered a unique basis for their cooperation.

Ilya Prizel (1998) posits that the states of Central and Eastern Europe are united by a complex theory of national identity in which these states share a common sense of cultural and political ressentiment directed toward a former oppressor. This ressentiment produces feelings of "political and social injustice," "cultural defensiveness," and "fascination with the past" that has a "unique impact on the development and exercise of foreign policy in the region" (Prizel 1998, p.23-25). Over the course of four decades Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia shared in the depressing realities of Soviet communism and experienced the collective elation of breaking free of this domination. They would also face the challenges of dual political and economic transitions together. It is not astounding these states found mutual interests in the realm of foreign policy.

Extraordinary changes in the regional order made it essential for this group to establish a mutual political, economic, and security agenda that would hasten their acceptance into the political, economic, and security institutions of Western European (Michta 1992, p.54). This common agenda become official policy as these three states coalesced into the so-called Visegrád Triangle and began working together to achieve a common foreign policy agenda. Such a collaboration had been prescribed years earlier in *Kultura* when Mieroszewski wrote, "In the future we should create a Polish-Hungarian-Czechoslovakian grouping which would strengthen the cooperating partners vis-à-vis Moscow." (Tyrmand 1970, p.273)

The leadership of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia held their first summit in Bratislava, Slovakia in April 1990 under the initiative of the Czechoslovak head of government Vaclav Havel. This meeting produced very little in way of tangible policy proposals as Prague waited until the last days before the summit to set an agenda, leaving little time for the other states to prepare. Furthermore, many of those in attendance were representatives of defunct communist regimes that were soon replaced by democratically elected officials (Spero 2004, p.236). This meeting laid the basic groundwork for the regional cooperative, but it would be Polish Prime Minister Mazowieki who would work diligently during the interim between the first and second summits to draw up a concrete policy program for the triangle (Spero 2004, p.237).

By the time the group met again in Visegrád, Hungary in February 1991 (from where the group obtained its name) Poland had set the framework of the Visegrád's foreign policy agenda and Skubiszewski quickly established himself as the figurehead of the group's initiatives (Spero 2004, p.238). Subsequent summits in Krakow, Poland in October 1991, and Prague, CSFR in May 1992, saw the full coordination of the Visegrád state's policy towards Moscow. The result was each state handing the Russians identical lists of demands.

This collaboration enabled the Visegrád states to put far greater pressure on Moscow to achieve policy outcomes on their own terms than if any one of these states were acting alone.

The proceeds of the Visegrád's cooperation came on 31 March 1991 with the removal of the military structures of the Warsaw Pact, and 1 July 1991 with the official dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (Michta 1992, p.130). These states also successfully negotiated Soviet troop withdrawals from Central Europe, with the last forces leaving Poland in late 1992. The collective actions of the Visegrád Triangle proved to Moscow that the Central European states took their sovereignty seriously and were willing to work together to achieve common foreign policy objectives.

With the Warsaw Pact in the history books, Poland was left outside of any tangible security structures. The reality of the time was articulated by Rysard Zieba when he said "Poland, officially, has no enemies or opponents" and the only conceivable threat to Poland is the possible destabilization in neighboring states that might conceivably result in an inundation of refugees or immigrants. He maintained that the "leading role…of preventing external threats to national security is played by foreign policy" (Ziebas 1993, p.69). The Polish-German reconciliation went a long way in allaying Polish fears of German revanchism and created an overall aura of security throughout the region. According to Mieroszewski, the Polish-German rapprochement was actually prerequisite to the Visegrád Triangle process as neither "Czechoslovakia nor Hungary wants to tie itself up with Poland, which has a quarrel with the Germans" (Tyrmand 1970, p.258). Therefore, aside from some lingering anxiety in Warsaw over dealings between Berlin and Moscow, there were no perceivable threats to regional security.

These conditions explain why Polish President Lech Walesa's idea of creating a Baltic-to-Black Sea security alliance met with very little support in the region and rebuke from Skubiszewski who was annoyed with Walesa for suggesting such a counterproductive

concept. Though never an official proposal, such a security structure would have locked Poland and other potential members into a regional security bloc making it more difficult for these states to justify their pursuit of NATO membership. The Visegrád Triangle clearly viewed NATO membership as a political move designed to deepen their Western integration, not as a military or security necessity. Skubiszewski never considered the Visegrád Triangle to be the beginnings of a regional security alliance, but rather as a "loose coalition" based on the objective of creating a stable and secure Central Europe (Spero 2004, p.258).

Arthur Rachwald proposed that the intent of the Visegrád Triangle was to create a stable and cooperative coalition demonstrating to Europe that "these particular post-communist nations are a special case; since they have the capacity to cooperate, compromise, and coordinate…" and "can provide evidence that their cultural and political values are identical to those of the west" (Prizel 1998, p.150). This stability was put in question on 1 January 1993 as the "Velvet Divorce" in Czechoslovakia threatened the cohesion of the Visegrád Triangle with the emergence of Slovakia as a new state in the Central European region. Skubiszewski urged the Czech Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, not to split Czechoslovakia, but if such a move was inevitable he must preserve the Visegrád process by all means necessary (Spero, p.85). Ultimately, Slovakia joined the coalition which from then on would be referred to as the Visegrád Group, but the Czech Prime Minister would continue to exhibit a smug attitude toward the Visegrád process as the Visegrád countries began to compete for early acceptance to the EU.

The defining moments of the Visegrád Group's Western integration strategy came with their admissions into NATO in March of 1999 and their accession into the European Union on 1 May 2004 thus completing their return to Europe. A full analysis of the complex processes these states underwent to meet entry requirements for NATO and the EU is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is crucial to note that the cooperative function of the

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Visegrád and the entailing atmosphere of stability it created were important mandates to accession into these institutions. As Spero (2004) summarizes "the Visegrád Triangle process enabled Poland to capitalize on its bilateral linkages to great, middle, and smaller powers between West and East in bridging to countries and institutions nonprovocatively" (Spero 2004, p.297). Though often times these states wrangled for position amongst themselves in the race to return to Europe, it was their general cooperation that netted the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the removal of Russian troops from the region, and later their simultaneous admissions to both NATO and the EU.

As Cooper et al. (1993) point out, it is characteristic of a middle power to act as a facilitator of collaborative activities that seek to utilize coalitions as a means of leveraging their power on issue-specific problems (Cooper et al. 1993, p.24) Though the Visegrád process was dependent on the equal participation of all its members, Poland's active participation in the process is demonstrative of it middle power leadership. The importance of the Visegrád process diminished after it achieved its key objectives, namely the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and bringing the issues of NATO and the EU to the political agenda (Cottey 1999, p.87). However, the Visegrád was instrumental in the early phases of Polish foreign policy as an agenda-setting platform and an instrument of creating stability and order in Central Europe. Poland also remained committed to the process even with the break up Czechoslovakia which brought a lagging Slovakia into the mix and seen the Czech trying to distance themselves from the process.

CHAPTER 6:

Russia: Managing the East-West Balance

In December 1988 Mikhail Gorbachev indicated to the United Nations that the satellite states of the Soviet Union would be free to pursue their own domestic policies. Less than a year later these states had freed themselves of Soviet domination. Of all the newly sovereign states that materialized in late 1989, Poland undoubtedly faced the most daunting foreign policy environment. In the few short years following Poland's independence, its geopolitical position was radically altered by the emergence of four newly independent states on its eastern boarder. Poland's initial concern with Germany had left them with little in way of a coherent eastern policy. It was not until after Poland's rapprochement with Germany that the MSZ began to construct a lucid *Ostpolitik*.

Skubiszewski illustrated Poland's unique circumstance to the Sejm on 29 April 1993 when he stated that, "The disintegration of the USSR and the emergence of a number of independent states aiming at a democratic political and economic transformation has changed Poland's geopolitical situation to our advantage and created a peculiar historic opportunity" (Sanford 1999, p.84). Poland considered it essential to establish solid diplomatic relations with each of these burgeoning states. However, Poland's geography location would again place it at the crossroads between East and West.

In the role of aspiring European, Poland's future would be determined on the basis of whether or not "the post-Cold War European order will include or exclude Russia (and)…will mean the difference between being a bridge between Western Europe and Russia and becoming a frontier outpost of the West against the East" (Prizel 1995, p.xii). Mierzewski believed that Poland had a vital part to play in 'Europeanizing' Russia (Tyrmand 1970, p.261). In this context Poland embarked on what Spero (2004) describes as Poland's

"two-track" policy of striving for closer ties with Moscow while simultaneously encouraging the independence movements materializing in the western republics of the still solvent USSR.

It is vital to note that Poland had no intention of subjugating its own foreign policy aspirations to appease Russian apprehensions. Warsaw understood the importance of supporting democratizing Russia's inclusion in Europe and the developing regional order, but they by no means could allow Moscow's neo-imperialist drift to threaten their own sovereignty. The MSZ had to continually dispel concerns emanating from Moscow over Poland and the Visegrád Group's quest to join NATO. They also worked to quell Russian suspicion of Poland's supposed quasi-imperialist motivations towards the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS). Managing Moscow's sensitivities added yet another layer of complexity to the already multifaceted *Ostpolitik* of Warsaw.

6.1: NATO

The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 left Poland in a security grey zone. Moscow's "Kozyrev Doctrine" of 1992 proclaimed that the strategic task of Russia was to prevent the Central Europeans from joining Western security institutions and promoting a Baltic to Black Sea belt of neutrality (Bugajski 2004, p.136), notably similar to Walesa's short-lived proposal. From the Russian perspective a zone of unaligned Central and Eastern European states would serve the dual purpose of providing a buffer against Western penetration into the Commonwealth of Independent States and a bridge to Western economic structures (EU).

Bugajski (2004) further illustrates that it was also the initial position of NATO to have a region of neutral states between Russia and Western Europe. However, the concept of neutrality ran counter to the motivations of Poland and the other Visegrád countries that were still uncertain of Russia's long-term intentions. Fearing Russian neo-imperialism, the Visegrád states reasoned that it was in their best interest to pursue a security policy as

independent of Moscow as possible. The Poles were especially concerned with the concept of neutrality as they found themselves situated between two historically hostile neighbors and felt their best interests rested in alignment with trans-Atlantic security structures. This threat may have been negligible given the Polish-German rapprochement, but Poland would still be vulnerable in the event of German or Russian antagonism absent any genuine security guarantees.

Poland's fears appeared justified in 1991 when it was revealed that Bonn and Moscow had met secretly during the "2 + 4" talks on 16 July 1990 to negotiate Soviet troop withdrawals from East Germany (Spero 2004, p.120). During these negotiations it was decided, without the participation of Poland, that troops leaving East Germany for Russia would transit Polish territory. This clearly demonstrated to the Poles that Bonn and Moscow were still more than willing to neglect Poland's sovereignty in matters of their own foreign policy. The Poles barred entry to Soviet forces attempting to cross the Polish-German border and utilized their position within the Visegrád Group to secure the support of Prague as they too denied Soviet troops transit across Czechoslovakia (Prizel 1998, p.148; Spero 2004, p.261). The Poles and Czechoslovaks maintained their positions until negotiations on troop withdrawals from their own territories were complete. This exemplifies the benefits Poland derived from regional cooperation as Spero (2004) asserts, "Both great power neighbors ultimately recognized Poland's right to uphold its sovereignty and security as a bridge between Germany and Russia" (Spero 2004, p.133). The failed Soviet coup in August 1991 and the final collapse of the Soviet Union in December of 1991 put even greater emphasis on the Visegrád's attempts to join NATO.

As Moscow became more resolute in denying approval of any Visegrád state joining NATO, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest became ever more apprehensive of Russian intentions (Prizel 1998, p.138). August 1993 brought a dramatic break through in the stalemate

between Warsaw and Moscow when, after a long night of drinking, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Polish President Lech Walesa reached a consensus on the NATO issue. The Joint Polish-Russian Declaration of 25 August declared in writing that "… Poland's intention to join NATO…does not go against the interests of other states, including the interest of Russia" (Spero 2004, p.197). Moscow quickly reversed this position, but Yeltsin's tacit approval signaled to the Poles that they now only needed to wait for NATO's decision to expand the alliance.

At the NATO Summit in January 1994 Skubiszewski sought to ease tensions with Moscow and further the Polish position towards NATO by declaring that "Russia is a power that is going to have good cooperation with NATO, while Poland's presence in the Alliance would have a good influence on Russia's security," he further stressed that Poland and the Visegrád's quest for western integration "cannot be viewed as a threat to the interests of a non-imperial Russia" (Spero 2004, p.273). In the end only NATO itself could dissipate Moscow's concerns of being isolated from European security structures.

Russia's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace program beginning in 1994 and the Paris Founding Act for NATO-Russian Consultation on 27 May 1997, which established the NATO-Russia Council giving Moscow a permanent voice in NATO, further subdued Russian paranoia of a NATO threat (Sanford 1999, p.93). With active outreach from the West, objections from Moscow over Polish NATO membership slowly diminished. When it became clear by the end of 1997 that Poland would be a part of an expanded NATO, Moscow was left with little choice but to acquiesce to the inevitable. The Poles themselves reached out to Moscow by offering Russia opportunities to partake in any joint military exercises held on Polish soil while also offering to send Polish troops to any Russian sponsored military exercise (Spero 2004, p.303).A great deal of Russia's reservation over the Central European's quest for NATO membership was undoubtedly psychological.

Moscow no longer maintained absolute control over a vast empire of satellite states as they had during the Soviet era. These former satellites were now pressuring Moscow to support their bids to join the very security structure that for decades had been in direct opposition to the Soviet ideology and now threatened to limit Russian influence in the regions they once had absolute control. Moscow would need to navigate many more psychological barriers as they dealt with the burgeoning independence of the former Soviet republics in the West.

The final characteristic that typifies a middle power is its management role. This is the most multifaceted of middle power behaviors and presents itself in many ways. With regard to Russia and Poland's membership in NATO the focus was on confidence-building. Cooper et al. (1993) outline confidence-building as being a process by which the middle power works to build credibility and trust through measures and facilities to resolve disputes (Cooper et al. 1993, p.25). Throughout the NATO admissions process, Poland worked to ease Moscow's fears of Warsaw joining the alliance. They did this by offering Russian participation in military activities in Poland and sought to provide transparency in their motives for joining the alliance. This, together with efforts towards Moscow by NATO, helped to ease Russian apprehensions and gain her support in Poland's bid for regional security.

CHAPTER 7:

Ostpolitik: Legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

A brief overview of Poland's historical relationships with the emergent states to its east will help clarify the inescapable salience of history in Polish foreign policy. Poland's ascendance to power on the European continent began during the Jagiellonian era of the 15th century and reached its peak when Poland united with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th century to create the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Prazmowska 2004). The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth encompassed all of present day Poland and Lithuania, nearly all of Belarus, and a majority of modern Ukraine. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's western border was nearer Moscow than Warsaw and encircled all of the present day capitals of the previously mentioned states except Kiev.

In 1772, 1793, and 1795 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth underwent a series of partitions dividing its territories between Prussia, Russia, and Austria effectively wiping the Polish state from the map until after the First World War. During the interwar period independent Poland pursued irredentist policies aimed at regaining its former frontiers in the *kresy*, which it accomplished with limited success. Poland was again split between Russia and Germany during the Second World War by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. The post-war settlement turned most of the *kresy* into the Soviet republics of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. After the war, Poland's sovereignty was quickly subjugated by Soviet Communism and the Poles lost all opportunity to dispute their current borders. Given this background, Poland's eastern neighbors waited anxiously to see what mode of foreign policy post-1989 Poland would pursue.

The Belovezha accords of 8 December 1991 marked the official end of the Soviet Union and resulted in the formation of many newly sovereign states including Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. This also marked the end of the MSZ's two-track policy of balancing

between Moscow and the individual capitals of the Soviet's western republics. The Republics of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine joined the Republic of Poland in the new Eastern Europe. Poland was thus free to pursue diplomatic ties with these infant nation-states with reduced anxiety of offending Moscow. However, the Poles realized that policy with these states could not be pursued in lieu of policy with Moscow. The MSZ recognized that the "new" Russia would still maintain a great interest in these states.

The policy aims of Skubiszewski and the MSZ in the East were again noticeably intimate with the ideals articulated in *Kultura*. As Juliusz Mieroszewski outlined, the Poles needed to acknowledge the Russian perspective of what he termed the ULB region (Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus) and manage their policy between the ULB and Moscow to avoid giving the impression of Polish designs for the ULB. He noted that historically "there was only the choice between Polish or Russian imperialism" in the ULB, but in the future, "the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Byelorussians cannot be pawns in a historical game between Poland and Russia" (Kostrzewa 1990, p.48-49). Mieroszewski further recognized that by promoting ideals of self-determination and freedom, alongside a guarantee to abandon all imperialist plans, added a moral dimension to Poland's foreign policy (Kostrzewa 1990, p.50).

In its effort to encourage the independence of the former Soviet Republics, Poland implemented a foreign policy based on the promotion of European standards. The basic tenets of these European standards are the preservation of the "territorial integrity of nation-states" and the protection of the "cultural rights of minorities" (Snyder 2003, p.257). These standards also presume the protection of human rights, promotion of democratic ideals, and the security of personal liberty. Snyder (2003) observes that through Poland's effort to promote European standards, the Poles were in fact consolidating these standards. This strategy by the MSZ served the dual purpose of encouraging the independence of the Eastern

states and advancing Poland's image in the West as a stable Western state, thereby increasing the likelihood of their integration into Western institutions

7.1: Lithuania

Four centuries of federation with a Polish state in one form or another left Lithuania with a large Polish minority that in some regions actually constituted a majority of the population. According to Snyder (2003), the 1989 Soviet census showed that in the Vilnius region, which includes the city of Vilnius, 63.8 percent of the population considered themselves ethnic Poles. In the Šalčininkai region, Poles represented 79.8 percent of the population (Snyder 2003, p.240). This sizable Polish minority would continually hamper Polish-Lithuania relations on the state level. The first instance of this came on 12 March 1990 when Lithuania became the first state of the future CIS to declare independence from the Soviet Union. This declaration resulted in an irredentist clamor from Polish minority organizations within Lithuania, such as the "Union of Poles in Lithuania," for the Polish state to reclaim its former lands in the east (Snyder 2003, p.240).

In April and May of 1990, Lithuanian foreign minister Algirdas Saudargas' visited Poland giving Skubiszewski the opportunity to offer Warsaw's symbolic support of Lithuania's independence and distance Poland from the nationalist aspirations of the Poles living within Lithuania (Spero 2004, p.159). In January 1991 Soviet forces responded to Lithuania's bid for independence by violently seizing parts of Vilnius and proposing partitioning Lithuania with the Polish minority being the beneficiaries of Vilnius and surrounding areas (Snyder 2003, p.240). During this chaos the Lithuanian parliament reaffirmed their declaration of independence with a referendum supported by 90 percent of voters, but the Union of Poles in Lithuania became even more emboldened by pressing for Polish autonomy in regions where they were a majority (Snyder 2003, p.240).

The Lithuanian-Poles' drive for autonomy reached its apex with the proposal of a "Wilno-Polish National-Territorial Authority" in May 1991 which amounted to a Polish minority declaration of independence, calling for a flag, an army, and triple citizenship (Lithuanian, Vilnian, and Polish or Soviet) (Snyder 2003, p.253). Skubiszewski stuck to his philosophy of putting state interests ahead of national interests and worked to distance the Polish state from the Polish minority in Lithuania by reiterating that Poland recognized its existing borders as the irrevocable boundary of the Polish state and opposed all territorial demands coming from the Union of Poles in Lithuania. The MSZ also offered their support in Lithuania's bid for independence by condemning the Soviet's use of force in Vilnius and sending *Solidarnosc* activists to Vilnius to offer their support. The Polish people themselves rallied in support of Lithuania by sending truckloads of supplies to Vilnius under the cry of "Long live a free Lithuania" (Snyder 2003, p.254).

The August 1991 putsch in the Soviet Union signaled the inevitable demise of the USSR and Poland officially recognized Lithuanian independence on 26 August 1991. These moments of optimism were quickly subdued on 4 September when the Lithuanians dissolved the regional governments of Vilnius and Šalčininkai, implementing administrative rule in these areas of Polish concentration (Snyder 2003, p. 269). This action delayed Skubiszewski's original plan to visit Vilnius in November 1991 until January 1992, after Lithuania promised to hold free elections in these regions (Michta 1992, p.72). Polish-Lithuanian relations were soon to be further undermined by the Lithuanian's demand that Warsaw apologize for their interwar occupation of Vilnius in 1920.

The issue at hand was Generals Jozef Pilsudski and Lucjan Želigowski's interwar military campaigns to reclaim the *Kresy* that had been lost in the partitions of the 18th century. Vilnius and much of Lithuania was returned to the Poles by the great powers in the Treaty of Riga on 18 March 1921 (Prazmowska 2004, p.164-165). Skubiszewski appealed to

the Lithuanians to put the past behind them and look toward the future. He indicated that the interwar period represented an atavistic mindset in which Pilsudski and Želigowski acted as Polish-Lithuanians with the desire to reconstitute a new Polish-Lithuanian federation (Snyder 2003, p.271). Poland did not apologize. Snyder (2003) points out that to renounce the legality of Poland's interwar claim on Vilnius would lead to questions over the legality of many other historical actions. Such debate could lead to territorial claims by any number of states thereby creating a dangerous situation for not only Poland, but also Lithuania and the entire region.

The dispute over 1920 Vilnius and the Union of Poles in Lithuania continued to impede reaching an official treaty of cooperation, and Vilnius became increasingly divided on the future direction of the Lithuanian state. However, actions by Vilnius in late 1993 marked a watershed in Polish-Lithuanian relations. The Lithuanian parliament recognized Russian neo-imperialism as a legitimate threat and recommended that the government apply for NATO membership, which it did on 4 January 1994 (Snyder 2003, p.272). Three months later Poland and Lithuania signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation which was ratified by both parliaments on the same day in October 1994. The Polish parliament ratified the treaty with a vote of 295-0 (Snyder 2003, p.273).

The unanimity of the Polish vote signaled to Lithuania the seriousness with which the Poles took their new friendship and completely eliminated Vilnius' phobia of Polish revanchism. The Polish-Lithuanian relationship flourished. By appealing to European values Poland displayed the benefits of Western integration to Lithuania, and Vilnius finally recognized that the Poles could assist them on this journey. For Lithuania, Poland was seen as the road to Europe (Snyder 2003, p.285). Poland's avid support of Lithuanian accession into NATO and the EU also allowed the MSZ to keep continued pressure on the Lithuanians

to appreciate the plight of the Polish minority living within their state without much recoil from Vilnius.

7.2: Belarus

If the Polish-Lithuanian relationship typified the constructive potential within the region during this period, the Polish-Belarusian relationship represents the polar opposite. As in Lithuania, Belarus holds strong historical animosities towards the Poles. In Belarus September 27 is celebrated as the day Belarus gained its independence from Polish imperialism when the Red Army invaded Poland in 1939. For the Poles this day symbolizes a national tragedy (Balmaceda et al. 2002, p.346). From the onset it became apparent Warsaw faced a difficult project with Belarus. On 27 July 1990 Belarus declared sovereignty from the Soviets and quickly declared that the Polish region of Bialystok belonged to it (Spero 2004, p.167). Poles were a minority to ethnic Belarusians in these lands. Skubiszewski's visit to Minsk in October of 1990 brought a throng of Belarusian complaints over territory, minorities, and supposed Polish aggression towards Belarus. Despite ensuing Belarusian antagonism over the next year, Warsaw was able to sign a joint declaration with Minsk in October 1991 (Snyder 2003, p.249).

This declaration was Belarus' first act of international politics as a sovereign state after officially declaring independence on 25 August 1991. Warsaw would establish diplomatic relations with Minsk in March 1992, and ratify a full Treaty of Good-Neighborliness in June 1992 (Sanford 1999, p.103). Throughout this period Poland was the only sovereign state apart from Russia willing to work with the leaders of Belarus (Sanford 1999, p.103), but further problems would continue to hinder Warsaw's efforts toward Minsk. The greatest issue in Belarus is its utter lack of a national identity and a deep-rooted provincialism that makes the idea of being a state independent of Russia difficult for the majority of Belarusians.

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Belarus' search for national identity is indisputably hampered by recent history. Nearly all of the Belarusian intelligentsia were murdered in the Stalinist purges of the late 1930s. During the Second World War the Germans obliterated Minsk and one in four Belarusian souls were lost to the atrocities of the war (Snyder 2003, p.283). Post-war Belarus was rebuilt by the Soviets in an environment of tireless Russification. The Russians removed Belarusian national history and language from the curricula leaving a scant five percent of the population with a reasonable knowledge of their national history and only twenty-five percent possessing a sufficient understanding of the Belarusian language by 1989 (Korosteleva 2003, p.116).

Korosteleva (2003) observes that due to Belarus' lack of a usable history, two events in the late 1980's marked founding moments in the development of Belarusian national cohesion. The first was the discovery of mass graves of Belarusian victims of Stalinism in the Kurapaty Forest, and the second was the revelation that nearly three quarters of the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl disaster fell on Belarus. These national tragedies built a sense of Belarusian national identity based on being victims of outside forces. In the early 1990s Minsk took official measures to promote national identity by making Belarusian the official language (previously Russian) and adopted important symbols of statehood including a national flag and a coat of arms (Korosteleva 2003, p.112). However, as Korosteleva (2003) points out, decades of Russian assimilation left Belarus maintaining the self-image of being "the Western Gate of the Soviet Union," an attitude that would be hard for Belarus to shake.

Warsaw's accomplishments in Belarus, and Minsk's own national identity building efforts, were soon overshadowed by the election of Alaksandar Lukashenko to the presidency of Belarus in 1994. Lukashenko quickly reversed Minsk's identity building efforts implemented in the first years of independence, and events in the spring of 1995 would leave

little doubt over Lukashenko's authoritarianism as he began using referenda to change the Belarusian constitution to increase his powers vis-à-vis parliament and the Constitutional court.

Among his proposals were the ability to dissolve parliament, elevate Russian to the second official language, change the national day to 3 July (the day the Soviets liberated Minsk from the Nazis in 1944), and changing the national flag to a replica of the Soviet flag, minus hammer and sickle (Lewis 2002, p.37). All of these measures met with majority approval in Belarus and further referenda in November 1996 effectively ended legal opposition from parliament or the courts to Lukashenko's future policy. The referenda also extended his term as president another five years (Lewis 2002, p.39).

Poland's response was to initiate a joint declaration with Lithuania and Ukraine on 20 November 1996 condemning Lukashenko's despotic policies and calling for Minsk to respect human rights and civil liberties in accordance with the principles of democracy (Lewis 2002, p.259). The Lukashenko dictatorship also established diplomatic relations with Cuba, Iraq, and Libya, further highlighting the government's willingness to condone undemocratic principles (Korosteleva 2003, p.175). Within this context Poland was forced to end high level diplomatic relations with Minsk and focus their efforts on Belarusian society through the support of minority organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and political opposition inside and outside of Belarus.

The absence of official guarantees from Minsk to protect the interest of the Polish minority living in Belarus made the work of minority organizations increasingly important. The Union of Poles in Belarus, established in 1991, publishes its own Polish language newspaper and presents candidates with the Belarusian National Front opposition party in regional elections in efforts to voice their concerns to the Belarusian government (Balmaceda 2002, p.350). The Polish state organization, Polish Commonwealth is concerned with culture

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and education and has established a number of schools offering Polish language instruction for Belarusian-Poles (Balmaceda 2002, p.350). However, these groups have faced increasing discrimination under the Lukashenko regime. On the other hand, the Belarusian minority in Poland is actively supported by the Polish state. In 2000 the Polish Culture Ministry provided over 1.2 million Polish zloty in funding for the Belarusian minority and projected that number to increase to 1.35 million zloty in 2001 (Wood 2004, p.148).

NGOs also play a critical role in countering the authoritarian rule of Lukashenko. In December 2000 over two hundred Belarusian NGO representatives met at a NGO congress in Minsk to participate in activities to coordinate their social, cultural, and political goals (Korosteleva 2003, p.121). Polish NGOs have also been active in their support of Belarusian society. Many work in conjunction with Belarusian NGOs to supply equipment, subsidize press and media, and organize workshops, conferences, and training seminars (Balmaceda 2002, p.364). The promotion of an independent media in Belarus is the top priority of Polish NGOs. One of their successes was the establishment of a Belarusian-language radio station, Radio Racja, in Bialystok that can be picked up in western parts of Belarus (Lewis 2002, p.257). The station provides Belarusian citizens the valuable commodity of independent news and political commentary free of censorship from the Lukashenko regime.

Poland has also increasingly served as a refuge, and base of operations, for the Belarusian political opposition. Since December 2001 the Union of Belarusian Political Refugees in Poland has organized various seminars and training programs in coordination with Polish NGOs to provide a voice of dissent against the Lukashenko regime (Lewis 2002, p.257). The opening of the Polish border in the early 1990s also played a major role in allowing Belarusian travelers to witness firsthand the positive effects of democracy in Poland. This opportunity is especially important for the younger generation who stands to

shape the future of Belarus. However, Poland's admission to the EU has forced them to significantly tighten their eastern borders putting an hampering this free exchange of ideas.

7.3: Ukraine

Ukraine declared sovereignty on 16 July 1990, officially declared independence on 24 August 1991 and made their first state visit to Warsaw soon after. The Ukrainians held a successful referendum on independence on 1 December 1991 and Poland became the first state to officially recognize the new Ukrainian state on 2 December 1991 (Hajda 1998, p.9). This prompt recognition marked a significant moment in the Ukrainian-Polish relationship that was enabled by earlier interactions between Poland and Ukrainian nationalists.

The Polish-Ukrainian collaboration actually began in September 1989 when *Solidarnosc* activists turned statesmen attended the founding congress of the Ukraine national movement, *Ruhk*, and met repeatedly with *Ruhk* activists to offer their technical and moral support in the run-up to Ukraine's declaration of independence (Snyder 2003, p.242). These meetings laid the foundations for the signing of the Declaration on Basic Principles and Directions of the Development of Ukrainian-Polish Relations that confirmed state borders and provided protection of minorities on both sides in October 1990 (Wolczuk 2002, p.9). The Polish-Ukrainian declaration became official on 18 May 1992 with the signing of a full treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendly Relations, and Cooperation (Hajda 1998, p.312). The initial progress of the Polish- Ukraine relationship was quite momentous, but Skubiszewski and the MSZ were soon confronted once again with the impediments of history that had plagued Warsaw's relations with Vilnius and Minsk.

The focal point of these debates centered on events that took place during the Second World War and soon after. The Poles remember the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA) in the Volhynia region of western Ukraine. After regaining the Volhynia territory from the Germans in 1943, the UPA began to slaughter ethnic Poles en

masse with some estimates putting the number killed between fifty and one hundred thousand (Snyder 2003, p.169). The Ukrainians remember Poland's Operation Vistula in 1947 which relocated the Ukrainian minority concentrated in southeastern Poland to northern and western parts of the state (Snyder 2003, p.198). By scattering the Ukrainian minority across Poland the Poles effectively prevented their further ability to associate and present collective demands against the Polish state. These issues presented frequent disagreements between Poland and Ukraine for many years until tensions were significantly alleviated with the signing of the Joint Declaration by the Presidents of Poland and Ukraine on Agreement and Reconciliation in May 1997 (Hajda 1998, p.59). After acknowledging their difficult pasts, Polish-Ukrainian diplomacy was then able to concentrate more on issues that were to determine the future course of independent Ukraine.

Zbigniew Brzezinski delineates the importance of an independent Ukraine in Hajda's "Ukraine in the World" (1998). Brzezinski believes the existence of Ukraine on the map of Europe is tantamount to unified Germany's integration into the European community in the early 1990s, equally altering the geopolitical configuration of Europe. The presence of Ukraine also enhances the security of Poland, by distancing it from Russia and Ukraine's opposition to integration with Russia requires Moscow to reconsider its own place in the European order (Hajda 1998, p.4-5). Moscow must now focus on self-reliance as opposed to neo-imperialist policies bent on influence through dominance. Most importantly Ukraine itself is confronted with its own identity as it decides what sort of nation it will become in the twenty-first century (Hajda 1998, p.4-5).

In the words of the early *Ruhk* leader, Ivan Drach, "We want to travel the Polish path. We know the path to Europe really does lead through Poland" (Snyder 2003, p.263). Ukraine's western inclination became evident when Kiev began to lobby Warsaw for membership in the Visegrád Triangle in May 1991. Then Ukrainian President Leonid

Kravchuk appealed to President Walesa that a "quadrilateral is a more complete geometrical figure than a triangle and provides more possibilities" (Hajda 1998, p.47). Steven Burant (1998) explains the numerous reasons why the Visegrád rejected Ukraine's bid for membership. Foremost, Ukraine's identity as a former Soviet republic did not fit the Central European identity Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia had worked so diligently to fashion. Ukraine also lagged far behind these states in its political and economic transitions which would further threaten the Visegrád's drive for Western integration. Furthermore, the Soviet Union was still officially solvent at that time and the Visegrád could not afford to offend Moscow when they were still negotiating troop withdrawals and the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact (Hajda 1998, p. 47).

Ukraine truly began its European integration on 14 February 1993 by joining Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia in the Eastern Carpathian Euroregion (Hajda 1998, p.48). This Euroregion was created by the Council of Europe in an effort to facilitate trade, transportation, and cultural projects between its member states. The signing of the Trilateral Statement by the United States, Russia, and Ukraine on 14 January 1994 provided a needed boost for Kiev's possible Western orientation (Wolczuk 2002, p.12). The Trilateral Statement created optimism about Western interest in Eastern Europe, and opened the door for Poland to assume a more active promotion of Ukraine. Due in large part to Poland's efforts, Ukraine became a member of the Council of Europe in September 1995 and the Central European Initiative in June 1996 (Hadja 1998, p.56).

Kiev and Warsaw also made significant ground in areas of security when they joined Germany and ten other NATO and former Warsaw Pact states in taking part in the first Partnership for Peace (PfP) military exercise, Operation Cooperative Bridge, which notably took place on Polish territory in September 1994 (Spero 2004, p.302). Poland and Ukraine built on this initiative by broadening their military alliance in 1997 by proposing and

implementing a joint battalion called POLUKRBAT. The battalion combined the Ukrainian Mechanized Border Regiment and the Przemysl 14th Tank Brigade from Poland (Wolczuk 2002, p.18). Poland and Ukraine's willingness to support Western initiatives was further revealed when POLUKRBAT forces were sent to support NATO operations in the 1999 Kosovo campaign (Spero 2004, p.303). Warsaw has consistently been a champion of Ukraine in matters of security as evidenced by Polish President Kwaśniewski's response to Kiev's official declaration to seek NATO membership on 23 May 2003 when he said, "We will support Ukraine, as usual" (Wolczuk 2002, p.25). Outside of the positive results achieved in areas of security, the Polish-Ukrainian relationship would be limited by Russia's relationship with the EU and Poland's own mandatory compliance with European Union membership requirements.

The vast territories of Russia contain an enormous wealth of oil reserves on which Poland and Ukraine are both heavily dependent. The EU has also taken notice of the strategic importance of establishing energy policy with Moscow. In late 2000 Moscow and Brussels reached a twenty-year agreement in which Russia is to provide EU states with gas supplies (Wolczuk 2002, p.23). Aware of the increasingly strategic relationship developing between Warsaw and Kiev, Moscow has attempted to divide these two states by oscillating between Poland and Ukraine as possible routes for the future gas pipeline to Western Europe. At stake is an estimated nine hundred million dollars per year in extra revenue for the chosen state (Wolczuk 2002, p.23).

At the outset Poland explicitly chose their relationship with Kiev over immense pipeline revenues when they rejected an early proposal to run a pipeline from Belarus through Poland in route to Western Europe as it conspicuously sidestepped Ukraine. By October 2001 economic realism would trump diplomatic congeniality as President Kwasniewski stated, "this is not solely a political issue…We are allies with Ukraine, but we must look after

our own interests" (Wolczuk 2002, p.23). It became evident in 2002 that Russian would use its energy supplies as a strategic foreign policy tool when Moscow changed course and began to reconsider a pipeline routed through Ukraine (Wolczuk 2002, p.23). In June 2003 Moscow suspended all future plans to route energy supplies through Poland when Warsaw eliminated visa-free travel across its borders which greatly reduced Russian access to the Kaliningrad oblast (Bugajski 2004, p.146).

In route to Poland's successful accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004, the Poles were obligated to adopt the non-negotiable Schengen *acquis* contained in the Schengen Agreement of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1998) requiring strict border controls on non-EU states. Poland grudgingly agreed to EU demands on 1 July 2003 (Wolczuk 2002, p.113). This marked the end of the easy movement of people between Ukraine and Poland that began in 1996 when Ukraine became the first CIS state with whom Poland reached a visa-free travel agreement (Hajda 1998, p.57). After a peak in 1997 of over 15.8 million crossings at the Polish-Ukrainian boarder, the number of crossings between 1997 and 2001 averaged over twelve million with nearly 12.7 million crossings in 2001 (Wolczuk 2002, p.82).

The porous border between Ukraine and Poland had supported a thriving "suitcase trade" between the regions of western Ukraine and south-eastern Poland. Studies of the Lviv border region have shown that informal trade is roughly equal to official trade in the region and is a vital component of the survival strategy of many families living in the region (Wolczuk 2002, p.124). Further evidence of the scale of this trade is demonstrated by the fact that forty-three percent of Ukrainians coming into Poland reside in the three western oblasts of Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Transcarpathia (Wolczuk 2002, p.125). On the Polish side of the border economic centers have sprung up to support this inflow of Ukrainian traders creating a wealth of small entrepreneurial ventures in warehouses, markets, and petrol stations for the Poles living in the southeastern region of Poland (Wolczuk 2002, p.126).

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Though this trade is largely the result of Ukraine's poor economic transition in comparison to Poland, both states suffer under the strict visa requirements of the Schengen Agreement.

Critical of the EU visa requirements, Polish President Kwasniewski argued that "if we seal the EU's eastern boarder, we shall in fact have to deal with a new division of Europe… The creation of new divisions in Europe will not serve the interests of Europe" (Wolczuk 2002, p.110). One Ukrainian commentators' perspective is in line with Kwasniewski when he declared "This is absurd; for what did we struggle with communism?! For the free flow of people and ideas– this was the motto of the West and under this flag it won the war with communism. But now [the West] shifts to the position of communism, which separated itself" (Wolczuk 2002, p.117).

There is little doubt the Iron Curtain has indeed been replaced by what Wolczuk (2002) describes as a "paper curtain." The paper curtain is a product of the rigorous application procedures involved in obtaining visas to travel into EU states from non-EU states. Ukraine has found visa requirements humiliating as well as isolating as they can no longer travel to a number of states within the region as other neighboring states were also required to meet the EU visa requirements. The Czech Republic (1999), Slovakia (2000), Romania and Bulgaria (2001) and even Hungary and Poland had to impose visa requirements on Ukraine (Wolczuk 2002, p.118). The Ukrainians are virtual captives of their own state, essentially isolated from the exchange of ideas and freedom of movement that are two of the fundamentals of Western style democracy. Most detrimental is the fact that Ukrainians are deprived of the ability to easily see firsthand the positive effects of democratic and free market policies that is so vital to their own transitions. In the absence of the free exchange of ideas, Polish NGOs and the Polish state have sought to bring the ideals of freedom and democracy *to* Ukraine.

Non-governmental programs such as the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative, which started work in 1999, help develop small- and medium-sized businesses, and work on local government reforms. The Polish Batory Foundation, and its Ukrainian counterpart, the Renaissance Foundation, seek to create societal ties between Poles and Ukrainians by facilitating youth exchanges, and provide training programs for young political leaders (Wolczuk 2002, p.49).

The Polish government also facilitates Polish-Ukrainian relations through governmental institutions designed to help Ukraine by sharing the Poles' own experiences in economic and political transformation and integration into Western institutions. The Presidential Consultative Committee, the Polish-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Coordinating Council for Interregional Cooperation, both established in 1993 as well as the Polish-Ukrainian Local Government Forum and the Polish- Ukrainian Parliamentary Group established in 1999 all serve to give the Ukrainians an opportunity to see how democracy works in the West (Wolczuk 2002, p.18). The Standing Polish-Ukrainian Conference on European Integration, which began work in 1998, has been particularly productive as Kiev sets the agenda by discussing areas of policy it is most interested in, including agriculture and the World Trade Organization (Wolczuk 2002, p.18).

The most remarkable example of Polish-Ukrainian institutional cooperation came in the military security sphere, as was discussed above, with the formation of the POLUKRBAT joint battalion in 1997. These non-governmental and governmental institution building initiatives have had profound effects on shaping Ukraine's self-identity and greatly influenced Kiev's quest to become part of Europe. Ukraine has made the policy decisions to seek NATO and EU membership and looks to Poland, much like Poland looked to Germany, for assistance and guidance in achieving these goals. It will be largely up to Poland to ensure

that Kiev continues to look west and not turn toward Moscow as it is perceivably isolated from Europe by the EU.

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding analysis of Poland's post-1989 foreign policy agenda demonstrates that Poland was successfully able to overcome its historical quarrel between political realism and political idealism. Poland was able to find a middle ground between the extremes which allowed it to turn the former disadvantages of its geopolitical and geostrategic location into advantages. Poland was therefore able to overcome the entrapments of either extreme. By recognizing the significant changes that occurred in its international surroundings and acknowledging the important role it might play in the development of order in CEE Poland was able to distinguish itself as a middle power in the region. This was of great importance for Poland and the rest of the region given general lack of any source of hegemonic leadership.

A comprehensive investigation of Poland's behavior toward other states demonstrates that Poland undeniably behaved as a middle power based on the framework presented by Cooper et al. (1993). Poland served as a regional catalyst by being the first state in the former Soviet Bloc to openly declare their intention to seek western integration and the other Central European states soon joined the Poles in a joint pursuit to return to Europe. Poland anchored itself to the west through Germany enabling them to act as a sovereign Western state in their foreign policy agendas with the Central European states and the newborn states of the former Soviet Union. Poland also took the initiative to promote unified Germany's membership in NATO, even before NATO itself considered such an option. Poland's fixation with Germany came at the expense of other pressing foreign policy concerns at the time, but was ultimately justified as the Polish-German rapprochement provided the Western foundation necessary to successfully accomplish future policy in the East.

The functioning of the Visegrád Group demonstrates Poland's ability to act as a regional facilitator by collaborating with like-minded neighbors to achieve common objectives. The Visegrád was initiated by the Czechoslovaks, but the first summit was plagued by the obstinacy of lingering communist leaders and an incoherent policy agenda. Poland formulated a lucid foreign policy program in the interim between the Bratislava and Visegrád summits and helped to give the Visegrád Group its unified voice and greater influence in obtaining its collective demands. The culmination of the Visegrád Group's cooperative efforts came with the removal of Soviet troops from Central Europe, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and ultimately the simultaneous admission of the Visegrád states first into NATO and then the EU.

Poland's *Ostpolitik* was initially slowed by more pressing concerns with Germany. When addressed, Poland's eastern policy presented the MSZ with the difficulties of managing a multifaceted policy of balancing between Moscow and the emergent governments in Vilnius, Minsk, and Kiev as the USSR remained an official entity. The collapse of the Soviet Union freed the Poles to embark on a policy towards the former Soviet Republics based on the promotion of European standards and democratic ideals. These efforts gave a sense of legitimacy to Poland's policies and created an overall atmosphere of trust that was essential to building sound bilateral relations throughout the region. This approach also furthered Poland's push for Western integration by demonstrating to the West that the Poles shared the same democratic ideals as the rest of Europe.

History presented a multitude of difficulties for Polish foreign policy toward the former Soviet Republics and Russia. Each state presented a unique foreign policy challenge for the MSZ. The Poles successfully attained NATO membership by taking inclusive actions toward Russia and capitalizing on Western support to gain Moscow's confidence that their alliance with NATO would not threaten Russian interests. Poland confronted an obstinate

Polish minority in Vilnius that put great strain on state level diplomacy between Poland and Lithuania. The MSZ's response was an enlightened approach that eschewed the nationalist concerns of Poles living outside of Poland in favor of the long term interests of the Polish state. Poland's avid support of Lithuania's Western integration enabled the Poles to press for Polish minority rights within Lithuania with little consequent recourse from Vilnius.

Poland's relationship with Belarus was difficult from the beginning and soured further with the election of Alaksandar Lukashenko to the presidency of Belarus. Poland was the lone Western state to maintain diplomacy with Minsk, but Lukashenko's despotism ultimately ended all state level contact between Poland and Belarus. The Poles answered by initiating a joint declaration with Lithuania and Ukraine condemning the regime and called for the recognition of human rights and the basic tenets of democracy. Poland then focused attention on establishing relations with Belarusian society through the work of NGOs and support of the Belarusian political opposition.

In Ukraine, Poland was able to overcome an atrocious history to become a champion of Ukraine's quest for a European identity despite Moscow's efforts to divide the Poles and Ukrainians over transit rights for EU energy supplies. EU requirements forced Poland to implement a detrimental visa and border control policy that threatens to hinder the future Polish-Ukrainian relationship. State institutions and NGOs are filling the void left by restrictions to the freedom of movement. These institutions share with Kiev Poland's experience with democratic and economic transitions as well as the experiences they gleaned from their own bid for Western integration. These efforts on the part of Poland are meant to accelerate Ukraine's own transitions and integration.

The analysis of Poland's post-1989 foreign policy agenda clearly demonstrates that Poland has established itself as a middle power by acting as a catalyst, facilitator, and manager in their foreign policy behavior toward their diverse array of neighbors. However, as

Robert Cox (1989) states, the concept of middle power is not stationary and the definition must shift to accommodate the contemporary international environment. Therefore, Poland must continue to act as a middle power in the evolving foreign policy environment in order to retain the distinction of being a middle power.

The future of middle power Poland is inseparable from its membership in the European Union. With Poland's neighbors Lithuania, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary all members of the European Union, bilateral relations with these states will be decidedly maintained within the constructs of Brussels. Belarus' progressing federation with Russia leaves them increasingly outside the Polish sphere of influence, thus leaving Ukraine as the lone state in the region with whom Poland has considerable opportunities to advance their middle power diplomacy.

With Ukraine's admission into the European Union likely to be generations away, Poland will face many years of working with Ukraine within the confines imposed upon it by Brussels. Subsequently, the development of Poland's Eastern policy toward not only Ukraine, but also Belarus and Russia may in fact guide the Eastern policy of the EU itself. Brussels' unwillingness to compromise on visa and border issues with regard to the Eastern European states demonstrates that the EU lacks a genuine understanding of the difficulties these requirements have imposed. The European Union's reluctance to offer meaningful cooperation with the Eastern European states also shows that they fail to realize what Poland knows all too well, "that Russia will step into any vacuum the West fails to fill" (Wolczuk, p.28). This might also explain why the Poles are resistant to a common EU foreign policy and seek to maintain an independent foreign policy. Given the inherent limitations of Poland's middle power authority, they will again need to rely on their entrepreneurial abilities and niche diplomacy to achieve their goals towards their eastern neighbors under the unavoidable restraints of EU membership.

To date, superficial assessments of Poland's role within the EU might regard the Poles as being trouble makers. The Pole's have proposed largely unpopular reforms of the EU voting system, namely the Penrose square root law, which would significantly strengthen Poland's voting position within the EU (Warsaw Voice Online 5/31/07). Poland has also vowed to continue vetoing the renewal of the EU-Russia Partnership Agreement, and even block Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization, until Moscow agrees to lift its ban on the importation of Polish meat products which has been in effect since late 2005 (Warsaw Voice Online 5/28/2007). Another point of contention between Poland and Russia is the proposed US missile shield that would be constructed on Polish soil. Moscow views the shield as an offensive threat while Poland and the US maintain the shield is strictly defensive in nature. By all accounts the proposed missile shield has further strained the already tense relationship between Russia and Poland (Warsaw Voice Online 5/25/2007).

Such actions by Poland would need to be analyzed in much more depth to determine whether or not they fit the characteristics middle power behavior. Of late Poland has been criticized for lacking a coherent foreign policy. However, one might also view Poland's current behavior, and lack of a clear foreign policy, as a consequence of adjusting to its nascent role within the EU. What is certain is that Poland is likely to remain an important actor within the EU towards Russia and the rest of Eastern Europe. Likewise, as a staunch ally of the United States, Poland will be a key player in the future of trans-Atlantic relations. It has been shown that Poland was successful in exhibiting middle power behavior in the post-1989 period, whether Poland is able to maintain that distinction post-EU could certainly be the object of future study.

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