

The Relations of Central European Countries with the United States



Edited by
ANNA PÉCZELI

Dialóg Campus

THE RELATIONS OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
WITH THE UNITED STATES

This page intentionally left blank.

THE RELATIONS OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITH THE UNITED STATES

Edited by
Anna Péczeli

DIALÓG CAMPUS ❖ BUDAPEST, 2019

The work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project PACSDOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled “Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance”.

Authors

Robert Barić

Monika Brusenbauch Meislová

Gábor Csizmazia

Dušan Fischer

Slobodan Janković

Mark Kogoj

Tamás Levente Molnár

Anna Péczeli

Steven Pifer

Tomasz Smura

Dražen Smiljanić

Mihai Vladimir Zodian

Revised by

Péter Rada

© The Authors, 2019

© The Editor, 2019

© The Publisher, 2019

Reproduction is authorized, provided the source is acknowledged.

Contents

Introduction (<i>Anna Péczeli</i>)	7
Relations between the United States and Austria: How a Once Special Relationship Descended into Triviality (<i>Tamás Levente Molnár</i>)	11
Relations between the United States and Croatia: Development and Future Perspectives (<i>Robert Barić and Dražen Smiljanić</i>)	33
Relations between the United States and the Czech Republic: From Honeymoon to Hangover? (<i>Monika Brusenbauch Meislová</i>)	57
Relations between the United States and Hungary: Phases and Fluctuations of the Last Two Decades (<i>Gábor Csizmazia</i>)	79
Relations between the United States and Poland: From Enemy to the Main Security Guarantor (<i>Tomasz Smura</i>)	101
Relations between the United States and Romania: Changing Dynamics? (<i>Mihai Vladimir Zodian</i>)	117
Relations between the United States and Serbia: Asymmetric Confrontation and Relation (<i>Slobodan Janković</i>)	135
Relations between the United States and Slovakia: Friends and Allies between 1989 and 2017 (<i>Dušan Fischer</i>)	157
Relations between the United States and Slovenia: From U.S. Adverseness to Acceptance and Cooperation (<i>Mark Kogoj</i>)	175
Relations between the United States and Ukraine: Managing Transitions (<i>Steven Pifer</i>)	197
Comparing Trends in the Relations of Central European Countries with the United States (<i>Anna Péczeli</i>)	219

This page intentionally left blank.

Introduction

*Anna Péczeli*¹

The current volume examines the post-Cold War relationship of ten selected Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine) with the United States. Despite the many differences, it is true for every single state that they have a highly asymmetric relationship with the U.S. The countries of the CEE region are relatively small, with limited resources and weak military capabilities which are insufficient to protect them against outside threats. After the end of the Cold War, they quickly realised that maintaining strong ties with Western powers – especially with the U.S. – was crucial for their defence. As a result of this, the CEE countries are more dependent on good relations with Washington, than the other way around. This asymmetry allows the U.S. to pick the countries with whom it wants to maintain stronger ties in the region. At the same time, the White House can afford to criticise the states which are not implementing the requested reforms fast enough, or which are not spending the required amounts on defence. The U.S. can also exercise more pressure on the domestic issues of its partners. This asymmetry forces the CEE states to be more careful in their criticism towards the U.S., and there have been many instances where they sided with Washington, instead of Berlin or Paris.

There are two main reasons why the CEE countries have supported the U.S. even in cases when it was against their own national interests, or when it meant risking their good relations with major Western European states. First, many of them have bad historical experience of being a buffer zone between Russia (the Soviet Union) and Western European states, therefore they are more worried about a resurgent Russian aggression.

¹ Anna Péczeli, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic and Defense Studies, National University of Public Service (Hungary). Email: peczeli.anna@uni-nke.hu

Second, they are more sceptical about the military strength of the EU and question whether Western European states would be willing or able to protect them against a serious military threat. Thus, in the eyes of the CEE states, an Alliance with the U.S. seems to be the strongest assurance for their physical security.

Although there are many similarities in the bilateral relationship of the U.S. with the states of the region, there are also many important differences. This is partly due to the differences in size, economic power and military strength. Besides these factors, geographical location is also an important determinant of the main tendencies in U.S. relations with the region. The ten selected countries can be divided into four sub-regions: 1. the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia belong to the so called Visegrád countries (Romania shows a lot of similarities with this group); 2. Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia belong to the Balkans; 3. Ukraine provides a unique example of a country, which is trapped between the expanding NATO Alliance and the Russian zone of influence; and 4. Austria also represents a special case due to its neutral status. These sub-regions have faced different challenges in the post-Cold War period, which left its mark on their relationship with the U.S., as well.

After the end of the Cold War, the Visegrád countries were the primary beneficiaries of U.S. financial aid in the region, and their economic and political transition was largely supported by Washington's assistance programs. The successful implementation of a parliamentary democracy, a market economy, and the creation of civilian control over the armed forces gained them a lot of goodwill in the White House. Although Hungary's security has been directly affected by the dissolution of the Former Yugoslavia, the main security concern for these states remained the threat of a resurgent Russian Federation. In comparison to the other regions, this created a completely different set of problems, and it requires different responses and assurances from Washington.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of the Balkans faced the dissolution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), which put the Croatian and Slovenian cases on a completely different path than the Serbian case. While the role of the U.S. in the air campaigns during the Yugoslav Wars created strong anti-American sentiments in Belgrade, the newly independent states of Croatia and Slovenia enjoyed significant U.S. support in their Western integration efforts and they built much stronger ties with Washington.

In the case of Kyiv, the proximity of Russia has the biggest influence on the evolution of the U.S.–Ukrainian bilateral ties. During the early 1990s, the successful disarmament and repatriation of Russian nuclear capabilities from the territory of Ukraine created strong bonds with Washington. Ukraine's domestic problems and the slow progress of the political and economic transition, however, quickly devaluated these ties, and the U.S. became more impatient with its partner. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the problems in the Donbas region have opened a new chapter in the relationship of the U.S. and Ukraine. Washington's critic over Kyiv's domestic problems was put aside, and the U.S. has been actively supporting the defence of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the peace efforts in the region.

The special neutral status of Austria was an important asset for Washington during the Cold War. However, in the 1990s it has been gradually devaluated, and it is becoming more and more challenging for Austria to fill its relationship with the U.S. with content. Its neutrality prevents Austria from significant engagement in military missions, and as a non-NATO nation, it also lacks the institutional framework that would create a strong bond with Washington.

Another important difference between these states is the status of their integration into NATO and the EU. The membership of these states in NATO is clearly the most important institutional tie with the U.S. From the ten selected countries, only Austria, Serbia and Ukraine are not members of the Alliance. Although the U.S. is not a member of the EU, it has been actively supporting the Eastern enlargement of the organisation. The EU membership of the CEE states has clearly affected their bilateral ties with the U.S. (first and foremost in the economic and political domains but – to a lesser extent – also in the military domain).

Regarding the evolution of the bilateral ties, most of these states have a long history with the U.S. In some cases, immigrants from the region were already present in North America during the American War of Independence. Although the size and the influence of these immigrant groups varies in each case, they continue to play an important role today, and their lobbying efforts have supported the political agenda of their home country on many occasions. These immigrant groups are also important in maintaining and cultivating strong cultural ties between the U.S. and the CEE region.

Regarding the nature of the cooperation between the CEE states and the U.S., it is true in general that the military domain is the strongest one, and in many cases, this field has proved to be immune to the political

quarrels. In the political domain, the military contributions of these states have gained the region a lot of goodwill in the White House. This has also contributed to the success of the visa negotiations, and today most CEE countries enjoy visa-free travel to the U.S., which was a major political victory to the beneficiaries.

Despite these success stories, the bilateral relations are not free from problems. The U.S. is closely monitoring the domestic issues of its partners, and there have been many instances when it has raised serious concerns about the takeover of right-wing, nationalistic parties. Washington has been very vocal on issues like the freedom of the press, free speech, checks and balances, and minority rights. This led to many political disputes between the White House and the countries of the region. Another burdened topic in the political domain is the relationship of the CEE states with Russia – the White House has been explicit about its desire to keep the unity of the EU in the sanctions against Russia, and it has publicly criticised those states which have showed closer political ties with Moscow.

In comparison to the military and political ties, the economic cooperation is the weakest link. Due to their accession to the EU, most CEE countries are primarily trading with their EU partners, and the volume and nature of their trade relations with the U.S. are significantly behind countries like Germany. This, of course, is also due to the high level of asymmetry in their economic potential, and it is not likely to change in the future. A very important aspect of the economic relations is the energy sector, where the U.S. has been supportive of initiatives to reduce the energy dependence of the region on Russia, and it has been very critical of major energy deals with Moscow (for example in the nuclear domain).

Although the above mentioned tendencies are mostly well documented, there is still a very limited literature about the details and specifics of U.S. relations with the CEE region. This edited volume aims to fill that gap and provides a detailed, and up-to-date insight into the country-specific aspects of U.S. relations with the region. Each chapter covers four main domains: political, military, economic and cultural ties in the post-Cold War period. The volume concludes with a comparative chapter which shows the main similarities and differences in these bilateral relations. This summary highlights the strengths and weaknesses of U.S.–CEE ties, providing a list of problem areas which need to be resolved in the future. It also outlines a list of well functioning areas which could be used as a basis to deepen and strengthen the bonds between the U.S. and its CEE allies.

Relations between the United States and Austria: How a Once Special Relationship Descended into Triviality

*Tamás Levente Molnár*¹

1. Introduction

The relations between two sovereign states essentially depend on the respective societies' perceptions of each other. In 2018, the U.S. and Austria celebrates the 180th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. One would assume that after almost two centuries, bilateral ties and a sort of common language between the two nations would have developed, thus providing some level of mutual understanding, and maybe even some positive attitudes towards each other. However, this does not seem to be the case.

Eugen Freund is a well-known political expert in Austria, who started as a long-serving correspondent in Washington, and a presenter of the evening news for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF). In a humorous speech at ORF, he tried to analyse one of the core problems of the bilateral relations between the U.S. and Austria: “I started in 1979 at the Austrian Press and Information Service in New York. Our task there was to, well, somehow correct the image Austria enjoyed in the United States. Austria – or better Australia, because we were always confused with the entity Down Under – Australia is a communist country, inhabited by Nazis, who's emperor rides on a white stallion called the Lipizzaner, in his capital Salzburg, and whistles the national anthem, which actually was a tune out of *The Sound of Music*...” (U.S. Embassy Vienna 2013). According to Günther Bischof, an Austrian–American historian and university professor,

¹ Tamás Levente Molnár, Research Fellow, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Hungary). Email: tamas.molnar@ifat.hu

there is a long existing stereotype among the Austrian middle-class, who consider the U.S. a fundamentally materialistic country that lacks any sort of culture and sensitivity whatsoever (BISCHOF 2016, 75).

Lack of interest and dull stereotypes – as we will see, those observations about Austrian–American relations by Eugen Freund and Günter Bischof – were not just fitting during the Cold War era but remain relevant today, as well.

2. Political Relations

When analysing the political relations between Austria and the U.S. since the fall of the Berlin Wall, first a careful examination of some relevant developments of the Cold War era is necessary. Looking at some of the main tendencies in the bilateral relations – and special roles the respective countries had chosen for themselves during the Cold War – provides some insight to better understand the present day dynamics between the two countries.

Compared to other countries in the region, the occupation period after World War II ended relatively soon in Austria on 15 May 1955 when the Austrian State Treaty was signed by the Allied powers and the Austrian Government. The withdrawal of the allied troops followed a couple of months later, when the Austrian Parliament enacted the Declaration of Neutrality (*Neutralitätsgesetz*) on 26 October 1955 (Rechtsinformation des Bundes 2018). With the country's regained sovereignty, Austrian decision-makers wanted to find a new role for the country in the international arena. They decided that Austria should act as a neutral bridge builder between the East and the West, and a reliable moderator in international disputes, hosting various international organisations in its capital. The self-appointed Austrian *Sonderfall* (Austrian exception) played in the superpowers' interests. Vienna was now chosen as the site of important meetings between the main antagonists of the Cold War era – in 1961 the Kennedy–Khrushchev summit, and in 1979 the Carter–Brezhnev summit took place in the Austrian capital. Meaningful preparatory talks before the 1975 Helsinki meeting of the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe also took place in Vienna. Being a neutral state itself, Austria increasingly developed trade relations with the Communist Bloc from the 1970s onwards, and it did not adhere to the Western economic sanctions

against third countries (e.g. the U.S.-led economic boycott against Iran in 1979). As Chancellor Bruno Kreisky defined the Austrian concept of active neutrality as pro-Western, the Austrian *Sonderfall* was met with economic tolerance and political respect in Washington (BISCHOF 2013, 13–14).

2.1. *A rocky start*

At the dawn of 1989, bilateral relations were far from ideal. One year after the Austrian presidential election in 1986, the U.S. Department of Justice put the newly elected Austrian President, former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim on the watch list, barring him from entering the U.S. The Justice Department spokesman said at a news conference that the reason was Kurt Waldheim's accusation of having "assisted or otherwise participated in the persecution of persons because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion" during World War II (WERNER 1987). The legal basis of the charges against Kurt Waldheim, however, was later proven to be false. According to a CIA-report from 1986, which was released in 2001, "there is not, at present enough evidence to indict Waldheim or to accuse him of committing war crimes" (CIA 1986, 1). Still, the constantly changing statements of President Waldheim regarding his Nazi affiliations and activities during World War II did not bring him much sympathy and understanding (VAN DER VAT 2007). Based on what we know today, the Waldheim-affair had more to do with the inner dynamics of the Austrian SPÖ, and the involvement of the World Jewish Congress with U.S. governmental policy (which led to some serious consequences in American domestic politics as well), than with the actual deeds of Waldheim in his position as an officer of the German Wehrmacht during World War II (HAAS 2001). Nevertheless, the U.S. declaration of Waldheim as *persona non grata* turned him into a pariah on the international stage, and it had a significant negative effect on bilateral relations. Repairing the damaged Austrian–American relations took a lot of energy and diplomatic effort.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, Europe started to "breathe with two lungs" again. The major changes in international politics caused by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the self-liberation of the former Eastern Bloc had serious implications on U.S.–Austrian bilateral ties, as well. A couple of months before the

historical event, Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock delivered the application for the European Communities (EC) in June 1989. Vienna's "Letter to Brussels" was received with a chilly response, as some of the European politicians argued that the "admission of a neutral country could hinder efforts at coordinating the foreign policies of the EC's members" (SCHAETTLER 1994, 218). The Austrian foreign policy to open up towards European integration finally achieved its objective on 1 January 1995 when the country joined the EU. Austria's foreign policy increasingly focused on Brussels, and gave up some of its autonomy and independence in the context of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The change of scope in the Austrian foreign policy was also reflected in the name change of the foreign ministry, as well (the former Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs was now called the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs).

Meanwhile, U.S. foreign policy with regards to Europe has gone through some considerable changes, too. Its developments can be summed up in two main strategic goals: first, to expand American influence in the former Eastern Bloc by supporting system transition efforts (democratisation process, transition from planned economy to market economy, supporting the civil society etc.), as well as offering real membership perspectives in NATO for CEE countries. Second, with the sudden disappearance of the "Cold War enemy", to appeal to Western European countries by leaving their comfort zones and letting them take the destiny of the Old Continent into their own hands ("Partners in Leadership" as President George H. W. Bush put it in his Mainz speech – *A Europe Whole and Free* on 31 May 1989).

The U.S. hoped for a strong Europe of responsible allies that would be able to take care of its own issues. A country with neutrality political traditions, and a reluctance to spend on defence did not really fit that picture. Thus, with the end of the Cold War, bilateral relations between the U.S. and Austria were put on the backburner. The U.S. turn-away was not an unforeseeable development though. Peter Moser, then Austrian Consul General to Los Angeles, sent an analysis to Vienna in April 1982. In this document, he expressed his worries about the American voices, which at the time were calling the uncertain attitude of European allies "spineless" and "neutral." In his conclusions, he warned about the lack of understanding in the U.S. for neutral countries like Austria (BISCHOF 2016, 73).

2.2. *Schüssel's normalisation efforts*

The Austrian parliamentary elections in autumn 1999, and the resulting government changes led to an international outcry, again negatively affecting the bilateral relations. When the SPÖ failed to form a government, the conservative People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei – ÖVP*) turned to the right-wing nationalist and anti-immigrant Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs – FPÖ*). The European and international reactions to the formation of the “blue-black” government coalition were furious: the EU14 imposed unprecedented diplomatic sanctions on Austria; Israel immediately withdrew its ambassador from Vienna. The Clinton Administration recalled its American ambassador for consultation, but otherwise did not join the European sanctions. However, Washington unambiguously articulated its expectations towards the newly formed government: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made it clear that there can be no place in a European government for a party that “doesn't distance itself clearly from the atrocities of the Nazi era and the politics of hate” (COHEN 2000).

Austrian reactions to the external sanctions were, to quote then Austrian Ambassador to Washington Peter Moser, best described by “disbelief” and “shock”. However, Washington's response was more dignified in comparison to Europe's: “the only difference is, that whereas the Europeans put a time bomb in our window and said it will go off when you have this new government sworn in, the Americans said it is very severe, we are very concerned, we share the concerns of the Europeans but they left the door open to the very last moment and only when this government was formed then they published and decided on measures” (AP Archive 2000). Ambassador Moser had a meaningful influence on softening the tone of the American reactions towards the new Austrian government. He was trying to maintain a positive image of Austria in the American civil society. In the House of Representatives, he watered up a condemning resolution against Austria (which was calling the FPÖ a “Neo-Nazi party” and anticipated the boycott of Austrian businesses), making the step virtually irrelevant (BISCHOF 2013, 34). The real icebreaker for the strained relations proved to be the internationally acclaimed regulation, which ordered the restitution of Jewish assets stolen during the Nazi period, and the compensation of the forced labourers employed on Austrian territory between 1939–1940

and 1945. The restitution policy of the Schüssel Administration mainly concerned works of art from the federal and provincial museums; while the compensation for forced labourers was provided by the Reconciliation Fund of the Austrian Republic, and it amounted to almost 352 million Euros until 2005 (KARNER 2010, 399).

Following the U.S. presidential elections in 2000, the Austrian side was optimistic that the previously frosty relations between the two administrations could be overcome by new positive dynamics in bilateral ties. Austrian hopes were confirmed when the newly elected President George W. Bush invited Chancellor Schüssel and his delegation to Washington for a work meeting and for a stay at the Blair House, the President's Guest House. The visit on 31 October 2001 – just a couple of weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks – was a success, and for a short while it seemed as if the bilateral relations were back on track (BISCHOF 2013, 36).

Six days after President Bush addressed the U.S. Congress and declared America's War on Terror on 20 September 2001, Chancellor Schüssel in his speech to the Austrian Parliament reaffirmed the country's solidarity with the U.S. and its citizens, stating that due to the global effects of terrorism "we all felt the ranks closing with the Americans, not only in Europe but here in Austria, as well"² (Nationalrat 2001, 65). As a sign of solidarity, Austria sent troops to the NATO-led ISAF mission (International Security Assistance Force) in Afghanistan but engaged only in non-military tasks (like reconstruction and training). The involvement of the Austrian armed forces in military tasks was out of the question.

2.3. *From solidarity to 'schadenfreude'*

The level of the Austrian solidarity with the U.S. has changed considerably during the course of 2002–2003. The main principle of the Bush Doctrine, the pre-emptive strategy, laid down in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy, was incompatible with the Austrian neutrality policy traditions. When President Bush chose to intervene in Iraq in 2003, the vast majority of Western-European states including France, Germany, Belgium, and neutral countries such as Austria or Sweden decided not to join the U.S.

² "Wir alle haben ein Zusammenrücken mit den Amerikanern, aber auch in Europa und hier in Österreich gespürt."

in the fight against the regime of Saddam Hussein. At the same time, the new NATO members such as Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary, and the aspirant countries such as the Baltic states, Slovakia, Romania etc. of the former Eastern Bloc joined the so called “coalition of the willing”. U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld drew a clear line between “old” and “new” Europe, stating that in the “entire NATO Europe today, the centre of gravity is shifting to the East” (AP Archive 2003). It was indubitable that Washington perceived Austria as part of old Europe, and therefore treated the country as a sort of second-class partner. Chancellor Schüssel explained his government’s position in the parliament, stating that due to the absence of a mandate by the UN Security Council, Austrian forces would not participate in a war against Iraq. In the same speech, he condemned the “idea of lifting up a political pre-emptive strike to a doctrine, as it could undermine the very authority of the United Nations... [and] the UN Security Council”³ (Nationalrat 2003, 21). The Austrian public shared the view of its government: according to a public opinion poll by EOS-Gallup Europe, 85% of Austrians considered the U.S. intervention in Iraq “not justified” (HUMMEL 2007, 8). Austrians turned against Bush’s policy in the Middle East, and as a result, their attitude towards the country swiftly changed – to use Günter Bischof’s words, from solidarity to *schadenfreude* (BISCHOF 2013, 41).

The 50th anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty in 2005 was to be marked by a festive event in the Alpine Republic. All four foreign ministers of the former signatory Allied countries were invited to attend the ceremony, but ultimately only three (more precisely two plus one) of them showed up in Vienna: Sergey Lavrov and Michel Barnier, the Russian and French Foreign Ministers, and Douglas Alexander, the British Minister of State for Europe. Washington refused to send an active minister, and instead sent Rudy Boschwitz, the retired Senator of Minnesota (with no official title at the time) to represent U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Showing a cold shoulder to Austria in this symbolic way was a clear sign of U.S. indifference towards improving bilateral relations.

³ “...die Idee eines politischen Präventivschlages zu einer Doktrin erheben, weil das gerade die Autorität der UNO, der Vereinten Nationen, des Weltsicherheitsrates untergraben könnte...”

The Austrian presidency of the Council of the EU in the first semester of 2006 provided a good opportunity to arrange bilateral meetings. Shortly before the beginning of the Austrian presidency, Chancellor Schüssel visited President Bush in December 2005 for the second time during his chancellorship. The meeting in Washington was spent in a “good atmosphere” according to the Austrian visitor, and even some of the most controversial topics related to the CIA (such as the unannounced overflights in the European airspace, or the torture methods used in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp) were discussed. President Bush expressed the commitment of the U.S. to the Geneva Convention, but added that in the war on terror there were a lot of “grey areas”, as this sort of war was not fought against states, but against terrorism, and therefore the conduct was largely unprecedented (DerStandard 2005a). Chancellor Schüssel encountered some criticism at home from the opposition parties and even his coalition partner FPÖ due to his uncritical and “soft” attitude towards the topics of Guantanamo and the torture methods of the CIA (DerStandard 2005b).

President Bush also paid a visit to Vienna in June 2006, on the occasion of a summit of consultation with EU-leaders in the Austrian capital. The American delegation of President Bush and Secretary of State Rice was hosted by their European counterparts: Schüssel (who at the time held the position of President of the Council, as well), José Manuel Barroso (then President of the Commission), and Javier Solana (then High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy [CFSP] of the EU). A wide range of topics was discussed during the summit, including the Iraqi War, the Israeli–Palestine conflict, and energy issues, in particular the rising oil prices. It can undoubtedly be counted as a success of the Austrian Presidency that the leaders of the EU and the U.S. agreed on a common agenda. The Vienna Summit Declaration of 21 June 2006 strengthened the strategic partnership by incorporating a number of priority actions to support the transatlantic co-operation (Austria 2006).

The citizens of Vienna were not exactly happy about the visit: besides the fact that half of Vienna’s downtown was blocked off due to security measures, President Bush himself was a rather unpopular and a clearly unwelcome person in the eyes of many Austrians. When President Kennedy visited Vienna in 1961, 100,000 Austrians marched to the streets to greet the American president. In 2006, the public atmosphere was clearly different – in this case, around 10,000 people were protesting against the Iraqi

War, Guantanamo, and against President Bush personally (FISCHER 2006). After his visit to Austria, President Bush continued his tour to Hungary, and later to Russia. His visit was the first presidential visit in the Austrian capital since the end of the Cold War. Despite the Austrian civil society becoming more and more hostile towards the American leadership, the U.S.–Austrian bilateral relations somewhat relaxed during the final years of President Bush’s second term.

2.4. *The short-lived Obamania*

By the end of Bush’s presidency, the approval ratings of the American leadership were low in many regions of the world, including Europe. A strong opposition towards the U.S. foreign policy was one of the reasons for a rising anti-Americanism among civil societies. The negative tendencies changed significantly with the election of Barack Obama in November 2008: the president’s approval ratings among Europeans skyrocketed within a short time (WIKE–POUSHTER–ZAINULBHAI 2016, 3). The *Obamania* did not leave Austria untouched either. The approval rating of the new American president among Austrians changed from 8% (2008) to 45% (2010) (Gallup 2013, 15). The young, smart, inspiring and cosmopolitan president with mostly liberal views (evoking some memories of the late John F. Kennedy) coming into power was understood as a turn away from his predecessor’s unpopular policies, and a return to the main U.S. mission of upholding a liberal world order. Making America a nation to look up to, a symbol of hope and the land of the free – with Obama, the Old Continent’s nostalgia towards the ‘New World’ was revived (BURUMA 2008).

However, European enthusiasm for President Obama did not last long – a development that can be traced back to two main reasons. First, due to the recalibration of American foreign policy interests away from the Transatlantic region, and towards the Pacific area (through the so called ‘Pivot to Asia’ program). Europe has become more peripheral for Washington. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tried to rebalance America’s loss of attention for Europe. She travelled to the continent nearly 40 times to work with European leaders on several common issues, such as agreeing on sanctions against Iran, the deployment of a new missile defence system, and sustaining NATO consensus on the mission

in Afghanistan (O'HANLON 2013). Second, following Edward Snowden's leak of classified documents about the National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance practices against European governments, and industrial espionage against various European companies, the European public turned against the U.S. again. By 2012, President Obama's approval in Austria fell to 31%, marking a 14% drop within two years.

2.5. A unique look into the core of relations

After the ÖVP–FPÖ coalition was voted out of the government in the parliamentary election of 2006, and the social democrats took over the chancellor's office again (Alfred Gusenbauer from 2007 to 2008, and Werner Faymann from 2008 to 2016), bilateral relations got stuck in a gridlock: no bilateral meetings or work meetings took place between the leaders of the two nations. Despite the downturn of diplomatic ties, due to the publication of the WikiLeaks files, an extensive literature is available about the bilateral relations of the two countries from 2010 onwards.

After the U.S. embassy dispatches from Vienna got public, the American views on Austria and the Austrian leadership became more apparent. Going through the published documents, it quickly becomes evident that the tone used by the U.S. envoys ranges from reserved to openly hostile. According to an analysis of the reports by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, U.S. diplomats had three main concerns vis-à-vis Austria (Spiegel Online 2010).

The first was a fundamental problem: while Austria's engagement in global affairs diminished, politicians still stuck to the catchphrase of "political neutrality" attempting to always be involved but never taking any real responsibility. According to a diplomatic cable from 2007, Americans interpreted the country's neutrality policy as a framing for mere profit seeking activities: "It is a tenet of Austria's national mythology that the country's ability to maintain ties throughout the world constitutes a real contribution to peace and stability." The real sore points from the American point of view were Austria's "commercial ties to countries of concern to the US": Austrian business with Iran and North Korea did not stop despite the U.S. sanctions; banks carried out dubious activities in many post-Soviet countries.

The second problem of the U.S. had to do with the Austrian political leadership. It overwhelmingly focused on domestic matters, and it only perceived international politics as an issue if they threatened to have an immediate effect on domestic issues (e.g. the stability in the Western Balkans), or if they were of economic relevance. Many sources described Chancellor Faymann as a person who “has no personal interest in foreign affairs”. Defence Minister Norbert Darabos (SPÖ) was just as “uninterested in foreign and international security affairs” as his chancellor. Besides, he was the first minister in the history of the Second Republic to “not have served in the military”, as U.S. diplomats emphasised. The diplomatic cables described him as an ambitious politician with a bad connection to the military, as he proved himself unable to provide sufficient funding. Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger (ÖVP) seemed to focus too much on advancing “Austrian economic penetration” into the Black Sea region: the embassy openings in Astana (Kazakhstan) and in Baku (Azerbaijan) in 2007 were largely due to the economic interests of OMV, the national oil company. A point of criticism that according to Mr. Spindelegger might just as well be perceived as a compliment, as promoting national economy is part of the job description of every foreign minister (NOWAK 2010).

Reports on U.S. opinions regarding earlier chancellors were published, as well. According to those cables, Alfred Gusenbauer was seen as a knowledgeable and open-minded leader, but also a loose cannon. Wolfgang Schüssel, on the other hand, “rarely went out of [his] way to poke the US in the eye”, and if there was no domestic political consequence, he “tended to seek ways to support the US” (Spiegel Online 2010).

The third concern regarded the limited leverage of the U.S. on Austrian policy. U.S. diplomats were often disappointed by Austria’s lack of will to cooperate. Although Austrian governments had always patiently listened to the concerns of their respective American partners, they increasingly kept ignoring the wishes of the U.S. and went on doing their own business. An emblematic example of this is the refusal to accept any former detainees from Guantanamo when the U.S. was trying to find new homes for them in 2009. Another issue arose when Austria did not prohibit a wanted leader of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) to leave the country, despite the explicit request of the U.S. to do so. The lack of common issues led to a lack of leverage, which in turn damaged bilateral relations. An embassy memo from 2009 adequately summed up

the American response to Austria's isolative behaviour: "The Austrian government wants contact with the Obama administration at cabinet level and higher. We are making it clear that such contact requires real U.S.–Austrian partnership."

The criticism of the U.S. regarding Austrian indifference towards the outside world is not limited only to the elite, as this attitude is very much present among all levels of society. U.S. diplomats described the Austrians as one of the most Euro-sceptical and isolated populations in Europe. The conservative-liberal magazine *Die Presse* accurately summed up the U.S. observation of the country's inhabitants as "retreat[ing] to an intellectual Alpine fortress" (SEIFERT 2010).

2.6. *A cloudy future ahead*

With the victory of the Republican nominee Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. elections, and the conservative nominee Sebastian Kurz (ÖVP) in the 2017 Austrian elections, the composition of both governments changed significantly. It is yet to be seen if the conservative governments on both sides can bring some positive dynamics to the bilateral relations.

So far, the signs are not promising. President Trump tends to measure his country's European allies by two statistics: the share of GDP spent on military (and whether it meets NATO's guideline of 2%), and the trade balance of the U.S. with the respective country. The first figure is irrelevant in this case as Austria is a non-member of NATO. The second number, however, can be seen as a problem as the U.S. have a serious trade deficit with Austria (see Chapter 3 for details). Regarding the Austrian leadership, it is hard to imagine that there will be a change any time soon in its culture of "neglecting U.S. wishes" (as U.S. diplomats put it) and in its poor willingness to work together. The ÖVP–FPÖ coalition treaty of 2017 only mentions the U.S. once, so the country's intentions with regards to the ties with Washington remain cloudy. Bilateral co-operation will probably concentrate on particular issues – energy security, fighting terrorism etc. – but a general improvement of the relations is not in sight.

3. Economic Relations

The Austrian–American economic and financial relations have improved a lot since the end of the Cold War. While in 1989 the common value of U.S.–Austrian foreign trade in goods added up to barely over \$2 billion, it almost reached the sum of \$16 billion in 2017. The trade balance between the two countries is highly uneven though: since 2000, Austria is exporting a lot more goods to the U.S. than they import. By 2017, Austrian trade surplus had grown so large that its trade value was two and a half times higher than that of the U.S. By examining the foreign trade numbers, a couple of tendencies can be observed in the bilateral trade. Austria has a small, export-oriented economy, which is highly dependent on the absorption capacity of foreign markets. Therefore, the weak spot of the Austrian economy is the foreign market's inability to accept the country's products due to any reason, like for example an external shock.

This problem became evident during the financial crisis of 2007–2008 when the Austrian export to the U.S. dropped by 32% within two years (by \$4 billion). Regarding the trade of goods, the U.S. is the second most important trade partner for Austria (after Germany).

The four most important categories of Austrian export goods are machines and mechanical devices, electrical machinery and electrical products, vehicles, and optical and photographic equipment. The top four export goods categories of the U.S. are chemical products, medical products, machines, and mechanical devices and vehicles (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich 2018, 11–12).

Considering the service trade, the U.S. exports are worth €1.79 billion and therefore exceed Austria's, which only came to €1.58 billion in 2017 (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich 2018, 3).

According to the figures of the Austrian Economic Chamber, U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) in Austria was €15.59 billion in 2016, and American companies employ 21,312 workers in Austria. Austrian FDI in the U.S. is €9.66 billion, and Austrian companies provide 38,253 workplaces in the States.

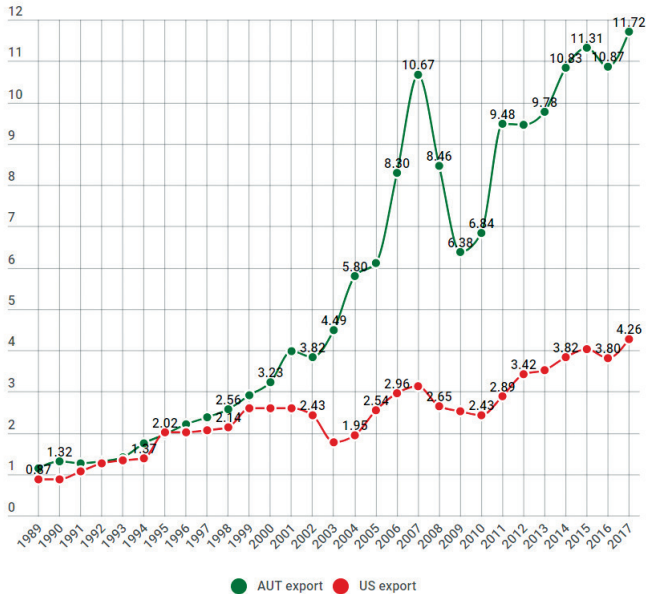


Figure 1.

U.S.–Austrian foreign trade in goods in billion USD

Source: Compiled by the author based on U.S. Census Bureau 2018.

4. Security and Defence Co-operation

Since the end of the Cold War, the State Department tends to define its relations with countries of the Central European region depending on the status of their NATO membership (BISCHOF 2013, 45). As a neutral country, Austria refuses to enter into a military alliance, and thus does not belong to the inner circle of the Central European states, which receive a kind of special treatment from Washington.

Austria's neutrality policy became a "problem child" during the Iraqi War, negatively affecting bilateral relations. Austria was following its principle of "solidarity within and neutrality beyond the EU", resulting in the country's decision to close its routes for transport of NATO troops from German bases to the Italian Trieste. Instead, the troops had to take

a time-consuming detour via Rotterdam. U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld took a highly critical stance towards the blockade of the Austrians. As a symbolic act of compensation, Interior Minister Ernst Strasser (ÖVP) sent police instructors to Amman (Jordan), who helped with the training of new units and capacity-building tasks for the Iraqi police (DAVID 2005, 23–25).

Austrian engagement and solidarity considering security and defence co-operation is currently conceivable almost exclusively within the EU. The only exceptions from this are missions which contribute directly to the stability of its neighbourhood: for example, Austria's engagement in the NATO-led KFOR mission in Kosovo, where Austria is by far the biggest non-NATO contributing nation. Austrian engagement in the Western Balkans is acknowledged and appreciated by the U.S., as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated at a joint press conference with her Austrian counterpart Michael Spindelegger, when he visited Washington in 2010 (VIEREGGE 2010).

Over the last 25 years, there were some serious considerations to change Austria's status and integrate the country into the Western alliance system (including NATO). In 1995 Austria joined the waiting room of NATO, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, but not the Atlantic alliance itself. The Austrian Security and Defence Doctrine (*Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin*) adopted in 2001 suggested to “keep an eye open” towards the option of an accession to NATO (SVD 2001, 10). Chancellor Schüssel argued to change Austria's neutral status, calling it an “old convention” which should be reevaluated: “[They,] whether they are Mozart balls, Lipizzaner or neutrality, don't cut it anymore in the complex reality of the beginning of the 21st century” (ERLANGER 2001). As a result of a blockade by the social democrats, and strong opposition by the Austrian public, Austria never joined NATO. The bilateral security and defence co-operation is therefore limited to only a few areas.

5. Cultural Relations

A dynamic cultural and scientific exchange takes place between the U.S. and Austria. Austrian Cultural Fora in New York and in Washington, D.C. are considered the main cultural embassies of the country, which promote Austrian art, music, movie, theatre, and literature in over 100 events

annually. One of the most important channels of Austrian public diplomacy in the U.S. is the Embassy's Press and Information Service. The fact that three American universities offer Austrian studies in their academic program is a clear sign of the vibrant scientific exchange between the two countries.⁴

Austrian Americans build a significant minority group in the U.S. From the couple of million Austrian citizens who arrived in the U.S. in the last centuries, there are over 735,000 Americans of full or partial Austrian ancestry currently living in the U.S.⁵ (BRITTINGHAM–DE LA CRUZ 2004, 4). Austrian Americans are considered well-integrated, important members of the American society: they made meaningful contributions in all fields of the *American life*, including arts, music, medicine, science, literature or business. There is very little data available on the voting patterns of Austrian Americans, or their influence through lobby groups on American politics, but the fact that an Austrian-born actor led the most populous American state for 8 years, speaks about the importance of the Austro–American community in the U.S.

The influence of American culture in Austria became relevant only after World War II. The Alpine country received meaningful aid through the Marshall Plan to help rebuild its economy. It also introduced the various goods of the American industry in the Austrian market. The so-called America Houses (*Amerika Häuser*), which were developed to promote the American culture in Germany and Austria, helped to make a lasting effect towards a positive attitude to the *American lifestyle* among the Austrian society. American cultural goods – movies, TV series, music, fashion or literature – still enjoy a certain level of popularity in Austria.

According to the U.S. Consulate, about 15,000 Americans lived in Austria in 2013. Based on the activity level of the two main American political party organisations abroad (Democrats Abroad and Republicans Overseas), the Democrats in Austria are better represented. Beyond the U.S. embassy, the Austro–American Society is playing an important role in organising cultural events in Austria. The American community

⁴ These are the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota, the Austrian Marshall Plan Center for European Studies, the Austrian Marshall Plan Center for European Studies at the University of New Orleans and the Austrian Studies Program at the University of Berkeley.

⁵ Official recent data on the person's ancestry or ethnic origin living in the U.S. are not available, as the U.S. Census 2010 left off questions about this matter.

has several educational institutions in Austria, such as the American International School Vienna or the Salzburg International Preparatory School. Webster University has a campus in Vienna. Compared to other international students, the number of American students is low at Austrian public universities: in 2013 only 662 of them were matriculated at a public Austrian institution (Medien-Serviceestelle 2014).

6. Conclusions

U.S.–Austrian bilateral relations have changed significantly since the end of the Cold War, and not in a positive way. The relationship has suffered a noticeable slowdown, to a certain extent even alienation. While before 1989 a special bond characterised the two countries' relation, this intimacy slowly faded away in the course of the 1990s. The U.S. did not have as much use for neutral mediators or “honest brokers” (as Austrian political leaders like to refer to themselves) anymore, but Washington needed reliable allies instead. Austria, on the other hand, calibrated the main direction of its foreign policy towards the European integration, and merged to some extent with EU CSFP. Thus, the once special relationship increasingly trivialised.

With solid economic relations, flourishing academic and scientific exchange, and growing tourism, it is indeed hard to understand how the two nations estranged themselves from each other the way they did during the last 25 years. Anti-American sentiments are widespread among the Austrian public, while Americans treat the Alpine Republic mostly with disregard. However, as members of the free world, the two are still connected by a wide range of common values. This should be the basis on which bridge builders of both countries can look for more positive dynamics and work towards improving the bilateral relations once again.

Bibliography

AP Archive (2000): USA: Austrian Ambassador Peter Moser. *AP Archive*, 11 February 2000. Source: www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/44da4725c5ea-bc92de03819a6b526f45 (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)

- AP Archive (2003): Defence Secy comments on Europe, France, Germany. *AP Archive*, 21 March 2003. Source: www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/42c7143b10c4b55a0c0ad7efcd176775 (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Austria (2006): *Vienna Summit Declaration: 21 June 2006*. Source: www.eu2006.at/includes/Download_Dokumente/2106EUUSDeclaration.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- BISCHOF, Günter (2013): Of Dwarfs and Giants, From Cold War Mediator to Bad Boy of Europe – Austria and the U.S. in the Transatlantic Arena (1990–2013). In BISCHOF, Günter – KARLHOFFER, Ferdinand eds.: *Austria's International Position after the End of the Cold War*. Contemporary Austrian Studies, Vol. 22, Innsbruck University Press, 13–52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1n2txd9.4>
- BISCHOF, Günter (2016): Von Riesen und Zwergen – die USA und Österreich. *Europäische Rundschau*, Vol. 44, No. 2. 71–77. Source: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/521b937ec4b036e9c34fe712/t/57bf5d9129687fe4f8dcc80a/1472159122261/ER+Oesterreich+USA+2016.pdf> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- BRITTINGHAM, Angela – DE LA CRUZ, G. Patricia (2004): *Ancestry: 2000*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Census Bureau, Government Printing Office. Source: www.census.gov/history/pdf/ancestry.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Bundeskanzleramt (2013): *Österreichische Sicherheitsstrategie, Grundlinien, Prinzipien und Maßnahmen*. Source: www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/sicherheitsstrategie (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- BURUMA, Ian (2008): Endlich wieder zu Amerika aufschauen können. *Der Standard*, 07 November 2008. Source: <https://derstandard.at/1226067131550/Endlich-wieder-zu-Amerika-aufschauen-koennen> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- CIA (1986): Document ID 28521500. *CIA*, 03 June 1986. Source: www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/WALDHEIM%2C%20KURT%20%20%28DI%29%20%20%20VOL.%201_0056.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- COHEN, Roger (2000): Austria Coalition Sworn In as Diplomatic Fallout Rises. *The Washington Post*, 05 February 2000. Source: www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/02/04/austrian-right-gains-a-hand-in-ruling-coalition/bffae62a-b627-4d98-b118-4ed170b4c21a/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c095fad35b3 (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- DAVID, Martin (2005): Die Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und den USA (2001–2005). Administration George W. Bush I. *SIAC-Journal – Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis* (1). 19–27. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7396/2005_1_C

- DerStandard (2005a): Schlüssel nach Bush-Besuch: USA stehen zu Genfer Konvention. *DerStandard*, 13 May 2005. Source: <https://derstandard.at/2267947/Schuessel-nach-Bush-Besuch-USA-stehen-zu-Genfer-Konvention> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- DerStandard (2005b): “Bei Bush eingeknickt”. *DerStandard*, 13 December 2005. Source: <https://derstandard.at/2269807/Bei-Bush-eingeknickt> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- ERLANGER, Steven (2001): World Briefing | Europe: Austria: Neutrality Is Old-Fangled, Leader Says. *The New York Times*, 27 October 2001. Source: www.nytimes.com/2001/10/27/world/world-briefing-europe-austria-neutrality-is-old-fangled-leader-says.html (Accessed: 31.07.2018)
- FISCHER, Sebastian (2006): Hintertürchen in der Sperrzone. *Spiegel Online*, 20 June 2006. Source: www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bush-besuch-in-wien-hintertuerchen-in-der-sperrzone-a-422550.html (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Gallup (2013): *The U.S.-Global Leadership Project*. Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/161309/global-leadership-project.aspx> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- HAAS, György (2001): Waldheim és a Watch-lista. *Válasz.hu*, 29 June 2001. Source: <http://valasz.hu/vilag/waldheim-es-a-watch-lista-5684> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- HUMMEL, Hartwig (2007): *A Survey of Involvement of 15 European States in the Iraq War 2003*. Parliamentary Control of Security Policy, paks working paper 7.
- KARNER, Stefan (2010): Bilanz der Regierung Schüssel auf dem Gebiet der Restitution und Entschädigung. In KHOL, Andreas – OFNER, Günther – KARNER, Stefan – HALPER, Dietmar eds.: *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik 2009*. Wien, Böhlau Verlag. 399–413.
- Medien-Serviceestelle (2014): Rund 15.000 US-AmerikanerInnen in Österreich. *Medien-Serviceestelle*, 03 November 2014. Source: http://medienserviceestelle.at/migration_bewegt/2014/11/03/rund-15-000-us-amerikanerinnen-in-oesterreich/ (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Nationalrat (2001): *Stenographisches Protokoll, 77. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XXI. Gesetzgebungsperiode*. Source: www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXI/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00077/fname_114509.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Nationalrat (2003): *Stenographisches Protokoll, 5. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode*. Source: www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXII/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00005/fname_114619.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)

- NOWAK, Rainer (2010): Spindelegger: “Verstehe US-Kritik als Kompliment”. *Die Presse*, 23 December 2010. Source: https://diepresse.com/home/politik/aussenpolitik/621107/Spindelegger_Verstehe-USKritik-als-Kompliment (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- O’HANLON, Michael E. (2013): State and the Stateswoman. *Foreign Affairs*, 29 January 2013. Source: www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2013-01-29/state-and-stateswoman (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Rechtsinformation des Bundes (2018): *Federal Constitutional Law on the Neutrality of Austria*. Source: www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=Erv&Dokumentnummer=ERV_1955_211 (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- SCHAETTLER, John F. (1994): Government and Politics. In SOLSTEN, Eric – McCLAVE, David E. eds.: *Austria: a country study*. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Federal Research Division. 165–220.
- SVD (2001): Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin. January 2001. Source: www.digitales.oesterreich.gv.at/documents/22124/30428/sicherheits-und-verteidigungsdoktrin_d.pdf/b8c95040-fd56-406d-a6c3-e534e090b567 (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- SEIFERT, Thomas (2010): Wiener WikiLeaks: Rückzug in die geistige Alpenfestung? *Die Presse*, 05 December 2010. Source: https://diepresse.com/home/meinung/kommentare/leitartikel/616077/Wiener-WikiLeaks_Rueckzug-in-die-geistige-Alpenfestung (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Spiegel Online (2010): The Rocky US Relationship with Little Austria. *Spiegel Online*, 08 December 2010. Source: www.spiegel.de/international/europe/no-and-no-again-the-rocky-us-relationship-with-little-austria-a-733536.html (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- U.S. Census Bureau (2018): *Trade in Goods with Austria*. Source: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4330.html (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- U.S. Embassy Vienna (2013): Eugen Freund about Austria’s image in the U.S. *YouTube*, 27 March 2013. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0baFyvXnQU (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- VAN DER VAT, Dan (2007): Kurt Waldheim. *The Guardian*, 14 June 2007. Source: www.theguardian.com/news/2007/jun/14/guardianobituaries.austria (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- VIEREGGE, Thomas (2010): Clinton: “USA für EU–Beitritt der Türkei”. *Die Presse*, 16 November 2010. Source: https://diepresse.com/home/politik/aussenpolitik/610943/Clinton_USA-fuer-EUBeitritt-der-Tuerkei (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)

- WERNER, Leslie Maitland (1987): Waldheim Barred from Entering U.S. over Role in War. *The New York Times*, 28 April 1987. Source: www.nytimes.com/1987/04/28/world/waldheim-barred-from-entering-us-over-role-in-war.html (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- WIKE, Richard – POUHTER, Jacob – ZAINULBHAI, Hani (2016): As Obama Years Draw to Close, President and U.S. Seen Favorably in Europe and Asia. *Pew Research Center*, 29 June 2016. Source: <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/06/14095546/Pew-Research-Center-Balance-of-Power-Report-FINAL-June-29-2016.pdf> (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)
- Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (2018): *Aussenwirtschaft Update USA, April 2018, Aussenwirtschaft Austria der WKÖ*. Source: www.wko.at/service/aussenwirtschaft/usa-update.pdf (Accessed: 31.07.2018.)

This page intentionally left blank.

Relations between the United States and Croatia: Development and Future Perspectives¹

Robert Barić and Dražen Smiljanić²

1. Introduction

The relations between the Republic of Croatia and the U.S. in the post-Cold War era cannot be separated from the general U.S. activity in the area of Southeast Europe,³ particularly in the Western Balkans.⁴

After the Cold War, we can distinguish three periods in the foreign policy of the U.S. towards the Western Balkans. First, a period of extraordinary activism during the Clinton Administration (1994–2000), followed by the gradual departure from the region during the administration of George W. Bush (2000–2008). The third started after a period of not giving particular importance to the region. This new era represented the re-strengthening of U.S. action in the area during the second presidential mandate of Barack Obama (2014–2016). In general, U.S. policy towards

¹ The authors are very thankful to Mr. Marin Braovac for compiling valuable information on U.S. assistance to Croatia, which profoundly contributed to the relevance of data in this chapter.

² Robert Barić, PhD, Senior Researcher, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies; Assistant Professor, Croatian Defence Academy, Ministry of Defence (Croatia). Email: rb.baric@gmail.com

Dražen Smiljanić, MSc, Director, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies; Lecturer, Croatian Defence Academy, Ministry of Defence (Croatia). Email: smiljanic.drazen@gmail.com

³ The terms ‘Southeast Europe’, the ‘Western Balkans’, and ‘the region’, although not synonyms, are used interchangeably throughout this article to depict Croatia’s neighbourhood.

⁴ The Western Balkans consists of: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (European Commission 2018).

the Balkans since the end of the Cold War altered from containment to strategic reengagement. One of the primary objectives of the American *grand strategy* after the end of WWII was to limit the influence of the USSR. At the end of the Cold War, this goal has been altered: supporting democracy globally, and preventing the Russian Federation or the People's Republic of China from turning into a new Euro–Asian hegemon.

In the context of U.S. grand strategy, the area of Southeast Europe (the Western Balkans) is significant because it geographically links Europe with the Middle East and it opens the way for the spread of Western influence to the Caucasus and Central Asia. The effort to spread U.S. influence in these areas in the post-Cold War period was motivated by the roll-back of Russian influence from these strategic areas. Control of this region was crucial for any aspirational country which aimed to gain a dominant position in the Euro–Asian area (VUKADINOVIĆ 1998).

During the Cold War, the U.S. provided strong support to the former Yugoslavia, which Washington perceived as a means of maintaining a strategic balance with the Soviet Union in the Southeast Europe area. In the U.S. perception, despite the socialist arrangement, Yugoslavia represented a buffer zone between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, essential for preventing the spread of the Soviet influence towards the Mediterranean. Consequently, Washington consistently supported the right of Yugoslavia to maintain its independence and territorial integrity, and it avoided any significant criticism of human rights violations within the country.⁵ This fact is significant because the George H. W. Bush Administration's policy during the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1990–1991 was based on the above mentioned Cold War patterns. Only the escalation of the conflict in the second half of 1991 initiated a gradual change in Washington's policy towards the region.

After the Cold War, the U.S. opted for stability in the region under the leadership of the West. This outlined the framework for the relations between the U.S. and the Republic of Croatia.

⁵ For more information on the relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia in the period from 1949 to 1990 see e.g. LUKIĆ–LYNCH 1996, 303–307.

2. 1991–1994: The Breakup of Yugoslavia and Croatia’s Homeland War

The period from 1991 to 1994 was characterised by the question of recognition of the Republic of Croatia and the quest for the development of relations with the U.S.

2.1. U.S. diplomacy and the dissolution of Yugoslavia

The principal objective of U.S. foreign policy towards Yugoslavia from 1990 to 1991 was to preserve its unity and later, when the extreme violence erupted, to give the European Community a chance to deal with what was called a *European problem*.

Mr. Warren Zimmermann, the last U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia (in office from 11 July 1988 until 16 May 1992), commenced his mandate by reasserting the traditional mantra of the U.S. support for Yugoslavia’s unity, independence and territorial integrity, but only in the context of democracy, actively opposing unity imposed or preserved by force. Expecting that the worst-case scenario for Yugoslavia would be the breakup of the country, Ambassador Zimmermann and his political and economic officers knew that no breakup could happen peacefully. The U.S. administration understood that the Serbian territorial ambitions, the ethnic hatred disseminated by Slobodan Milošević, and the mixture of ethnic groups in every ex-Yugoslav republic – except Slovenia – meant that developments in Yugoslavia would lead to extreme violence, perhaps even war. Thus, Ambassador Zimmermann argued for at least a loose unity, with the endorsement of democratic development (ZIMMERMANN 1995).

From August through November 1991, the siege and shelling of the town of Vukovar by Serb forces, accompanied by the bombing of Dubrovnik in October 1991 attracted significant publicity and attention, and contributed to an international movement to support the recognition of Croatia’s independence. The use of force was considered by Washington a red line in late 1991 (ZIMMERMANN 1995).

2.2. *U.S. recognition of Croatia's independence*

The central ambition of the Croatian Government in 1991 was the independence of the Republic of Croatia, and the international recognition of the new state. In this context, the recognition by the U.S. was of particular importance. Washington officially supported the preservation of Yugoslavia, but not at all costs. Although many in Croatia expected that the U.S. would support the democratic movements and the democratically elected new governments in Croatia and Slovenia, Washington still gave priority to the support of the Yugoslav federal government led by Ante Marković, expressing deep suspicion of the motives of the new governments in Slovenia and Croatia.⁶ The primary intent of the U.S. diplomacy was to achieve and maintain stability in Eastern Europe. The political orientation of the U.S. may be depicted by the statement of then Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs James F. Dobbins on 21 February 1990, in which he emphasised that the determinants of the U.S. policy towards Yugoslavia were supporting democracy, dialogue, human rights, economic reforms and unity (LUKIC-LYNCH 1996, 310; DOBBINS 2004). Washington sought to prevent the further escalation of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and thus the need for direct military engagement by the U.S. In this context, Washington did not support the intentions of Croatia and Slovenia for unilateral separation, insisting that the only solution to the Yugoslav crisis could be inter-republic negotiations that will either lead to the reform of the Yugoslav federation or a peaceful separation (MOREL 2008, 355–356). These efforts ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

The escalation of the conflict in Yugoslavia in October 1991 led finally to a change in Washington's policy. However, this was not the change that Croatia wanted. After the apparent failure of the current approach, Washington chose the 'wait and see' policy, i.e. passive monitoring of the developments before defining a new mode of action. After having completed the Desert Storm Operation successfully (in response to Iraq's

⁶ Representatives of the Bush Administration had doubts about the new nationalist political leaders in Slovenia and Croatia. According to their perception, Slovenes showed no interest in the fate of the other Yugoslav republics, and Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and his HDZ Party, in their perception, dazzled by fascism and showed readiness to introduce discriminatory measures against Croatian Serbs (MOREL 2008, 354–355.).

invasion of Kuwait), Washington did not show the desire to undertake a new military intervention. Also, the worsening of the political situation in the former Soviet Union had a priority over the case of the former Yugoslavia.

After the European Community's (EC) recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in December 1991, Washington revised its policy of supporting the maintenance of Yugoslavia. The U.S. recognised Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as independent states on 7 April 1992 (BUSH 1992). For the Bush Administration, the recognition of the independence of Croatia and the other republics of the former Yugoslavia was not a strategic interest at that time (RAMET 2008).

The reason for the decision was that the U.S. did not have an interest to independently carry out a military action in BiH. U.S. action through NATO was also excluded because of the possibility of disapproval of other Alliance members, which would have undermined NATO's cohesion. In the end, the U.S. abandoned the idea of unilateral action and left the initiative to its European allies. This policy remained in place during the entire tenure of President George H. W. Bush.⁷

President Clinton announced a more active role for the U.S. in resolving the conflicts of the former Yugoslavia to prevent the spillover of these problems to Southeast Europe. The efforts of the U.S. were also motivated by the fact that the EU was unable to stop the wars in the former Yugoslavia, which created the need for Washington to actively engage in resolving European security issues (including the question of NATO's future, and the relations with the Russian Federation). Besides, it also sent a message to European allies, showing that solving problems in the global security environment was still not possible without U.S. leadership.

In the first year of the new administration, Washington tried to implement three measures of pressure on Serbia: removal of the arms embargo imposed on BiH, strengthening the sanctions against Serbia through UN mechanisms, and launching limited air strikes against Serb forces in BiH. The lack of support from European allies, along with Washington's unwillingness for unilateral action had led to the maintenance of the *status quo*. In this period, an important decision of the new U.S. administration was to support the territorial integrity of Croatia by adopting a position that the

⁷ To find out more about the Bush Administration's policy on the dissolution of Yugoslavia, see HENRIKSEN 2017, 75–81.

solution of the situation in Croatia and BiH must take into consideration the existing international borders. That position was apparent in the U.S.'s efforts to gain the UN Security Council's support for the recognition of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia (GALBRAITH 1998, 426).

The crucial change in the U.S. policy towards the conflict in BiH took place in February 1994, after the Serbian bombing of the Markale marketplace in Sarajevo.⁸ The large number of civilian victims have provoked a strong condemnation of the passivity of Europe, and it opened the possibility of active U.S. engagement. These events also opened the door for the development of a strategic U.S.–Croatia partnership.

3. 1994–2003: Partners in the Resolution of the Crisis in the Western Balkans

The period from 1994 to 2003 was characterised by the establishment and the development of the strategic partnership between the Republic of Croatia and the U.S. The conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia facilitated a renewed engagement with the U.S. in European security. A private military contractor, the Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) was used as a means of “silent” U.S. support to the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian contribution to Operation Allied Force⁹ in 1999, and the “Boka Star” case in 2002 represented the pinnacles of this cooperation.

3.1. Active U.S. engagement in the Western Balkans

The Clinton Administration's decision to intervene in this conflict was motivated by the strengthening of U.S. influence in Europe, particularly with regards to NATO's future and the development of economic relations in the transatlantic region. The change of Washington's policy towards the conflict in BiH had also contributed to the establishment of a strategic

⁸ To find out more about the Clinton Administration's politics towards the conflict in the former Yugoslavia between 1993 and 1995, see HENRIKSEN 2017, 119–133.

⁹ NATO launched Operation Allied Force in response to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians. The air strikes lasted from 24 March 1999 to 10 June 1999.

partnership between the U.S. and the Republic of Croatia. The Clinton Administration's strategy in BiH was based on the creation of an alliance between the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), which was not possible to achieve without the active co-operation of Croatia, who assisted the Bosnian Croats. Washington intervened directly to end the Croatian–Bosniak conflict in BiH. The conflict came to an end in the second half of 1993: both sides signed an agreement in Washington in March 1994 to establish a joint Croatian–Bosniak Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering half of the total territory of BiH. For the U.S., the signing of the agreement helped to create the conditions for curbing Milosevic's aggression, which was perceived as the primary source of instability in the Balkans.¹⁰

3.2. The role of the U.S. in the transformation of the Croatian Armed Forces

In the development of the partnership, the U.S. military assistance had a significant influence, which was provided through a private security company, MPRI. This form of aid allowed circumventing the UN embargo on the export of arms and military equipment to the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Two contracts were concluded between Croatia and the MPRI on 27 September 1994. The first contract was aimed at assisting the restructuring of the Croatian Defence Ministry. Its implementation began in January 1995, under the guidance of a retired U.S. Major General, John Sewell.

The second contract (*The Democracy Transition Assistance Program*) was oriented towards the organisation of the education and training of staff officers. For the implementation of this project, the MPRI sent to Croatia a team of 15 people, led by retired U.S. Major General, Richard Griffiths. The first generation of Croatian students completed the course in April 1995. For the Croatian side, this was an opportunity to obtain the necessary military expertise and training, required for the further development of the Croatian Armed Forces. This was part of the preparations to liberate the occupied parts of the country that was planned for 1995. This

¹⁰ To find out more about the American action that led to the signing of the agreement, see MOREL 2008, 360–361.

way, the Clinton Administration avoided direct military engagement in the support of Croatia.¹¹

The training had a positive effect on the improvement of the operational capacity of the Croatian Armed Forces. The operations of the Croatian Armed Forces carried out in the summer of 1995 were good examples of that (AVANT 2005, 109–110). The long-term effects were even more visible as the MPRI's program was based on meeting the standards and guidelines for entering the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program (restructuring Croatia's Ministry of Defence [MoD] for long term strategic capabilities, democratising the military and reorganising the structure of forces), and contributing significantly to the professionalisation of the Croatian Armed Forces. Subsequently, the military education program arranged by the MPRI also had a significant impact on the domestic political affairs of the Republic of Croatia between 1995 and 2000 (the contract itself brought substantial political benefits to the governing HDZ party of Tudjman). The contract had an important impact on morale (showing that the U.S. was on Croatia's side), and the long-term transformation of the MoD and the structure of the forces (AVANT 2005, 110).

The informal military assistance provided by the U.S. through the MPRI was replaced after 1994 by the establishment of direct military co-operation, however the MPRI continued to work in the Republic of Croatia even after 2000. Croatia's entry into the U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET) program on 29 November 1994 enabled Croatia to conduct joint military exercises with the U.S. The program allowed the training of Croatian military personnel in the U.S., and helped the organisation of activities in Croatia which were aimed at assisting Croatia's efforts to join the PfP and in the longer-term become a fully fledged member of NATO.

3.3. Towards the end of the Yugoslav Wars

Despite the established partnership, the relations of the U.S. and Croatia between 1996 and 2000 were burdened with a series of problems. The U.S. particularly criticised Croatia in the area of human rights, the development

¹¹ To find out more about the activities of the MPRI in the Republic of Croatia, see SINGER 2003, 127–129; AVANT 2005; AVANT 2009.

of the democratisation process, and the implementation of the Dayton Agreement (to find out more about the U.S. view on Croatian foreign policy, see LARRABEE 1996, 103). Tensions between the sides were visible even at the end of 1995. Washington, for example, emphasised that by using U.S. military assistance provided through the MPRI, the Republic of Croatia became its strategic ally. At the same time, a warning was given that the Croatian side cannot use the military capabilities gained through U.S. assistance against the interests of Washington, and Croatia cannot use these capabilities for a possible military action aimed at the liberation of the then-occupied Croatian Danube river region, either (COHEN 1995).

Following the signing of the Dayton Agreement Washington's priorities changed. In the U.S. perception, the achieved stability could have been preserved by encouraging the process of democratisation and economic development, especially in the two key countries of the region – Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which was constructed by the republics of Serbia and Montenegro. These changes would have also allowed a long-term U.S. influence in Southeast Europe. In this strategy, Washington expected the support of Zagreb as a catalyst for change in the region.

The U.S. sought to promote the process of democratisation through a rigorous oversight of the Croatian Government's activities, monitoring the Croatian implementation of the provisions of the Dayton Agreement, and the Croatian co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.¹² The U.S. dissatisfaction with the Croatian Government's policy and its democratic deficit became evident in June 1997 when Washington blocked the \$30 million World Bank loan to Croatia and called the Council of Europe two months later to suspend Croatia. Between 1996 and 1999, Washington doubled its financial aid to Croatia (\$74.97 million), but most of the funds were used to finance the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act in the Republic of Croatia.¹³ This strat-

¹² To find out more about the expectations of the U.S. with regards to the relations with Croatia, the disappointment of the Croatian non-compliance with the democratic norms, and Croatia's policies towards BiH, see MOREL 2008, 366–367.

¹³ The SEED program was one of the key instruments of the U.S. to promote the process of democratisation in Eastern Europe. In Croatia, the SEED program was focused on three areas: financing programs related to the removal of the consequences of war activities (51%), promoting democratisation (27%), and economic restructuring (22%) (PINNA 2013, 181–182.).

egy in the second half of the 1990s was aimed at encouraging changes by strengthening the democratisation process as part of a broader Western Balkans stabilisation program.

Washington was dissatisfied with the authoritarian rule of the first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman. That criticism has led to a significant cooling but not a complete interruption of the relationship between Zagreb and Washington. Despite this, cooperation between the two countries in the defence area had developed well. In fact, between 1996 and 2000 the only area where the co-operation was successful was the defence sector. Croatia provided support to NATO's military intervention in Kosovo, participating in Operation Allied Force (NATO 2016). Croatia provided NATO with access to its air and maritime space. As a result of Croatia's support, President Clinton abolished the embargo on the sale of U.S. arms to the Republic of Croatia (which formally demolished the UN embargo), and funds were increased for the IMET program. Despite the disagreements, the Republic of Croatia was confirmed as an American ally in the region. The full normalisation of relations followed the parliamentary and presidential elections in Croatia in 2000, with the arrival of the Social Democratic Government of Ivica Račan. The principal objective of the new government was the acceleration of Croatia's Euro-Atlantic integration (NATO, EU), which required the support of Washington (VUKADINović 1996).

3.4. Croatia's way towards the Euro-Atlantic community

In the defence sector, strengthening Washington's support for Croatia's accession to NATO was indicated by Croatia's accession to the PfP in May 2000 and by its addition to the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in May 2002 (MONTGOMERY 1998). At the NATO summit in Prague in November 2002, the presidents of Croatia, Albania and Macedonia proposed to Washington to launch a new U.S.–Adriatic Charter initiative, with a view to preserve the policy of open doors.¹⁴ The Charter was signed in Tirana on 2 May 2003 by Croatia, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in which the three NATO aspirants pledged their commitment

¹⁴ For the Croatian views on the meaning of the American–Adriatic Charter, see GRDEŠIĆ 2004.

to NATO values and their cooperative efforts to advance their collective NATO aspirations. The Adriatic Charter later expanded to include two new countries in 2008: BiH, and Montenegro.

3.5. Croatia as a reliable partner

The George W. Bush Administration marked the return of the Republican Party to power, and the end of the U.S. foreign policy campaign in the Balkans. Following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the U.S. gave priority to the global war on terrorism.

In these circumstances, the Western Balkans started to lose importance (in particular because Russia was weak and unable to maintain its expansionist policy, and it was forced to cooperate with the West). This led to a gradual withdrawal of the U.S. from the region, and the limitation of its indirect support for the stabilisation of the region, which was transferred to the EU. Washington gave up the responsibility of the political and economic stabilisation of the Southeast region, which ultimately led to the EU's failure to achieve this task.

Despite all the problems, the strategic partnership between Zagreb and the U.S. has been thriving, as demonstrated by the case of the seizure of the "Boka Star" commercial ship. The ship was seized by Croatian officials on 22 October 2002 at the port of Rijeka, after it left the port of Bar in Montenegro. The seizure followed a warning from U.S. intelligence on the suspicion that the ship was being used for arms smuggling. The ship's cargo (loaded at Bar, Montenegro) included 14 transport containers of chemical pellets, declared as activated carbon and water filters, which was in fact 208,337 kilograms (459,304 lbs) of explosives, consisting of nitrocellulose and nitroglycerin (Croatian Ministry of the Interior 2002).

4. 2003–2006: Diverging Views on Croatia's European Future

The period from 2003 to 2006 was characterised by a relative deterioration of U.S.–Croatian relations. The principal cause was the insistence of the new U.S. administration to grant immunity to U.S. citizens on Croatian territory from extradition to the International Criminal Court

(ICC). At the same time, the U.S. Government also insisted that Croatia must cooperate with the ICTY.

4.1. Diverging views and disagreements

In 2003 Zagreb expressed its disagreement with the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Croatian Prime Minister, Stjepan Mesić said in a televised address immediately after the U.S. attack on Iraq that the U.S. actions marginalised the UN, created divisions within the EU and questioned the foundations of the international order. At the opening of the new U.S. Embassy, Mesić condemned the American pressure on Croatia, causing a fierce U.S. reaction. One day later, in an interview published in the *Slobodna Dalmacija* newspaper U.S. Ambassador Lawrence G. Rossin condemned the Croatian Government's decision not to support the U.S. intervention in Iraq (KLAUŠKI 2002). During his visit to Croatia on 8 February 2004, then U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld voiced hope that the new Croatian Government would consider giving the U.S. some support in Iraq. The U.S. expected a support that would correspond to Croatia's ability and its capabilities (they did not insist on the participation of the Croatian military, but the U.S. wanted to see Croatia as a member of the "coalition of the willing" in the reconstruction phase of the Iraqi War). Despite the U.S. requests, the new Croatian Government maintained the same attitude as the previous one.

According to U.S. sources, disagreement between the two sides on several issues caused the cooling of relations with Croatia. There were "six sins" of the Croatian Government that, according to sources close to the State Department, burdened U.S.–Croatian relations at the time: 1. Lawrence Rossin (then U.S. Ambassador to Croatia) filed complaints to his superiors in Washington on the interpretation of the Croatian Government and Goran Granić (then Minister of Foreign Affairs) for publicly criticising his work; 2. Croatia refused to sign the bilateral agreement with Washington on the exemption of U.S. citizens before the ICC; 3. Croatia did not endorse the Ship Safety Act related to U.S. Navy vessels when they visit Croatia's harbours; 4. inconsistency about sending Croatian troops to Iraq, and more generally about co-operation in the post-conflict stabilisation of Iraq; 5. Croatian politics (then President of the Republic, Stjepan Mesić in particular) publicly denounced the war in Iraq, and said that the

U.S. goals were highly debatable; and 6. the American assessment that the return of Serb refugees, defined in the Dayton Agreement, is running too slowly (PUKANIĆ 2003).

At the end of May 2003, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia, Lawrence Rossin warned the Croatian Government that the U.S. military aid of \$19 million would be suspended in case the Croatian side did not sign the agreement on non-extradition by 1 July 2003 (Article 98), and even suggested that the lack of cooperation would question the future of Croatia's membership in NATO. On 1 July 2003, the State Department announced that Croatia was among the 35 countries where the Bush Administration suspended all American military assistance because they refused to give American citizens immunity before the International Criminal Court (BECKER 2003). Consequently, the Croatian rejection of the signing of this agreement led to the abolition of U.S. military assistance in the period from 2003 to 2008.¹⁵

The cooling of the relationship led Washington to begin to consider the possibility of strengthening relations with the FRY. This also meant a long-term prospect for the Yugoslav side to become the leading U.S. partner in the region. In the U.S. assessment, Serbia (still in the union with Montenegro) occupied a strategic geographic position in the Balkans as a junction at the intersection of the routes between Western and Eastern Europe, representing an important component of the geostrategic competition between the West and Russia. In Washington's perception, a modernised Serbia, free from Russian control, could potentially represent the engine of economic growth for the entire Balkan region (MORELLI 2018).

Consequently, the deterioration of Washington's relationship with Croatia between 2003 and 2006 led to an improving strategic partnership between the U.S. and the FRY (PINNA 2013, 188). Ultimately, the expectations have not been met. Despite the U.S. efforts and the invested funds, the political and economic stabilisation of the former Yugoslavia did not follow. The influence of the Russian Federation has not been suppressed either – on the contrary, it became even stronger. The U.S. recognition

¹⁵ The funding of current programs from 2001 and 2002 was temporarily continued, but the military assistance for 2004 was suspended. By that time, the Republic of Croatia has used all funds received through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program (roughly \$12 million). For 2003, the Republic of Croatia should have received \$5.5 million in the FMF program, \$967,963 in the IMET program, and \$150,000 for the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP) program.

of Kosovo on 17 February 2008 sparked a new crisis in the relations of Washington and Belgrade (SERWER 2008).

5. 2006 to 2018: The Reconstruction and Strengthening of the Strategic Partnership

The period from 2006 to 2018 was characterised by the reconstruction and strengthening of the strategic partnership. After 2006, the issues regarding the ICC have been resolved. The U.S. showed strong support for Croatia's membership in NATO, as it was shown in the breakdown of Slovenian obstructionism. The U.S. counted on the Republic of Croatia in its efforts to suppress the Russian influence in the Western Balkans.

5.1. A partnership restored

Regardless of the previous issues in U.S.–Croatian relations, the Republic of Croatia as the only politically and economically stable country in the region became a desirable U.S. partner again. For Zagreb, it opened up the possibility of revitalising the disrupted relations with the U.S. Both countries began the gradual normalisation of relations in 2006. The issue that triggered the most significant controversy – the ICC issue – was quietly sidelined (three years later, the Obama Administration changed the U.S. policy towards the ICC, and definitively removed this issue from the agenda). In response, the Croatian side has also increased its contribution to ISAF forces in Afghanistan.¹⁶ In 2009, Croatia also joined the KFOR¹⁷ in Kosovo by sending two Mil Mi-171Š transport helicopters together with 20 troops.

An indicator of the change in the U.S.–Croatia relationship was the visit of the then Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader to Washington on 17 October 2006, which was followed by the invitation of President George

¹⁶ ISAF has been the largest and the most demanding operation abroad for the Croatian Armed Forces. It has been implemented to assist the Afghan Government to establish security and to stabilise the country, to build and train its national security structures and to assist with the disarmament and the reconstruction programmes respectively.

¹⁷ The Kosovo Force is a NATO-led international peacekeeping force which was responsible for establishing a secure environment in Kosovo.

W. Bush. Before the visit, the U.S. ban on military assistance in the area of education and training programs was withdrawn. This was also apparent from the State Department report of U.S. Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke on 11 October 2006.¹⁸ The final confirmation of the full normalisation of the relations between the two countries was the visit of U.S. President George W. Bush to Croatia on 4 April 2008, which sent a message that Croatia was a reliable American partner in this part of Europe.

This also marked the end of Washington's attempt to develop a strategic partnership with Serbia. The U.S. appeasement with Croatia was seen as a measure of reducing Russia's influence in the region through the creation of some kind of sanitary cordon around Serbia, as Belgrade was still seen as a potential source of instability in the Balkans (RADOSAVLJEVIĆ 2008).

5.2. The U.S. support to Croatia's fully fledged NATO membership

The normalisation of U.S.–Croatian relations was visible in Washington's effort to prevent the possible Slovenian veto on Croatia's accession to NATO. When Slovenia threatened with vetoing Croatia's NATO membership in late 2008, due to the Croatia–Slovenia border dispute in the Gulf of Piran, Washington and then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer put a diplomatic pressure on Slovenian politicians to ensure that the official invitations to Albania and Croatia to join NATO would be sent after the NATO Summit in April 2009.

¹⁸ U.S. Ambassador Bradtke stated in his report that Sanader's government had implemented a series of measures which were demanded by the American side over the previous three years. Among others: suppressing the right-wing extremism in Croatia, helping the extradition of Ante Gotovina to the ICTY, improving relations with the Serb community, and normalising relations with Belgrade. According to Bradtke's assessment, the U.S. should continue to cultivate Croatia as the key U.S. strategic partner in the region, and it should continue to form bilateral relations with Croatia in order to increase cooperation between the two countries in the political (civil aviation, law enforcement, and a Supplemental Status of Forces Agreement – SOFA), economic (increasing U.S. investments) and defence areas (supporting Croatia's candidacy for NATO) (Index 2010).

The U.S. demand was conveyed in early February 2009, asking the Slovenian Government to ratify the protocol of NATO enlargement. Despite attempts by certain Slovenian parties to organise a referendum on Croatia's NATO membership, Slovenia finally handed to the Alliance its signature as the last of the 26 NATO members (SIMONOVIĆ 2009).

5.3. Partners in developing stability in the Western Balkans

In more recent years, the two visits by senior Obama Administration officials have shown that the U.S. continues to develop a strategic partnership with Croatia, and that neither country has any open issues of a magnitude that could challenge the progress made so far. Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Zagreb on 31 October 2012, highlighting Croatia's importance in the Western Balkans. At a meeting with Croatian President Ivo Josipović, Clinton emphasised the importance of the joint efforts of both countries in NATO, the role of Zagreb as an anchor of stability and progress in the region, and as a model for other Western Balkan countries (U.S. Department of State 2012). On 25 November 2015, then Vice President Joe Biden visited Croatia to participate in the "Brdo-Brijuni" process, which was launched in 2013 by the presidents of Croatia and Slovenia. In light of the security challenges in this area, and the activities of these countries in solving the problems in the region alongside allies and partners, including the Republic of Croatia, this meeting (along with an almost parallel visit by the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to the region) signalled the continuation of Washington's involvement in the events of Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans (Euractiv 2015; BIDEN 2015).

The U.S. counts on Croatia in suppressing the Russian political, diplomatic and economic influence in the region. Russian strategic behaviour, particularly in light of the crisis in Ukraine, is of increasing concern for the U.S. and Eastern European countries. This behaviour is often characterised by a subtle way of influencing political and economic dynamics in Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans region (KRASTEVIĆ 2015). The fragile banking systems in the countries of the region makes them especially vulnerable to foreign investment that can be used to plant instability, undermine integration and delay democratic development. In the energy security domain, for instance, the U.S. recommended that Croatia should

not choose the Russian Rosneft company as a new strategic partner to replace the Hungarian MOL. The U.S. Ambassador to Croatia, Robert Kohorst said on 12 February 2018 that the U.S. did not want Rosneft to buy the INA oil and gas company, noting it would be a “mistake” since Russia is a “disturbing factor in the region” (GARACA 2018).

Regarding the relations with U.S. President Trump, some aspects of the foreign policy between the two countries are well aligned. For instance, President Trump was the guest of honour of the Transatlantic Session of the Three Seas Initiative¹⁹ Summit, held on 6–7 July 2017 in Warsaw. President Trump expressed that the U.S.’ support to the Initiative can help to create a sustainable and accessible energy market, and it can bring the citizens of the region prosperity (President of the RoC 2017). However, being a member of NATO, and particularly among the members that devote less than 2% of the GDP for defence, Croatia belongs to the group of countries that are the target of President Trump’s criticism concerning the countries that do not contribute to an adequate burden sharing of the Alliance.

5.4. U.S. security assistance and aid to Croatia

The U.S. has played a significant role in the region in the post-Cold War period, providing political, economic and military support.

To show the scale of U.S. assistance, it is important to note that from FY2013 to FY2016 the Excess Defence Article (EDA) programme in itself totalled in \$197,697,425.

It also has to be mentioned that the U.S. provided many other means of assistance which have not been measured financially. One of them was the provision of the USAF strategic airlift for deploying Croatian troops to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

The total amount of funds for Security Assistance for Acquisition totalled in \$293,765,253 (ODC 2018).

¹⁹ The Initiative is devoted to strengthen concrete trade, infrastructural, energy and political cooperation in the area between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Seas. The members are: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

6. Conclusions and the Future Perspective of U.S.–Croatian Relations

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S. has had significant influence in the countries of Southeast Europe and, notably, the Western Balkans (Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo). U.S. engagement enhanced stability, as well as economic and democratic development, advancing U.S. security goals. Since the beginning of the 1990s, U.S.–Croatian relations have been marked by ups and downs, which ultimately led to the creation of a strong partnership. Given the above, what could be the future perspective of their relations?

The past of U.S.–Croatian relations suggests that the key factor of their development in the future will be the strategy of the U.S. towards the broader Southeast region. After the period of active engagement under the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, a gradual set-back occurred in U.S. direct engagement in the Western Balkans, evident in the actions of all U.S. administrations from 2000 to the present. The Obama Administration almost completely neglected the Western Balkans. That disengagement created a gap filled by Serbia's meddling in Bosnia and Montenegro, Russia's militarism and Turkey's Islamism. This was the direct outcome of the shifting U.S. focus towards the new challenges in the Euro–Asian and Pacific areas. Accordingly, the EU attempted to take a role as the principal security provider who can take over the tasks of long-term political and economic stabilisation from the U.S. and NATO. This, however, does not mean the complete withdrawal of the U.S. from the region (BARIĆ 2017, 59–61). On the other hand, it is apparent that the EU has not met these expectations due to the combination of several factors. Besides, as the relations between Russia and the West have turned for the worse since the Russian annexation of Crimea, tensions are also noticeable in the Western Balkans, where a geopolitical competition exists among a number of international actors (Russia, China, Turkey and the Persian Gulf states) seeking to reduce the influence of the West. This competition can cause severe consequences for all countries of the Southeast region, including the Republic of Croatia (BARIĆ 2017, 69–74).

In these circumstances, we can expect in the future a stronger U.S. engagement in the Western Balkans, especially if the EU proves to be incapable of reducing the influence of other geopolitical actors (notably the Russian Federation) in this area. It is unlikely that Washington will

again assume the role of the leading security provider. Rather, in the event of a major crisis in the region, the U.S. would organise a military intervention using the NATO framework. But, even then, after resolving the situation, the U.S. would most likely try to transfer the responsibility of achieving long-term stabilisation to the EU.

Arguably, the U.S. will not change the current strategy of indirect approach in the Western Balkans (MARUSIC–BEDENBAUGH–WILSON 2017). The focus of U.S. diplomatic and political engagement will probably attempt to reduce the influence of Russia in the EU, which has already provoked a reaction in Moscow. In such an approach, the U.S. must rely on its allies and partners in the Southeast region. This represents an opportunity to continue and deepen the relations between the Republic of Croatia and the U.S. The geostrategic position of the Republic of Croatia along with the U.S. efforts to strengthen its influence in the region, and the level of relationship achieved so far may be a sound basis for the continuation and deepening of their relations.

Bibliography

- AVANT, Deborah D. (2005): *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511490866>
- AVANT, Deborah D. (2009): Making peacemakers out of spoilers: International organizations, private military training, and statebuilding. In PARIS, Roland – SISK, Timothy D. eds.: *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*. London, Routledge. 104–126. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203884836>
- BARIĆ, Robert (2017): Intraregional Security Cooperation in the Western Balkans – Chances and Impediments. In JUREKOVIĆ, Predrag – HENSELLEK, Benedikt eds.: *Montenegro's NATO Membership: Regional and International Implications*. Vienna, National Defence Academy. 55–78.
- BECKER, Elizabeth (2003): U.S. Suspends Aid to 35 Countries Over New International Court. *The New York Times*, 2 July 2003. Source: www.nytimes.com/2003/07/02/world/us-suspends-aid-to-35-countries-over-new-international-court.html (Accessed: 27.02.2018.)

- BIDEN, Joe (2015): *Remarks by the Vice President, Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, European Council President Donald Tusk, and Slovenian President Borut Pahor in Zagreb, Croatia*. The American Presidency Project. Source: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-vice-president-croatian-president-kolinda-grabar-kitarovic-european-council (Accessed: 09.03.2018.)
- BUSH, George (1992): *Statement on United States Recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republics*. The American Presidency Project. Source: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-united-states-recognition-the-former-yugoslav-republics (Accessed: 09.03.2018.)
- COHEN, Roger (1995): U.S. Cooling Ties to Croatia After Winking at Its Buildup. *The New York Times*, 28 October 1995. Source: www.nytimes.com/1995/10/28/world/us-cooling-ties-to-croatia-after-winking-at-its-buildup.html (Accessed: 15.03.2018.)
- Croatian Ministry of the Interior (2002): *Izjava za javnost – kaznene prijave protiv odgovornih za brod Boka Star*. [Press Release – Criminal charges against those responsible for the Boka Star ship.] Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia. Source: <http://zagrebacka.policija.hr/728.aspx> (Accessed: 28.02.2018.)
- Croatian MoD (2013): *Godišnje izvješće o spremnosti obrambenog sustava, provođenju kadrovske politike i ukupnom stanju u Oružanim snagama Republike Hrvatske za 2012. godinu, s izvješćem o stanju obrambenih priprema u Republici Hrvatskoj za 2012. godinu*. [Annual Report on Defence for 2012.] Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia.
- DOBBINS, James (2004): *U.S. Policy Toward Southeast Europe: Unfinished Business in the Balkans*. Testimony presented to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on July 14, 2004. Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation.
- DURIC, Ivana (2001): The Croatian Diaspora in North America: Identity, Ethnic Solidarity and the Formation of a “Transnational National Community”. *Spaces of Identity*, Vol. 1, No. 3. 89–105. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25071/1496-6778.8047>
- Euractiv (2015): US Focuses on Balkans. *Euractiv.rs*, 27 November 2015. Source: www.euractiv.rs/english/9391-us-focuses-on-balkans.html (Accessed: 09.03.2018.)
- European Commission (2018): *Countries and regions: Western Balkans*. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/western-balkans/> (Accessed: 09.03.2018.)
- GALBRAITH, Peter W. (1998): Croatia Should Strive For Tolerant, Pluralistic Society. In GALBRAITH, Peter W. ed.: *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1992–1997*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office.

- GARACA, Maja (2018): U.S. against sale of Croatia's INA to Russian buyer – report. *SeeNews*, 12 February 2018. Source: <https://seenews.com/news/us-against-sale-of-croatias-ina-to-russian-buyer-report-601475> (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- GRDEŠIĆ, Ivan (2004): US–Adriatic Charter of Partnership: Securing the NATO Open Door Policy. *Politička misao*, Vol. 41, No. 5. 104–122.
- HENRIKSEN, Thomas F. (2017): *Cycles in US Foreign Policy since the Cold War*. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48640-6>
- ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (2004): *The Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić – Judgement*. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, judgement of 29 June 2004. Source: www.icty.org/x/cases/babic/tjug/en/bab-sj040629e.pdf (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- Index (2010): *WikiLeaks: Scen setter – PM Sanader's meeting with President Bush*. Source: www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/wikileaks-zabrinuti-sanader-trazio-da-amerikanci-demantiraju-indexovu-pricu-o-prodaji-plive/529470.aspx (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- JOHNSON, Ralph (1991): *US Efforts to Promote a Peaceful Settlement in Yugoslavia. Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 17, 1991*. Washington, D.C., US Department of State Dispatch. 782–785.
- KRASTEV, Ivan (2015): The Balkans are the soft underbelly of Europe. *Financial Times*, 14 January 2015. Source: www.ft.com/content/2287ba66-8489-11e4-bae9-00144feabdc0 (Accessed: 03.02.2018.)
- KLAUŠKI, Tomislav (2002): Što će ljudi misliti o vama? [What will people think about you? –An interview with U.S. Ambassador in Croatia, Mr. Lawrence Rossin.] *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 21 March 2003. Source: <http://arhiv.slobodnadalmacija.hr/20030321/temedana02.asp> (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- LARRABEE, F. Stephen (1996): The Balkans. In KHALILZAD, Zalmay: *Strategic Appraisal 1996*. Santa Monica, RAND. 97–116.
- LUKIC, Reneo – LYNCH, Allen (1996): *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union*. New York, Oxford University Press. 303–307.
- MARUSIC, Damir – BEDENBAUGH, Sarah – WILSON, Damon (2017): *Balkans Forward: A New US Strategy for the Region*. Washington D.C., The Atlantic Council.
- MONTGOMERY, William (1998): Croatia's Roadmap to Partnership for Peace. *Croatian International Relations Review*, Vol. 4, No. 11. 88–90.
- MOREL, Jean-François (2008): American–Croatian Relations during the 1990s. In RAMET, Sabrina P. – CLEWING, Konrad – LUKIĆ, Reneo eds.: *Croatia since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations*. München, Oldenbourg Verlag GmbH. 353–380.

- MORELLI, Vincent L. (2018): *Serbia: Background and U.S. Relations*. Congressional Research Service. Source: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44955.pdf> (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- NATO (2016): *Kosovo Air Campaign (Archived)*. Source: www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics_49602.htm (Accessed: 15.01.2018.)
- PINNA, Alessandra (2013): US Democracy Promotion in Serbia and Croatia. In BURT, Sally – AÑORVE, Daniel A. eds.: *Global Perspectives on US Foreign Policy: From the Outside In*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan. 173–199. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137357663>
- President of the RoC (2017): Three Seas Initiative. *Views and News*, No. 9. Source: http://predsjednica.hr/files/NEWSLETTER%20VIEWS%20AND%20NEWS_no%209.pdf (Accessed: 15.01.2018.)
- PUKANIĆ, Ivo (2003): Šest grijeha hrvatske politike prema SAD-u. [The Six Sins of Croatian Politics towards the United States.] *Nacional*, No. 213. Source: <http://arhiva.nacional.hr/clanak/10741/sest-grijeha-hrvatske-politike-prema-sad-u> (Accessed: 15.01.2018.)
- ODC (2018): Security Assistance to Croatia in Acquisition. The US Office of Defence Cooperation (ODC) in Zagreb, Croatia.
- RADOSAVLJEVIĆ, Zoran (2008): Bush visit to boost Croatia's Balkan role. *Reuters*, 1 April 2008. Source: www.reuters.com/article/us-bush-croatia/bush-visit-to-boost-croatias-balkan-role-idUSL0119734020080401 (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- RAGAZZI, Francesco (2009): *The Invention of the Croatian Diaspora: Unpacking the Politics of "Diaspora" During the War in Yugoslavia*. Global Migration and Transnational Politics, Working Paper no. 10. Arlington, VA, The Center for Global Studies at George Mason University.
- RAMET, Sabrina P. (2008): Priznati, ili ne priznati – Politika Sjedinjenih Američkih Država prema Hrvatskoj, 1990–1991. [To recognize, or Not to Recognize – United States Policy towards Croatia, 1990–1991.] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Vol. 40, No. 1. 141–158.
- SERWER, Daniel (2008): *Kosovo Isn't the Problem, Serbia Is. Testimony of Vice President for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*. United States Institute for Peace. Source: www.usip.org/publications/2008/03/kosovo-isnt-problem-serbia (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- SIMONOVIĆ, Gordana (2009): Slovenci "pustili" Hrvatsku u NATO. [Slovenes "let" Croatia into NATO.] *Deutsche Welle*, 10 February 2009. Source: www.dw.com/b/slovinci-pustili-hrvatsku-u-nato/a-4016505 (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)

- SINGER, Peter W. (2003): *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*. New York, Cornell University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801459894>
- SIPRI (2012): *EU arms embargo on the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Croatia)*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Source: www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/eu_arms_embargoes/croatia (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- ŠOŠTARIĆ, Eduard (2009): Slovenija pala u nemilost NATO-a. [Slovenia fell into NATO's disfavour.] *Nacional*, No. 690. Source: <http://arhiva.nacional.hr/clanak/52795/slovenija-pala-u-nemilost-nato-a> (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2012): *Remarks With Croatian President Ivo Josipovic After Their Meeting*. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2012/10/199931.htm> (Accessed: 17.02.2018.)
- VUKADINOVIĆ, Radovan (1996): Croatian Foreign Policy: From State Building to the Regional Power. *Politička misao*, Vol. 33, No. 5. 148–165.
- VUKADINOVIĆ, Radovan (1998): U.S. Policy in the Southeast Europe. *Politička misao*, Vol. 35, No. 5. 89–104.
- ZIMMERMANN, Warren (1995): The Last Ambassador: A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 2. 2–20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/20047039>

This page intentionally left blank.

Relations between the United States and the Czech Republic: From Honeymoon to Hangover?

Monika Brusenbauch Meislová¹

1. Introduction

Although the primary focus of this chapter is the Czech–U.S. bilateral relationship after 1989, it is worth mentioning that the historically close links between Czechoslovakia and the U.S. provided a strong basis for their relationship in the post-Cold War era.

According to many, the independence (and the very existence) of CEE states is to a large degree “attributable to American power, diplomacy and the idealism of President Woodrow Wilson” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 205). As Asmus and Vondra remark, “nowhere is this truer than in a country like former Czechoslovakia” because “without Woodrow Wilson’s idealism and activism, Czechoslovakia would never have gained its independence, at least not in 1918” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 205; cf. ŠEDIVÝ–ZABOROWSKI 2004, 206).

A key U.S. link to the newly independent Czechoslovakia goes back to one of its founders and its first president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937). Masaryk considered the U.S. “both as a spiritual force and as an important and perspective protector of smaller oppressed European nations in their fights against ancient regimes” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 205). In his book entitled *Making of a State* (1925), Masaryk wrote that he “on many occasions [...] devoted much thinking to the idea that our Czechoslovak state would resemble America in that we, too, have no

¹ Mgr. Monika Brusenbauch Meislová, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations and European Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University Brno (the Czech Republic). Email: brusenbauch.meislova@email.cz

dynasty of our own and dislike foreign dynasty” (KOVTURN 1988, 53). In 1918, Masaryk issued a declaration of the Czechoslovak independence whilst being in the U.S. With this in mind, and with the U.S. constitution serving as a model for the first Czechoslovak constitution, one can truly speak of “a remarkable dose of Jeffersonian inspiration at the cradle of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918” (SCHNEIDER 2014, 1).

2. Bilateral Political Relations since 1989

2.1. Bilateral relations in the 1989–2009 era

Subsequently, Czechoslovak/Czech–U.S. bilateral relations went through different phases of ups and downs. The new Czechoslovak (and later also Czech) elites emerged as generally pro-American, considering “the US contribution to the end of the Cold War as well as to the liberation of captive nations as the most decisive among all other international factors” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 207). As Asmus and Vondra aptly remind us, “people still remember the warm welcome offered by huge crowds to President George Bush when he visited Warsaw, Prague and Budapest in early 1990. With all the respect and admiration for Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl or Francois Mitterrand, they could only dream about receiving such warm greetings” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 208). In addition, the Czechs also “embraced America as a symbol of all the culture and consumerism that had been denied to them by communism and misrule” (JACKSON 2014, 2).

In the wake of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, both countries embraced a shared set of values, with the new Czech political elites generally considering a robust transatlantic bond with the U.S. and continued U.S. engagement in Europe a core national interest. U.S. leadership did, indeed, prove instrumental in the process of the country’s transition to democracy (JACKSON 2014, 2). The Czech Republic’s main foreign policy objective in the first years after the collapse of communism was integration into Western organisations, especially into NATO and the EU, and the U.S. (in the former case particularly under the Clinton Administration, with the support of the Republicans) assisted greatly in this respect² (TABERY 2017, 157).

² The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999, and the EU in 2004.

The 1990s were thus generally portrayed as a “romantic” era of Czech–U.S. bilateral relations, with both countries acting as if “everything mattered and everything was possible” (GLENN et al. 2015, 2). Alexandr Vondra, who served as a Czech ambassador to the U.S. in 1997–2001, describes the two decades since 1989 as “20 years of sunshine”, when Czech influence in Washington was far greater than its physical strength might suggest (RICHTER 2011). Similarly, Michael Žantovský, Czech ambassador to the U.S. (from 1992–1997), acknowledged that “the ten plus years that followed under three different US presidents from both parties must be seen as the absolute height of this relationship” (RICHTER 2011).

Multiple reasons help understand the unique nature of the mutual relationship in those early years. First of all, it was the favourable international climate and the fact that, in the words of Vondra, the U.S. “had a mission, a special mission – to make Europe ‘whole and free’” (RICHTER 2011). Moreover, it was the intriguing and impressive story of the Velvet Revolution and, most importantly, the image of Václav Havel, the first President of the newly independent Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic, that propelled the relationship to develop and thrive. Indeed, the relations between Václav Havel and U.S. presidents (and other top U.S. representatives) were extremely friendly, cordial and respectful. As Jackson succinctly states, “Americans embraced Havel as a secular saint” (JACKSON 2014, 2.), with Havel acting as “the most important single player in these relations for more some two decades, from his dissident days until he left office in 2003” (RICHTER 2011). Havel was also an ardent supporter of NATO’s continued relevance after the end of the Cold War, having become the first statesman from the former Soviet-bloc to ever visit NATO headquarters.

During this “honeymoon era” of mutual relations, all U.S. presidents repeatedly visited Prague and, likewise, Czech representatives were “welcomed in the White House year by year as friends and allies” (GLENN et al. 2015, 3). In February 1990, Havel made his first soon-to-become-legendary visit to the U.S. during which he addressed the joint session of the U.S. Congress. The 17 standing ovations that Havel’s memorable speech received can be seen as an indication of how well-received and respected he was in the U.S. In November 1990, George H. W. Bush became the first U.S. President to ever visit Prague. On this occasion, he unveiled a plaque that commemorated Woodrow Wilson’s words: “The world must

be made safe for democracy” (GLENN et al. 2015, 2). Correspondingly, people-to-people contacts were also exceptionally strong at that time “driven by a similar enthusiasm and a sense of culture proximity” (GLENN et al. 2015, 3).

A significant area of mutual interests covered human rights and the democracy agenda. Since the early 1990s, Czech and U.S. governmental institutions and NGOs have been engaged in the support of human rights and the transition to democracy worldwide. The Czech Republic (alongside Poland) was also a strong supporter of the U.S. initiatives in the UN Commission for Human Rights on Cuba and Burma (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 210). On top of that, the relocation of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from Munich to Prague, offered by Václav Havel (who also supported broadcasting to Iraq and Iran), carried an important symbolic meaning (GLENN et al. 2015, 3).

A crucial issue that dominated the bilateral Czech–U.S. agenda in the first half of the 2000s was the question of the projected Ballistic Missile Defence System that was supposed to provide protection against a missile threat from the Middle East region. In January 2007, after five years of diplomatic deliberations, the Czech Republic received an official note from the Bush Administration calling to negotiate its participation in the Ground-Based Midcourse Defence (GMD) system by locating a U.S. radar base on the military grounds in Brdy. The official negotiations were initiated at the end of March 2007 after the Czech Government sent its response (BERDYCH–NEKVAPIL–VESELÝ 2008, 112). The issue raised a number of foreign policy concerns in the country but the Czech Government generally viewed this as “a unique opportunity to build around it a strategic dialogue, thus creating a sort of ‘special relationship’ with the US” (SCHNEIDER 2014, 3–4) in a belief that the “U.S. military deployment on [its] soil would provide a visible assurance against a possible re-emergence of Russia as a European power” (GLENN et al. 2015, 4).

On closer scrutiny, however, mutual relations in the 1990s and early 2000s were, naturally, not devoid of doubt or trepidation. Nor do the converging interests in the bilateral context suggest that the Czech Republic has always “been decidedly uncritical of the US and staunchly Atlanticist” (ŠEDIVÝ–ZABOROWSKI 2004, 189). There were, for instance, several failed attempts to translate the up-beat rhetoric into practical, concrete policies – especially when it came to the issues of strategic defence, the visa waiver program, or the joint educational centres. This prompted some

observers to suggest that whilst the Czechs and Americans shared many values, these values were not “so detailed or developed as to provide a guide to the conduct of statecraft” (JACKSON 2014, 2). For instance, it was not until 2008 that the U.S. administration finally placed the Czech Republic on its list of countries participating in the Visa Waiver Programme. This visa asymmetry (under which U.S. citizens were allowed to enter the Czech Republic up to three months without a visa, whereas the Czechs had to obtain a visa first) proved to be one of the most sensitive issues in mutual relations in the pre-2009 era. It took many years before the visa waiver program was finally extended to the region due to the significant pressure from the CEE states (NEKVAPIL–BERDYCH–VESELÝ 2007, 14). Mostly, it was the support that the country lent to the U.S. in the military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq – that is an often cited justification for establishing visa-free relations between the two countries. Furthermore, the issue of the 1999 Kosovo air campaign also proved highly controversial in the Czech context.

2.2. Bilateral relations in the post-2009 era

The year 2009 marked a turning point in the Czech–U.S. relations, signalling the beginning of an era widely referred to as “the hangover period”. Despite the rhetorical emphasis put by both countries on the significance of mutual ties, and the role specifically ascribed to the U.S. by all concepts of the Czech Republic’s foreign policy, the post-2009 period has been characterised by a certain downgrading of the importance attached to the bilateral relations (MZV 2011; MZV 2015). The stark contrast with the pre-2009 era is well epitomised by the difference between the iconic 1994 image of President Clinton playing saxophone given to him by Havel at a jazz club on the one hand, and by President Barack Obama dining alone with his wife during his 2009 visit to Prague on the other (GLENN et al. 2015, 4). The gradual exhaustion of bilateral relations, and their redefinition was evident, with the relations continuing, more or less in the pragmatic, “maintenance” mode without any truly major bilateral issue. This has prompted some Czech diplomats to refer to the state of mutual relations as “a 20-year-old marriage with no sex” (RICHTER 2011).

Broadly speaking, the setback in bilateral relations coincided with the election and subsequent presidency of Barack Obama (for a different

opinion, see GLENN 2014). Even though it was appreciated that he started his European tour in the Czech Republic and announced his ambitious plans to rid the world of nuclear weapons, he profoundly rebalanced U.S. foreign policy focus away from Europe. While this development generated much concern in the Czech Republic, subsequent Czech governments tended to be rather inward-looking and parochial (and unstable, on top of that) (GLENN 2014, 2). This deterioration of mutual relations was exacerbated by far less amicable personal ties between the Czech and the U.S. leaders, with Havel's successors, Presidents Václav Klaus and Miloš Zeman, doing little to rebuild the strained ties (GLENN 2014, 2).

What have been the main sources of tension in mutual relations since 2009? In April 2009, ten days before President Obama was to arrive in Prague for the U.S.–EU Summit, the Czech Government collapsed as a result of political score-settling and partisan manoeuvring, midway through the country's EU presidency. In his Prague speech, President Obama still explicitly welcomed that the Czech Republic was “courageous in agreeing to host a defence against [the] missiles” (WATERFIELD 2009). Yet, five months later, he announced that the European leg of the GMD Ballistic Missile Defence System was cancelled, and it was transformed into the European Phased Adaptive Approach, with no specific role for the Czech Republic (SCHNEIDER 2014, 4). In October 2009, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden travelled to the country for a damage-control trip to reassure worried Czechs about America's continued commitment to the region, famously encouraging them to “become partners rather than protégées of the United States” (SCHNEIDER 2014, 4). Joe Biden's efforts, notwithstanding, still represented a major setback in mutual relations.

Relations were also not strengthened by the comments of the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, who called Obama's economic policies “the road to hell”. Nor was it helpful that the position of the U.S. ambassador to Prague remained unfilled for nearly two years from 2008 to 2010. In addition, the strength of the transatlantic alliance with the U.S. has also been tested by President Zeman's accommodating stance towards Russia and his warm relations with China (DOSTÁL–JERMÁNKOVÁ 2017, 32). As a case in point, an incidence broke out in 2015 between the U.S. embassy and the Prague Castle when, in a rather unusual move, U.S. Ambassador Andrew Shapiro criticised Zeman's visit to the Moscow military parade, which marked the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (an event that was boycotted by the leaders of all other EU member states). In

response, the Czech President announced that the Prague Castle's doors were closed to the ambassador (ČT24 2015). This was followed by another controversy when, one year later, the Czech Republic refused to extradite Lebanese detainee, Ali Fayyad to the U.S. to face weapons smuggling charges, and to Washington's dismay Prague returned him to Lebanon instead (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2016).

Despite these setbacks in the relations, intensive diplomatic exchanges were carried out and the cooperation was ongoing in fields such as defence, cybersecurity, science and research, and the human rights agenda. In April 2010, for instance, Prague hosted President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for the signing of the New START agreement which provisioned substantial reductions in the deployed strategic nuclear stockpiles of both nations. One year later, a bronze statue of President Wilson was restored outside Prague's main train station, 70 years after it was pulled down by the Nazis, in what was a hugely symbolic act. Besides, in November 2014, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, a bust of Václav Havel was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol. The importance of this act has been highlighted by the fact that only three other international figures (Churchill, Kossuth and Wallenberg) have been honoured this way (GLENN et al. 2015, 5).

In addition, both countries promote mutual cultural programmes and activities aimed at fostering a better understanding between them. There are, for instance, three Czech centres in the U.S. (Houston, New York City, Iowa) which function as non-profit cultural arts organisations, hosting art exhibitions, concerts, film screenings, lectures, book readings and other cultural events. In the U.S., it is essentially Chicago (as a place with the largest concentration of Czech Americans) that is considered to be the centre of Czech–American culture.

2.3. Public opinion on the U.S.

When it comes to the public opinion on the U.S., Šedivý and Zaborowski succinctly observe that: “What one thinks and says about America is one of those issues that defines the political identities of Europeans in the same way as attitudes towards the Pope, marijuana, and rock & roll. One could almost say, ‘Tell me what you think about the US and I tell you who you are’” (ŠEDIVÝ–ZABOROWSKI 2004, 187). In the Czech Republic, public

opinion vis-à-vis the U.S. and the conduct of its foreign policy has been often out of step with the Czech official policy, with the elites being clearly Atlanticists, whereas the public much less so (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 203). Glenn also points to the “gap between the framing arguments of policy elites and the views of the public” (GLENN 2014, 3). The popular support and strong domestic consensus on the U.S. vision, role and engagement which was typical for the immediate post-1989 era has gradually given way to a more polarised public opinion.

More specifically, public opinion became heavily polarised, for instance, during the Kosovo air campaign in 1999, divided over the approval of the U.S.-led campaign to oust Slobodan Milošević. As Asmus and Vondra explain: “Leaders such as Vaclav Havel felt strongly that a dictator like Milosevic had to be confronted and favoured humanitarian intervention to help people in need. Yet, the Czech populations had strong ties with the Serbian people based on a shared history of great power intervention. And many Czechs were suspicious when they looked at the leaders of the Kosovar rebels, who at times reminded them more of cigarette or drug smugglers than of freedom fighters” (ASMUS–VONDRA 2005, 212).

Likewise, the issue of the missile defence project also seriously split the Czech public opinion. While its proponents perceived the base as an excellent opportunity to consolidate bilateral relations with the U.S., its opponents were afraid that the facility would make the Czech Republic as a host country a strategic target. Various public opinion surveys suggest that about two-thirds of the Czech public opposed the missile defence plans at the time (DOSTÁL et al. 2009, 134; GLENN 2014, 4). An important point to stress here, however, is that opinion polls also indicated a general lack of interest among the wider public when it came to deeper strategic questions surrounding the location of the radar base (BERDYCH–NEKVAPIL–VESELÝ 2008, 112). Last but not least, the Czech public opinion was also soured by the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and heavily divided over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) advanced by Obama to deepen transatlantic relations between the U.S. and the EU.

According to public opinion polls conducted by the Ipsos agency in 2014, 70% of the Czechs are satisfied with NATO membership, with a strong correlation between peoples’ predisposition towards NATO support and their voting behaviour. While positive attitudes towards NATO are typical especially for voters of the centre-right (KDU-ČSL, ODS and TOP 09), in which case the support reaches 80% to 90%, the least

favourable towards NATO were voters of the Communist Party (53%); women (66%) and older citizens (57%) (Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations 2014, 1; cf. DRULÁK 2009, 7–10). About 65% of the respondents believe that the transatlantic alliance with the U.S. is an important security guarantee, with the support following a similar pattern as above: especially high among centre-right voters and low among Communist Party voters, non-voters and senior citizens (Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations 2014, 2). 54% of the respondents perceive the U.S. presence in Europe as an important counterweight to Russia³ or Germany (Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations 2014, 3). The latest public opinion polls by STEM, which regularly surveys Czech attitudes towards selected countries, show a steady rise in the approval rating of the U.S., with more than 50% of the Czechs presently viewing the country in a positive light (STEM 2018).

3. Economic Relations since 1989

The U.S. has been an important trading and investment partner of the Czech Republic for long. Following the Velvet Revolution, the U.S. actively provided substantial financial support to the country to facilitate its political and economic transformation. In 1990, the U.S. was supportive of Czechoslovakia in its (re)entry into the IMF and the World Bank. In 1991, Czechoslovakia was granted the most-favoured-nation status in trade, the bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) was concluded, and the Czechoslovakian–U.S. Enterprise Fund was founded (GLENN et al. 2015, 2).

Taking a leap into more recent developments, the Czech Republic has recorded positive trade balance with the U.S. since 2011. Table 1 provides data on the overall development of mutual trade exchange between 2007 and 2017, demonstrating that both the volume of Czech goods exports to the U.S., and Czech goods imports witnessed an increase in 2017, compared to 2007 (in the former case, from \$2.43 billion in 2007 to \$3.76 billion in 2017; in the latter case from \$2.67 billion in 2007 to \$3.99 billion in 2017). By way of comparison, trade in services between the Czech Republic and the U.S. amounted only to \$3.47 million in 2017 (MZV 2018).

³ Russia's image among the Czech public is more negative than positive, with its reputation belonging to the least favourable in public opinion polls (after China, Turkey and Ukraine) (STEM 2018).

Table 1.

Czech–U.S. mutual trade (combined figures, in billion dollars) 2007–2017

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Czech export to the U.S.	2.43	2.57	1.93	2.47	3.34	3.58	3.53	3.90	3.75	3.53	3.76
Czech import from the U.S.	2.67	2.97	2.20	2.80	2.96	3.03	3.12	3.74	3.33	3.23	3.99
Balance	-0.24	-0.36	-0.27	-0.34	+0.39	+0.55	+0.41	+0.16	+0.42	+0.3	-0.23

Source: Drawn by the author based on KOVANDA 2014; MZV 2018.

As further illustrated in Table 2, Czech exports to the U.S. are dominated by motors, turbo propellers and other gas turbines; pumping devices and rubber tires. Conversely, it is the vehicles and other transport devices, motors, turbo propellers and other gas turbines and pharmaceuticals that currently represent the leading product types imported to the Czech Republic.

Table 2.

The commodity structure of Czech–U.S. trade in 2016 (five leading items)

	Type of product	Volume (thsd. USD)
Czech export to the U.S.	Motors, turbo propellers and other gas turbines	246,289
	Pumping devices	166,657
	Rubber tires	151,221
	Parts of motor vehicles including tractors	144,550
	Electrical protection devices	106,709
Czech import from the U.S.	Vehicles and other transport devices	221,275
	Motors, turbo propellers and other gas turbines	203,490
	Pharmaceuticals	164,896
	Helicopters, airplanes and other aircraft	105,118
	Telephones and other devices for voice and data transmission	93,077

Source: Drawn by the author based on MZV 2018.

The Czech Republic has been a popular destination for foreign capital, attracting high volumes of U.S. FDI since the 1990s. A Bilateral Investment Treaty was concluded with the U.S. in 1994 and currently the U.S. is listed as the sixth largest investor in the Czech Republic (KPMG 2017). By contrast, Czech investments in the U.S. are relatively small by U.S. standards.

A strong setback in the economic realm between the Czech Republic and the U.S. came in 2014, when the Czech state-controlled utility ČEZ announced that it would cancel a tender regarding the construction of two new nuclear reactors at the Temelín Nuclear Power Plant announced in 2009. At the time, there were only two remaining bidders in the deal, including the U.S.-based Westinghouse which officially entered the bid in February 2010. The Temelín tender, estimated to worth hundreds of billions of Czech crowns, long dominated the media and the Czech–U.S. relations, but it was eventually called off due to a series of over-optimistic financial forecasts and problems in securing government guarantees (ČT24 2014; LUKÁČ 2014; WATSON 2018).

4. The Policy Field – Specific Relations

4.1. Relations in the domain of security policy

Both countries have a long record of rich cooperation in the security and defence arena, with the security relationship between them having become increasingly significant in the post-Cold War era. Although the power asymmetry – which is a key feature of the Czech–U.S. relationship in general – becomes even more obvious in the military domain, the Czech Republic has gradually built its reputation as a solid partner of the U.S. In 1991, a Czechoslovak NBC battalion participated in the U.S.-led Operation Desert Storm to expel occupying Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and the Czech Armed Forces were engaged alongside the U.S. in basically every peace-keeping effort in the Balkans (GLENN et al. 2015, 2; SCHNEIDER 2014, 2).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Czech Republic belonged to the staunchest allies of the Bush Administration, supporting the U.S. (together with Denmark, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain) and participating in the operations in Afghanistan. For more than five years, the Czechs operated a Provincial

Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Logar (comprising both military and civilian parts), provided air transport and trained Afghan helicopter pilots both in Afghanistan and in the Czech Republic (NEKVAPIL–BERDYCH–VESELÝ 2007, 14; SCHNEIDER 2014, 3).

The country stood by the U.S. also during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 which created a deep division (or underlined the existing one) in Europe. Amidst the Czech public opinion strongly opposed to the war on Iraq, president Havel was one of those who signed the so-called ‘Letter of Eight’ (even though his signature was secured at the very last moment) (ŠEDIVÝ–ZABOROWSKI 2004, 205). The letter, an indirect support to the U.S., accused Saddam Hussein of continuing to develop weapons of mass destruction and urged the UN Security Council to act against that threat (Global Policy Forum 2003). This was shortly followed by a more outspoken declaration of support for the U.S., the Vilnius Letter, but this time with no Czech signature underneath.

Since 2012, the Czech Republic, acting through its embassy in Damascus, has also served as the U.S. ‘protecting power’ in Syria. As Tamkin notes, it is an unusual and rare role (only taken by Sweden in North Korea, Switzerland in Iran and briefly by Turkey in Libya in 2011) – a role widely interpreted as “a reflection of the small European country’s ability to juggle both continued access to the Assad regime and warm ties with Washington” (TAMKIN 2017a).

Besides, many security-related assistance programmes have been underway seeking to “strengthen Czech capabilities, enhance interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces, and provide opportunities for the professional and technical education of military officers and non-commissioned officers, civilian leaders, and other specialists” (U.S. Department of State 2018). Both countries have also tried to deepen their energy cooperation which they look at not only through an economic lens but also as a future-oriented strategic endeavour (DOSTÁL–EBERLE 2015, 40). Importantly, despite the steadily decreasing level of Czech dependency on Russian energy, it still makes the country vulnerable. With Russia having used energy as an instrument of coercive diplomacy in the past, the U.S. have repeatedly expressed concerns about the Czech Republic’s energy dependence on it. As such, it supports the country’s attempts at diversifying its sources of energy power, and strengthening its energy security. Notably, collaboration has been expanding in the area of the civilian use of nuclear energy, with the countries having signed a declaration on the

civilian use of nuclear energy in December 2010. In 2013, a joint Civil Nuclear Cooperation Center was established in Prague, which is generally viewed as an important step in intensifying U.S.–Czech energy collaboration. Numerous joint projects in research, development and information sharing among nuclear safety agencies have been launched, too.

Essentially, it is the threat perceptions vis-à-vis Russia that have always been at the heart of Czech–U.S. security relations. The issue of the cancelled missile defence system of the Bush era, and the concerns regarding Russia’s threats have already been covered. Since then, several attempts have been made to compensate for the failed project, but none of them has been particularly fleshed out (yet). Czech concerns about the country’s security in the wake of the Russian invasion of Georgia were embodied in the Open Letter to the Obama Administration from CEE states, signed by 22 influential former leaders, including Václav Havel. In the letter, six months after Obama’s inauguration in July 2009, the signatories complained that Central and Eastern Europe was “no longer at the heart of American foreign policy” and that the region was “one part of the world that Americans have largely stopped worrying about”. They questioned NATO’s defence readiness, doubting whether it would “be willing and able to come to [their] defense in some future crises”, warning that “Russia’s creeping intimidation and influence-peddling in the region could over time lead to a de facto neutralization of the region” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2009). Yet, Obama’s reset policy towards Russia did not produce the expected results and Russia’s actions in Ukraine and its resurrection as a militarily revisionist power made U.S. policy makers rethink many assumptions about European security (Mix 2015, 2). In June 2014, President Obama showed solidarity with the Eastern European nations and underlined U.S. commitment to his NATO allies when he asserted, at a meeting of East European leaders in Warsaw, that “as allies, we have a solemn duty – a binding treaty obligation – to defend your territorial integrity. And we will” (Reuters 2014).

4.2. Domestic political divisions vis-à-vis the U.S.

Confusion about the status of relations often arises from uncoordinated (and conflicting) statements by Czech political representatives. Indeed, the Czech policy towards the U.S. was, and remains until today, frequently

unable to act in a concerted way and formulate clear positions. More often than not, this inconsistency has been caused by contradictory foreign policy positions and actions taken by the government on the one hand, and the President on the other (who has limited executive powers within the Czech political systems but exerts a strong influence on the public debate). This has been further exacerbated by the increasingly vague and unspecific orientation of the Czech foreign policy as well as the fact that the government only rarely distances itself from the President's statements (which frequently diverge from EU positions) (ANÝŽ 2014; DOSTÁL 2016, 43).

This was exemplified, for instance, by the controversies caused within the Czech political establishment by the U.S. policy towards Iraq. While Havel signed the 'Letter of Eight', expressing support for the U.S., Václav Klaus who succeeded him less than two months later as a Czech President declared that he would not have ever signed such a letter. Meanwhile, the Czech Foreign Minister Svoboda distanced himself from the letter, averring that the country "sided with the coalition without being a member", while Prime Minister Vladimír Špidla defined the Czech position as "precisely halfway" between the U.S. and the Czech Republic's European neighbours (ŠEDIVÝ-ZABOROWSKI 2004, 206–207). Another prominent example of this internal disaccord dates back to December 2017 when U.S. President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital. While many world leaders condemned Trump's decision (arguing that the city's status should be determined through negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians), President Zeman officially welcomed the move (as the only world leader with the exception of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu), arguing that the Czech Republic should follow the U.S. lead, and branding the EU "cowards" for their lack of desire to do so (ČT24 2017b). In marked contrast, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it considered Jerusalem the future capital of both Israel and Palestine, along with other EU member states (ČT24 2017a).

Apart from that, the differing views on Russia (with the Czech President showing strong pro-Russia inclinations) has also complicated a uniform reading of the Czech foreign policy from the U.S. perspective. In this context, let us recall, for instance, the Czech debate on the deployment of NATO troops in the Czech Republic in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis (with Zeman branding Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region a "fait accompli"), or the prevarications over imposing sanctions on

Russia (with the Czech Prime Minister repeatedly condemning Zeman's rejection of the EU sanctions against Russia).

5. Conclusions and Outlook

The Czech–U.S. multi-layered relations have undergone a significant change since the fall of communism in 1989, and the Czech accession to NATO in 1999 and to the EU in 2004. As the analysis demonstrated, both countries enjoy a close relationship that runs across many areas of interest and operates at various levels, resting – broadly speaking – on three main pillars: 1. security and defence; 2. economy; and 3. issues concerning shared values (Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D.C. s. a.). Even though the relations have been repeatedly accused of losing their content and they are not devoid of certain tensions, setbacks and controversies, the institutional ties between the two countries have never been challenged by either side.

This invites a key question: how has the context of mutual relations changed with the election of Donald Trump as the 45th American president? Czech President Zeman was one of the few European politicians (along with the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán) to openly endorse Trump during the U.S. presidential campaign, repeatedly accentuating their common anti-immigrant sentiments, and proclaiming that he would have voted for him if he could (Reuters 2016). Perhaps, this came as a little surprise given the fact that Zeman's behaviour has earned him comparisons to Trump himself (MORTKOWITZ 2018; SANTORA 2018). By contrast (and, once again, amply illustrating the lack of coherence and coordination within the Czech foreign policy establishment towards the U.S.), the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs preferred Hillary Clinton as a presidential candidate, not least because of a higher level of predictability associated with her views on Russia (ANÝŽ 2017). In terms of the latter one, Daniel Anýž provides the following explanation: “Because when you read the US media, which is what the people at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence do, and receive information from the Czech Embassy in Washington D.C., the most common narrative is that Trump may make a deal with Russia. Some kind of realpolitik, Henry Kissinger-like deal in which Ukraine will become something like Finland. Talk about spheres of influence would return” (ANÝŽ 2017). When Trump

got elected, Zeman was one of the few European leaders to congratulate him on his victory,⁴ declaring his appreciation for his “matter-of-fact style” and expressing hopes that his presidency will lead to improved relations between both countries (ČT24 2016). What is certain already at this point, however, is that Trump’s electoral win means an end to the era of liberal U.S. ambassadors (such as Andrew Schapiro or Norman Eisen) to the Czech Republic (ANÝŽ 2017).

In October 2017, the Czech parliamentary elections were won by a large margin by the centrist ANO movement, led by a billionaire businessman, Andrej Babiš (who incidentally has been often dubbed the “Czech Trump”). Since foreign policy has never been Babiš’s primary concern, it seems plausible to expect continuity, rather than radical change in the Czech Government’s policy towards the U.S.

To conclude, the incoming Trump Administration has posed a number of new challenges to the Czech Republic, both in terms of security and in terms of economy (HENDRYCH 2017). Regarding the former, a major source of concern revolves around Trump’s apparent lack of willingness to intervene on behalf of Europe and stand up for European interests, epitomised in his “America First” motto. Indeed, Trump has repeatedly challenged the idea that active engagement in Europe is a central U.S. interest, suggesting to “regard all foreign relations as zero-sum transactions, in which each contribution to someone else’s security represents a net loss to the United States” (VALÁŠEK 2017). As a result, the Czech Republic’s confidence in the U.S. is being, once again, challenged. The country is anxious about the risk of the U.S. turning its back on Europe, especially its Central and Eastern part. Apprehensions in the economy realm have been caused by Trump’s reservations about multilateral trade deals (HENDRYCH 2017). The Czech Republic was closely following the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, considering the trade pact its priority and regretting its cancellation under Trump’s “America First” policy. Last but not least, given Zeman’s sympathy and admiration for Trump, some experts have voiced their concerns that the divisions

⁴ Interestingly enough, with Donald Trump as the U.S. President, a new tie emerged between the U.S. and the Czech Republic as his former wife with whom he has three children was born in the Czech Republic and at least two of his children speak (or at least understand) Czech. In the past, Donald Trump himself repeatedly visited the Czech Republic.

such as the one over Iraq or Jerusalem will become more commonplace with the risk that the Czech Republic's policy towards the U.S. might be kidnapped by the Prague Castle ever more often. Not least because Hynek Kmoníček, the former Director of the Foreign Affairs Department in the Office of the President was appointed as the new Czech ambassador to the U.S. in 2017, and he is generally expected to “serve more the interests of the president than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” (ANÝŽ 2017). At the same time, however, there is certainly much potential for enhanced cooperation between the Czech Republic and the U.S. – be it over security and defence, or peaceful nuclear research.

Bibliography

- ANÝŽ, Daniel (2014): Česko-americké vztahy v bodě nula. *Hospodářské noviny*, 30 September 2014. Source: <https://nazory.ihned.cz/komentare/c1-62883380-cesko-americke-vztahy-v-bode-nula> (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- ANÝŽ, Daniel (2017): Commentator Daniel Anýž: Zeman set to dominate Czech–US relations during Trump presidency. *Czech Radio*, 16 January 2017. Interview by Ian Willoughby. Source: www.radio.cz/en/section/one-on-one/commentator-daniel-anyz-zeman-set-to-dominate-czech-us-relations-during-trump-presidency (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- ASMUS, Ronald D. – VONDRA, Alexandr (2005): The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 2. 203–216. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557570500164439>
- BACOVSKÝ, Václav – DOSTÁL, Vít – THIM, Michal (2010): *Agenda pro českou zahraniční politiku 2010: Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2010*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- BERDYCH, Antonín – NEKVAPIL, Václav – VESELÝ, Luboš eds. (2008): *Agenda pro českou zahraniční politiku 2008: Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2008*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017): Spojené státy americké: Obchodní a ekonomická spolupráce s ČR. *Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 21 November 2017. Source: www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/spojene-staty-americke-obchodni-a-ekonomicka-18548.html (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- ČT24 (2014): ČEZ zrušil tendr na dostavbu dvou bloků Temelína. *ČT24*, 10 April 2014. Source: www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/ekonomika/1039254-cez-zrusil-tendr-na-dostavbu-dvou-bloku-temelina (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)

- ČT24 (2015): Zeman: Americký velvyslanec má dveře na Hrad zavřené. *ČT24*, 05 April 2015. Source: www.ceska televize.cz/ct24/domaci/1517808-zeman-americky-velvyslanec-ma-dvere-na-hrad-zavrene (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- ČT24 (2016): Zeman: Z vítězství Trumpa mám radost. Mluví drsně, ale srozumitelně. *ČT24*, 09 November 2016. Source: www.ceska televize.cz/ct24/domaci/1953098-zeman-z-vitezstvi-trumpa-mam-radost-mluvi-drsne-ale-srozumitelne (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- ČT24 (2017a): Trump uznal Jeruzalém jako hlavní město Izraele. Dal pokyn k přesunu ambasády. *ČT24*, 06 December 2017. Source: www.ceska televize.cz/ct24/svet/2324737-blazniva-provokace-neschopnost-usa-muslimske-zeme-rozlitilo-trumpovo-ocekavane-uznani (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- ČT24 (2017b): Zeman ocenil Trumpova slova o přesunu ambasády do Jeruzaléma. Podobně by se prý měla zachovat EU i Česko. *ČT24*, 07 December 2017. Source: www.ceska televize.cz/ct24/domaci/2326690-zeman-ocenil-trumpova-slova-o-presunu-ambasady-do-jeruzalema-podobne-se-pry-mely (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- DOSTÁL, Vít ed. (2016): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2016*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – EBERLE, Jakub eds. (2015): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2015*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – EBERLE, Jakub – KARÁSEK, Tomáš eds. (2013): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2013*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – EBERLE, Jakub – KARÁSEK, Tomáš eds. (2014): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2014*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – JERMÁNKOVÁ, Tereza eds. (2017): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2017*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – KARÁSEK, Tomáš – THIM, Michal eds. (2011): *Agenda pro českou zahraniční politiku 2011: Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2011*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – KARÁSEK, Tomáš – THIM, Michal eds. (2012): *Agenda pro českou zahraniční politiku 2012: Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2012*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DOSTÁL, Vít – NEKVAPIL, Václav – THIM, Michal – VESELÝ, Luboš eds. (2009): *Agenda pro českou zahraniční politiku 2009: Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2009*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- DRULÁK, Petr (2009): Česká zahraniční politika v době počínajícího politického rozkladu. In KOŘAN, Michal ed.: *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2008*. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů. 373–379.

- Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D.C. (s. a.): *Czech–U.S. Relations*. Source: www.mzv.cz/washington/en/czech_u_s_relations/index.html (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- GLENN, John K. (2014): *Beyond the Hangover: U.S.–Czech Relations in the Obama Administration*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 7. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Glenn_Czech-US%20Relations%202014_FINAL.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- GLENN, John K. – JACKSON, Bruce P. – KOVANDA, Lukáš – MITCHELL, A. WESS – MUNTER, Cameron – POJAR, Tomáš – SCHEUNEMANN, Leah – SCHNEIDER, Jiří – VONDRA, Alexandr eds. (2015): *Czech–American Relations: A Roadmap for the Future*. Prague, Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations.
- Global Policy Forum (2003): Europe and America Must Stand United. *Global Policy Forum*, 30 January 2003. Source: www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168/36565.html (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- HENDRYCH, Lukáš (2017): Czechs debate Trump's impact on national political priorities. *Euractiv*, 23 February 2017. Source: www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/czechs-debate-trumps-impact-on-national-political-priorities/ (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- JACKSON, Bruce (2014): *Small States and Worthless Allies*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 6. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Jackson_Small%20States%20and%20Worthless%20Allies_FINAL.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- KOVANDA, Lukáš (2014): *The Czech–US Economic and Trade Relations after 1989*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 1. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Policy%20paper_Kovanda.pdf (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- KOVTUN, George J. (1988): *Masaryk & America – Testimony of a Relationship*. Library of Congress. Source: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2009/20090709004ma/20090709004ma.pdf> (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- KPMG (2017): *Meet the Heart of Europe. Investment in the Czech Republic*. Prague, KPMG. Source: https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/cz/pdf/KPMG_Investment-in-Czech-Republic.pdf (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- LUKÁČ, Petr (2014): ČEZ zrušil tendr na dostavbu Temelína. Zbude mu na dividendy, hodnotí krok analytici. *Hospodářské noviny*, 10 April 2014. Source: <https://byznys.ihned.cz/c1-62004810-cez-zrusil-tendr-na-dostavbu-temelina-zbude-mu-na-dividendy-hodnoti-krok-analytici> (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)

- MORTKOWITZ, Siegfried (2018): How (the European) Trump won a second term. *Politico*, 28 January 2018. Source: www.politico.eu/article/milos-zeman-czech-republic-how-the-european-donald-trump-won-a-second-term/ (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- MZV (2011): *Koncepce české zahraniční politiky*. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR. Source: www.mzv.cz/file/1413389/Koncepce_2011.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- MZV (2015): *Koncepce české zahraniční politiky*. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR. Source: www.mzv.cz/file/1565920/Koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_CR.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- MZV (2018): *Spojené státy americké: Obchodní a ekonomická spolupráce s ČR*. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR. Source: www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/spojene-staty-americke-obchodni-a-ekonomicka-18548.html (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)
- NEKVAPIL, Václav – BERDYCH, Antonín – VESELÝ, Luboš eds. (2007): *Agenda for Czech Foreign Policy 2007*. Prague, Association for International Affairs.
- POJAR, Tomáš (2014): *Czech–American Relations and Support of Liberal Democratic Forces Around the Globe: Another Argument Why It Should Not Be In the US Interest to Forget (Central) Europe*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 3. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Policy%20paper_Pojar.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations (2014): *Attitude of the Czech Citizens towards NATO and USA*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 5. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Attitude%20of%20the%20Czech%20Citizens%20towards%20NATO%20and%20USA.pdf (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2009): An Open Letter To The Obama Administration From Central And Eastern Europe. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 16 July 2016. Source: www.rferl.org/a/An_Open_Letter_To_The_Obama_Administration_From_Central_And_Eastern_Europe/1778449.html (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2016): U.S. Embassy Condemns Czechs For Refusing To Extradite Suspects. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 04 February 2016. Source: www.rferl.org/a/prague-lebanese-ali-fayad-released-extradition-us/27532663.html (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)
- Reuters (2014): Obama says U.S. will defend eastern European allies. *Reuters*, 04 June 2014. Source: www.reuters.com/article/us-obama-europe-east/obama-says-u-s-will-defend-eastern-european-allies-idUSKBN0EF0U420140604 (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)

- Reuters (2016): Czech president would cast ballot for Trump in U.S. vote. *Reuters*, 20 September 2016. Source: www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-czech-trump/czech-president-would-cast-ballot-for-trump-in-u-s-vote-idUSKCN11Q1VW (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- RICHTER, Jan (2011): Czech–US relations: like a 20-year-old marriage without sex, envoys say. *Czech Radio*, 10 November 2011. Source: www.radio.cz/en/section/czech-history/czech-us-relations-like-a-20-year-old-marriage-without-sex-envoys-say (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- SANTORA, Marc (2018): Czech Republic Re-elects Milos Zeman, Populist Leader and Foe of Migrants. *The New York Times*, 27 January 2018. Source: www.nytimes.com/2018/01/27/world/europe/czech-election-milos-zeman.html (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- SCHNEIDER, Jiří (2014): *The U.S.–Czech Strategic Relationship: A Roadmap for the Future in Security and Defense. A Broken Glass or Alliance of Common Purpose Sealed by Joint Missions*. Policy Paper, Centrum Transatlantických vztahů, No. 2. Source: www.cevroinstitut.cz/upload/ck/files/PCTR/Publikace/Policy%20paper_Schneider.pdf (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- STEM (2018): Hodnocení vztahu českých občanů k vybraným zemím Evropy a světa. *STEM*, 17 January 2018. Source: www.stem.cz/hodnoceni-vztahu-ceskych-obcanu-k-vybranim-zemim-evropy-a-sveta/ (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- ŠEDIVÝ, Jiří – ZABOROWSKI, Marcin (2004): Old Europe, New Europe and Transatlantic Relations. *European Security*, Vol. 13, No. 3. 187–213. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830490499948>
- TABERY, Erik (2017): *Opuštěná společnost: Česko od Masaryka po Babiše*. Praha, Nakladatelství Paseka.
- TAMKIN, Emily (2017a): Americans, Need Help in Syria? Call the Czechs. *Foreign Policy*, 04 August 2017. Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/04/americans-need-help-in-syria-call-the-czechs/> (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- TAMKIN, Emily (2017b): Why Americans Should (Maybe) Worry About Czech Elections. *Foreign Policy*, 13 October 2017. Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/13/why-americans-should-maybe-worry-about-czech-elections/> (Accessed: 11.01.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2018): U.S. Relations with the Czech Republic. *U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*, 24 January 2018. Source: www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3237.htm (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- VALÁŠEK, Tomáš (2017): A New Transatlantic Security Bargain. *Carnegie Europe*, 23 May 2017. Source: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/05/23/new-transatlantic-security-bargain-pub-70050> (Accessed: 21.02.2018.)

- WATERFIELD, Bruno (2009): Barack Obama's missile defence pledge fails to stir Czech audience. *The Telegraph*, 06 April 2009. Source: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/barackobama/5110965/Barack-Obamas-missile-defence-pledge-fails-to-stir-Czech-audience.html (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)
- WATSON, Nicholas (2018): Czechs risk wrath of EU over nuclear power project. *Politico*, 22 February 2018. Source: www.politico.eu/article/dukovany-czech-risk-wrath-of-eu-over-nuclear-power-project/ (Accessed: 08.02.2018.)

Relations between the United States and Hungary: Phases and Fluctuations of the Last Two Decades

*Gábor Csizmazia*¹

1. Introduction

While the transatlantic bond is a crucial pillar of U.S. and Central European security, its assessment differs on both sides. Diverse perspectives, time and rising challenges are important factors in shaping the relationship. In this regard, Hungary's relationship with the U.S. has experienced fluctuations between 1989 and 2018. This chapter intends to reveal the main driving factors behind these changes. Although the goal is not to provide a chronological review *per se*, the chapter will follow a sequential order, as the arch of the relationship can only be understood by highlighting the milestones of the bilateral relations of the last two decades.

2. Entering the Doors of the Transatlantic Alliance

For the U.S., post-Cold War Europe included possibilities and challenges alike due to a security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe (ALBRIGHT 1990, 81). Washington's approach under George H. W. Bush was cautious, trying to avoid situations that had a destabilising potential, and paying more attention on pressing issues elsewhere (MAGYARICS 2008, 182–185). The Clinton Administration also faced an array of foreign

¹ Gábor Csizmazia, Assistant Lecturer, National University of Public Service (Hungary). E-mail: csizmazia.gabor@uni-nke.hu

policy issues, though Europe was addressed with a cohesive strategy: assuring European security through U.S. military strength, advancing the economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, and supporting democratic reforms in the former communist countries (The White House 1994, 21–23). Washington was the architect of NATO’s expansion which was important in establishing a Europe, that is undivided, democratic and at peace (KUSHLIS 1997, 5). It was also adamant that only the most adequate (ASMUS 2002, 216) candidates may gain membership: in Ronald D. Asmus’ words, Washington showed “tough love” to Central and Eastern Europeans, expecting political, economic, and security sector reforms from them. This meant the strengthening of parliamentary democracy, market economy, and the structural and technological improvement of the civilian-controlled armed forces. Membership in NATO represented a political value for CEE countries: the “tough love” also carried the promise of their dream of re-joining the West (ASMUS 2002, 146).

Budapest’s assessment of the international environment was in line with that of Washington: the Antall–Boross Government (1990–1994) formulated long-lasting and interconnected foreign policy goals [11/1993. (III. 12.) OGY határozat a Magyar Köztársaság biztonságpolitikájának alapelveiről 2018]. These goals were: Euro-Atlantic integration, good relations with neighbouring countries, and helping Hungarian minorities within the region. Hungary contributed to U.S./NATO operations before entering the Alliance by opening its airspace and one of its air bases to U.S. forces for operations in Bosnia and Kosovo (MAGYARICS 2013, 236). This was a testimony of commitment, as it carried the possibility of Serbian retaliation against Hungarians in Vojvodina. The latter issue shed light on another politically sensitive topic: Washington expected its future allies to settle their disputes on national minorities and borders. This was a crucial issue for Hungary, as Hungarian minorities living in all neighbouring countries have been a bitter heritage of its World War losses. As Washington was insistent on the issue, the Horn Government (1994–1998) signed bilateral treaties on good neighbourly relations and cooperation with Slovakia (1995) and Romania (1996) (ASMUS 2002, 149). While the first Orbán Government (1998–2002) was also supportive of NATO accession (1999), it did have some misunderstandings with its American counterpart. Due to their more decisive stance on defending the rights of Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries, Hungarian right-wing political parties were already viewed ambiguously in the U.S. This

notion gained impetus in 2001 when the Orbán Government intended to provide various social benefits to Hungarians living in Romania, Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Slovakia. Though not aimed against other nations, the initiative received criticism, particularly from Bratislava and Bucharest, and reportedly raised second thoughts in Washington on Hungary's adequacy for NATO membership (DIEHL 2002).

The economic aspect of U.S.–Hungarian relations in the 1990s displayed a similar need for U.S. assistance. Like other CEE states, Hungary was in short of capital and relied on foreign direct investments (FDI). Demand and supply met perfectly, as these nations were expected to deliver financial and economic reforms in order to join the Western institutions. Hungary was a pioneer in this regard, showing more openness to Western FDI already before the fall of communism. The country was in the spotlight of American companies such as General Electric, Guardian Industries and Ameritech Corporation. Between 1989 and 1999 the U.S. was the leading investor in Hungary, providing more than \$7 billion out of the overall \$23 billion FDI in the country. Some of the main U.S. companies investing in Hungary were Ameritech, Coca-Cola, Delphi-Calsonic, Flextronics, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, Guardian, IBM, Jabil Circuit, and PepsiCo. (U.S. Department of State 2000, 4–7). Yet American enthusiasm for enterprise had its limits. President George H. W. Bush supported the idea of financial aid to European countries in transition but the U.S. share in the EBRD was only 10% (MAGYARICS 2004, 252–253). Hungary was a lucrative place for investment due to its educated, yet low-cost labour force and its geographic value, i.e. the access it offered to other markets in Europe (DICKINSON 1998). The 1990s brought an increase in U.S.–Hungarian trade with Hungary being the 64th largest partner of the U.S., and the U.S. being Hungary's 6th largest trading partner, falling behind only countries like Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy and France (U.S. Department of State 2000, 4–7). This, however, also indicated that Hungary had more ties to Europe than to the U.S., which led to certain preferences for European deals in different areas, for example the procurement of fighter jets. Budapest decided to utilise procurements for economic growth by introducing an offset program in which contractors had to bring in investments prior to winning the tender. American companies such as Lockheed Martin or McDonnell Douglas composed their packages but European advantage was felt from the start (SPOLAR 1997). Still, Lockheed Martin's F-16 was the most likely to prevail, hence

Washington was surprised that Budapest chose to buy BAE-Saab's JAS-39 Gripens instead (LARRABEE 2003, 24). This did not have a positive impact on bilateral political relations (especially since it accidentally came one day ahead of the 9/11 terrorist attacks), and contributed more to the negative image of the Hungarian right-wing conservative parties in mainstream U.S. media for years to come (JESZENSZKY 2010). The latter issue has been highlighted in the publications of the American Hungarian Federation (AHF) which is the largest ethnic Hungarian organisation in the U.S. While AHF was initially established in 1906 with a cultural mission of assisting Hungarian immigrants and connecting their descendants, it has also showed political activity (e.g. providing aid to Hungarians in the homeland, as well as lobbying for Hungary) throughout the decades (The American Hungarian Federation 2018).

Yet overall, Hungary's reliability as an ally was felt rather in the political than in the defence dimension, as the drivers behind the accession of CEE countries to NATO were primarily political. The new members had been incapable of net contribution to allied defence. Even with military reforms, there was no guarantee that the performance gap between old and new members would disappear anytime soon (MAGYARICS 2013, 232). At the political level, Hungary signalled its intention to be an active member of NATO: in 1998 it updated its security and defence policy guidelines assuming the country's obligations in collective defence (Magyar Közlöny 1998, 8272). In addition to the earlier support to U.S./NATO operations in the Balkans, Hungary sent troops to Kosovo, as well. It signed up for the U.S. State Partnership Program in 1993, linking its defence forces with the Ohio National Guard which has been supporting joint military training exercises to this day. In addition, the U.S. offers financial assistance to develop the HR and equipment of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) through programs such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) and the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) initiatives. Though Hungary has received several million USD worth of FMF and IMET support, the level of its involvement in these programs is at the lower case among the Visegrád countries (see Figures 1 and 2).

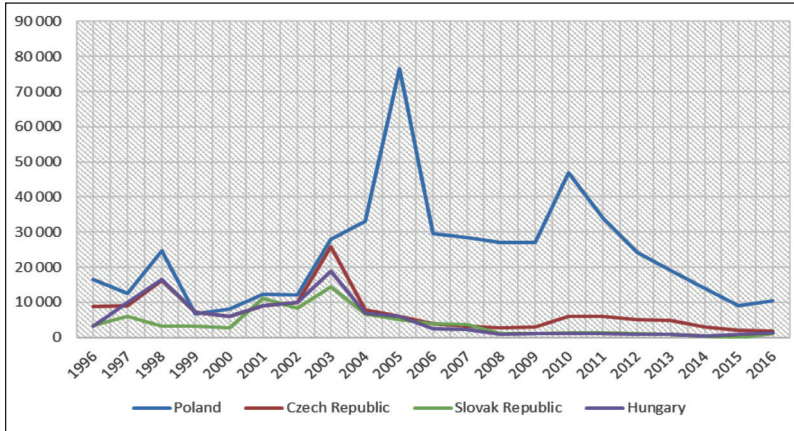


Figure 1.

FMF waived for the Visegrád countries (thousand USD)

Source: DoD Security Cooperation Agency 2016

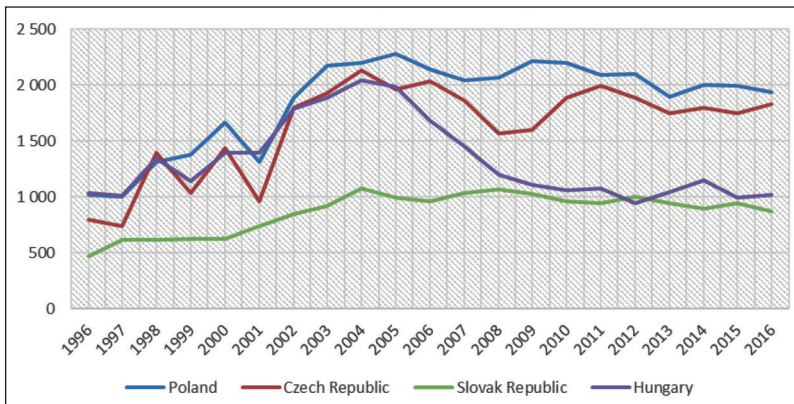


Figure 2.

IIMET Program & Emergency Drawdowns for Visegrád countries (thousand USD)

Source: DoD Security Cooperation Agency 2016

Still, military expenditure is a good indicator of Hungarian performance in the Alliance. While the first Orbán Government introduced an increase in the country's military expenditure (from 1.268 to 1.594% of the GDP), military spending has been the lowest among the Visegrád countries, and Budapest's underperformance did not please Washington (LARRABEE 2003, 24). Moreover, under the socialist-liberal Medgyessy and Gyurcsány–Bajnai Governments (2002–2004 and 2004–2010) it went overall downhill (see Figure 3). This led to a unique ally behaviour within the region: incapable of catching up to their Western allies, these nations tend to compensate military efforts with political ones. This was especially true when Washington's focus shifted away from territorial defence to threats of different nature and scope which were relevant in out of area regions such as the Middle East (MAGYARICS 2013, 237). The early 2000s served as a perfect example for such a relationship with the U.S.

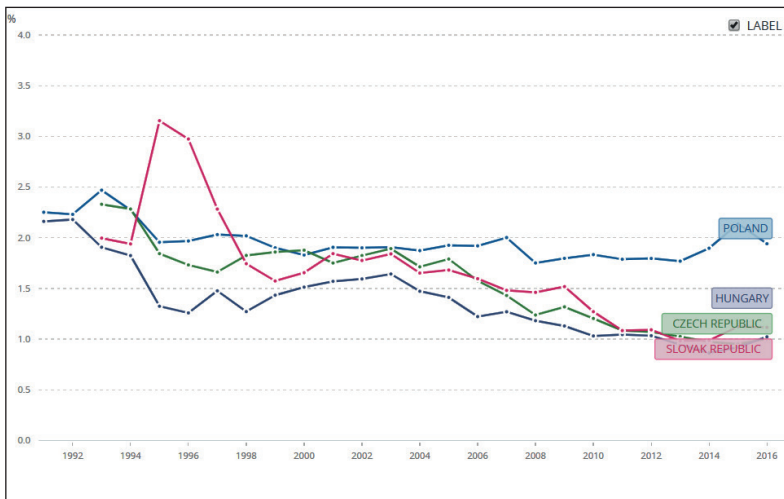


Figure 3.

Military expenditure (% of GDP) of the Visegrád countries between 1991 and 2016

Source: World Bank s. a.

3. One of the ‘New Europeans’

The millennium brought changes in U.S. foreign policy. George W. Bush began his first term with the belief that “Europe and America will never be separated” (BUSH 2001). At the same time, his administration had a mixed stance towards Central and Eastern Europe. It was keen on continuing NATO expansion but its global perspective also led to a diminishing importance of the region. The Bush team indicated that the U.S. can only assure its military presence in hotspot regions if it is not tied down in peacekeeping or humanitarian missions elsewhere (GORDON 2000). This notion was also brought up during President Bush’s visit to Warsaw in the summer of 2001 (BUSH 2001). After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the administration took a turn in foreign policy, showing stronger tendencies for unilateral actions. Having no UN Security Council authorisation, the 2003 military campaign of the U.S. against Iraq was controversial in Europe. While Germany and France were against the American enterprise, CEE countries were more supportive. Washington assembled a ‘coalition of the willing’, bypassing NATO and dividing the continent into what U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called ‘old Europe’ and ‘new Europe’, relying on the latter group whose Eastern members had experienced authoritarianism and were considered to be more understanding towards Washington’s arguments against the Saddam regime (BUSH 2010, 233). However, this approach strained the transatlantic alliance, received mixed views even from Central and Eastern Europeans and was ineffective² (BUGAJSKI–TELEKI 2007, 13–14). In short, the U.S. temporarily had an odd relationship with the region which, however, was not in the spotlight of Washington’s overall attention.

Hungary has kept its commitment to the transatlantic alliance after NATO accession. This was also true with regards to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as both the Orbán Government and the Parliament indicated their support to the U.S. Although the Parliament condemned all attempts of using these horrific events as arguments in party politics, the issue became subject of political debate, affecting U.S.–Hungarian political relations (LARRABEE 2003, 15). Nevertheless, the Hungarian political elite was prepared to turn compassionate words into action. Péter Medgyessy signed the ‘Letter of Eight’ agreeing with George W. Bush’s assessment

² For a brief summary, see ORBÁN 2003.

on the Saddam regime's WMD program. This meant that just one year before its accession to the EU, Hungary went against major European powers and took the risk of political quarrels with them (RADA 2018; SMITH 2003). There are several explanations why CEE countries went down this path: Washington was deemed to be a much more trustworthy partner in security issues than Paris or Berlin, whereas economically, good relations with the U.S. seemed to offer opportunities for procurements in Iraq. The Medgyessy Government's motivation was political. Budapest's siding with Washington served the purpose of advancing U.S.–Hungarian relations and demonstrating faith in the transatlantic alliance (MAGYARICS 2013, 246–247). The Hungarian Government expressed this in its national security strategy, which shared several points of the international environment's American assessment. Terrorism, WMDs and failed states were ranked at the top of the global challenges, and the responsibility of participating in missions far beyond the country's borders was emphasised (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2004, 3–6). Through these missions, Hungary could compensate for its shortcomings in other areas. Out-of-area missions enjoyed support by the mainstream political parties, thus international peace support and crisis management operations have received steady human and financial resources. Between 2003 and 2016, the number of HDF troops in international missions varied but it has been consistently close to 1,000 which is the approximate number of HDF personnel allowed to be sent to operations abroad by the Hungarian Parliament.³

America's and Hungary's romance was felt in other areas as well, including culture. Washington's public diplomacy efforts led to the establishment of American Spaces/Corners hosted by cultural centres in Pécs (2004), Veszprém (2005), Debrecen (2006), Budapest (2009) and recently in Szeged (2018). Academic cooperation also enjoyed support, as in 2007 the Hungarian Government signed an agreement with its U.S. counterpart to continue the Fulbright Exchange Program. Furthermore, the Bush Administration tried to award its closest allies by including them in the Visa Waiver Program which Hungary joined in 2008. Nevertheless, despite such political successes and the preference for Washington's view on Iraq, CEE countries did not intend to sacrifice their relationship with the EU for this romance. The 'Letter of Eight' called for "unity and cohesion" on Iraq

³ For a brief summary, see MÜLLER 2015 and MÜLLER 2017.

(AZNAR et al. 2003) and Hungary was no exception (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2004, 9). This is related to the country's advancement in the Euro-Atlantic integration. On the one hand, Hungary continued to rely on NATO's collective defence. Due to the limited performance in defence spending, the HDF's added value focuses on critical contributions (such as the provision of the Pápa Air Base to NATO's Strategic Airlift Capability Program) (VANDRIVER 2008) and niche capabilities (such as counter-IED trainings, engineering and technical support in water purification), along with the cooperation between special operations forces. Hungary also serves as a founding framework nation for NATO's Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine since 2009. On the other hand, progress in the Euro-Atlantic integration also led to a change in position and priorities. By 2004, Hungary became embedded within NATO and the EU which contributed to the rise of soft security issues at the expense of hard ones (MAGYARICS 2013, 236). Moreover, the importance of its geographical location diminished, and the desire for American military presence in Hungary has also become limited – as opposed to the enthusiasm to receive U.S. investments in the economy (FULLER 2003).

Indeed, international investments gained impetus in the early 2000s in Central and Eastern Europe. The boost was thanks to business process outsourcing. Multinational companies entered the region to locate back office services supporting their businesses' operation (TAGLIABUE 2007). Hungary became the host for an increasing number of shared service centres (MURPHY et al. 2007, 16) and a target for American companies including Exxon Mobil, Morgan Stanley, Avis, EDS and Corning. As a result of the outsourcing spiral, it also welcomed service centres in IT and R&D. Incoming U.S. companies in this field included Microsoft, Citibank and Alcoa (MURPHY et al. 2007, 8–9). However, the financial crisis of 2007–2008 halted the FDI inflow. While U.S. companies started outsourced activities in Hungary almost every year between 2003 and 2007, no major American shared service centres were established in 2008 and 2009 (Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency 2017, 16–17). The recession was felt in both countries, leaving their respective governments to set economic recovery as a priority on their agendas.

4. Closing to the Edge

The Obama Administration faced complex challenges with drawn-out missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and an economic downturn at home. While it emphasised domestic programs such as the nearly \$800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) for the U.S. economy, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010), it struggled with the financial constraints of the Budget Control Act (2011) and its spending cuts after 2013. In foreign affairs, President Barack H. Obama tried to end costly and ineffective enterprises, and accentuate global challenges such as nuclear proliferation and climate change. Washington deemed Europe to be a relatively secure part of the world and intended to turn its attention towards more challenging areas, like the Asia Pacific (CLINTON 2011a, 58). Yet, in the Obama Administration's view this did not mean negligence towards Europe, which was considered the main partner in tackling global challenges (The White House 2010, 41). Though this was primarily true for Western Europe, the same applied for Central and Eastern Europe: the Obama Administration encouraged partners in the region to preserve the impetus of the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative (GORDON 2011a). Washington also wanted to renew U.S./NATO–Russia relations. It was aware of the issue's political difficulties in CEE capitals but thought that the 'reset' with Moscow served their interest, as well. President Obama sent Vice President Joseph R. Biden to clarify the administration's stance towards Central and Eastern Europe, conveying the message that while the region enjoyed U.S. security commitments, it lost its special status in American foreign policy: it no longer differed from Western Europe (GORDON 2009) and was expected to be cooperative in regional and global challenges (BIDEN 2009).

The second Orbán Government's (2010–2014) assessment of the international environment was in some ways similar to that of the Obama Administration. It declared that the financial-crisis was a serious hit to the country already facing social and economic problems which could only be resolved through the national economy's recovery. Recognising the scope of international challenges, it called for a 'global opening' in terms of geography, focusing on economically emerging regions such as East Asia, and encouraging engagement in global issues. The global changes were deemed to support the idea of Europe's and America's interdependence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2011, 7, 36–38).

While the government called for U.S. commitment towards Central and Eastern Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2012, 7), it also agreed on the responsibility of advancing Euro-Atlantic integration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2011, 23, 38). It confirmed the dedication to NATO (and EU) crisis management, identifying its roots in common interests and allied solidarity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2012, 7–8). The Orbán Government demonstrated these principles through the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU from January to June 2011. Washington lauded the presidency's priorities on European energy security, Roma integration, Eastern Partnership and Croatia's European integration (GORDON 2011b). Hungary also received praise for its contribution to the evacuation of American journalists from Libya, and for its efforts to support the diplomatic and consular interests of the U.S. in Tripoli in 2011 (RACZ 2011).

However, in the wake of the Hungarian presidency, U.S.–Hungarian political relations were showing signs of decline. Having received unprecedented majority in Parliament in 2010, the Orbán Government introduced political, legal and economic reforms that were deemed controversial in Brussels and Washington. These included the adoption of Hungary's Fundamental Law (2012) as a new constitution, the act on the legal status of churches (2011), and the media law (2011) which attracted international attention. While the reforms' impact on checks and balances is debatable, the issue considerably spoiled the political relationship between the Obama Administration and the Orbán Government. The former indicated its reservations in June 2011 during Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton's visit to Budapest (CLINTON 2011b) and kept addressing these issues at high political levels. Washington also used public forums to express its views including President Obama mentioning Hungary among other countries with lower records of liberal democracy (OBAMA 2014). The Orbán Government felt that through these criticisms Washington not only interfered in its domestic issues but was preoccupied with them along ideological lines (O'DONNELL 2018; RADA 2018). The political relations reached a low point in 2014 when six high ranking Hungarian officials were denied entry into the U.S. due to their alleged involvement in corruption. The Hungarian side expected evidence which the American side refused to publish due to privacy reasons (NIELSEN 2014). By 2016, the Orbán Government was openly looking forward to personal and policy changes in the White House and the State Department (ORBÁN 2016). Cultural and

academic ties have also gone through mixed experiences in recent years: 2013 saw the birth of the Hungary Initiatives Foundation with the mission of fostering Hungarian–American cooperation in culture, science and art. In the meantime, the Hungarian Government’s efforts to regulate foreign (third country origin) higher education institutions operating in Hungary has led to bilateral (and international) political disputes through the case of the Central European University in 2017.

In the second decade of the 2000s, defence issues became the preferred area of cooperation between Washington and Budapest (MARTON–RADA–BALOGH 2015, 287–289), following the pattern as before. International missions continued to enjoy support from the Hungarian Government, keeping the principle of “in together, out together” (CLINTON 2011b). The presence of HDF personnel in Afghanistan increased between 2010 and 2012 which the government began to draw down as the ISAF mission was reaching its conclusion in 2014. The Orbán Government contributed to the Resolute Support Mission with a special operations contingent, a helicopter air support and training group, and a security platoon, (Magyar Közlöny 2014, 24186) while offering an annual contribution of \$500,000 to the Afghan National Security Forces between 2015 and 2017 (Ministry of Defence 2014). The Orbán Government also joined the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS in 2015 with contributions in aid and a contingent of maximum 200 (infantry and logistics) troops having a mandate until the end of 2019 (Magyar Közlöny 2017, 8809–8810). The Hungarian involvement was based on principles and interests alike, though some in the opposition alleged that the government’s real motive was to improve its image in Washington (DERCSÉNYI–LÁSZLÓ 2015). While Hungary received some criticism for its low defence spending, the Orbán Government pledged to increase Hungary’s defence budget with at least 0.1% of the GDP per year from 2016, and aimed to reach 1.39% by 2022 (Ministry of Defence 2012, 15). With the U.S. expectations becoming more vocal under the Trump Administration, the government indicated that the 2% benchmark is expected to be realised in 2024 (HVG 2017). Although Hungary continued to be a recipient of U.S. defence hardware, (MTI 2013) the financial aspect of defence efforts has been less effective in doing business with U.S. companies from the defence sector.

The Orbán Government carried the intention to attract U.S. investment but the picture of economic cooperation is more complex. Budapest had a similar view as Washington regarding the challenges inherited through the recession, though the former drew different conclusions on how to proceed with the recovery. First, it chose an ‘unorthodox’ program to loosen the constraints of state and public debt. In addition to its critical view of credit rating companies, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2011, 6) it introduced a crisis tax on large (mostly foreign) companies operating in banking, telecommunications, energy and retail in 2010 (MTI–HVG 2010). Second, the government saw global economic trends to be pointing in a direction where the economic and political power of Europe and the U.S. was turning into a “relative decline”, whereas emerging regions were becoming economically stronger (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary 2011, 6). It decided to direct its efforts in trade and investment towards these regions to a greater extent than before. This in itself should not downgrade U.S.–Hungarian economic relations, although the government’s decision to expand the nuclear power plant in Paks through Russian investment, for example, received strong U.S. criticism for the lack of transparency (BELL 2015). Budapest’s relationship with Moscow had already been a topic followed by Washington. WikiLeaks cables from the U.S. Embassy in Budapest during the period of 2006–2010 revealed that American diplomats have kept their eyes on domestic and foreign affairs issues of concern, such as the strengthening of radical right-wing groups along with occasional anti-Roma atrocities by extremists, and the Hungarian stance on Russian foreign and energy policy. While these issues emerged under the Gyurcsány–Bajnai Governments, their U.S. assessment remained the same after 2010 – namely, Budapest is a reliable partner in allied operations (as revealed in Afghanistan), but at the same time, it has shown tendencies of closing towards Moscow due to energy dependence (RÁCZ 2013, 96).

The transparency issue of the Paks expansion, along with the crisis taxes and similar measures, was mentioned in the State Department’s 2017 investment climate statement on Hungary among factors contributing to a decline in Budapest’s competitiveness (Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs 2017). Meanwhile, the volume of the bilateral trade of goods also showed a modest decline in 2016, though only after a strong increase between 2011 and 2015 (see Figure 4).

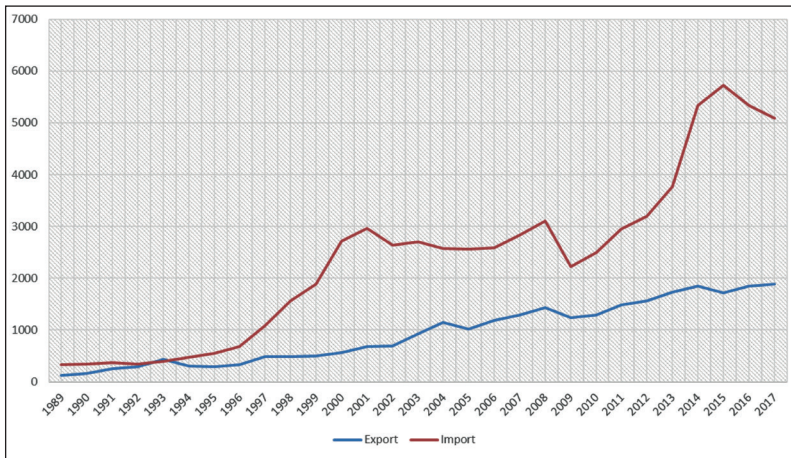


Figure 4.

U.S. trade in goods with Hungary (in million USD) between 1989 and 2017

Source: U.S. Census Bureau s. a.

The Orbán Government expressed interest in enhancing U.S. trade and investment by signing strategic partnership agreements with U.S. companies, including Coca-Cola, Alcoa, General Electric, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, and Jabil Circuit. The shared service centre spree of the 2000s continued with U.S. firms establishing or re-investing in offices every year since 2010 (Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency 2017, 16–17). By 2017, American companies provided \$1.7 billion of FDI thereby ranking the U.S. as the largest direct investor from outside the EU (Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs 2017). An interesting component of the government's enthusiasm for U.S.–Hungarian economic ties was its stance towards the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). While it was in favour of a well negotiated TTIP, (BELL 2016) the initiative was a subject of debate among political parties and Budapest never really publicised its official position, declaring the TTIP in September 2016 to be non-existent, and therefore not making any serious comments on the issue (MTI 2016). With the TTIP sidetracked, and the Trump Administration practicing a different trade policy than its predecessor, Hungary's possibilities in U.S. trade and investment are yet to be seen.

5. Conclusions

The relationship between Hungary and the U.S. went through different phases since the end of the Cold War. While Washington and Budapest share a set of values and interests, consecutive administrations and governments displayed various positions on bilateral relations which were determined by their contemporary international political, security and economic climates.

The political relations showed the strongest oscillation reaching both ends of the scale within a decade, and years after having become formal allies. In both cases it was apparent that Hungarian Atlanticism, and American focus on the region do have their limits. While bilateral economic relations were steadier, outside factors noticeably affected them as seen during the financial crisis. Security and defence cooperation on the other hand seem to have proven more fruitful, despite – or precisely due to – the occasional political difficulties.

Therefore, it is possible that the most tangible and solid achievements of the future bilateral relationship would come from this field, even though Hungary is expected to embrace opportunities for improved political relations, and also for enhanced economic partnership.

Bibliography

- 11/1993. (III. 12.) OGY határozat a Magyar Köztársaság biztonságpolitikájának alapelveiről. Source: <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/?page=show&docid=993h0011>. OGY (Accessed: 11.02.2018.)
- ALBRIGHT, Madeleine (1990): The Role of the United States in Central Europe. *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 1. 71–84. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1173814>
- ASMUS D. Ronald (2002): *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- AZNAR, José María – BARROSO, José-Manuel Durão – BERLUSCONI, Silvio – BLAIR, Tony – HAVEL, Vaclav – MEDGYESSY, Péter – MILLER, Leszek – RASMUSSEN, Anders Fogh (2003): United We Stand. *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 January 2003. Source: www.wsj.com/articles/SB1043875685287040744 (Accessed: 20.03.2018.)

- BELL, Colleen (2015): “We Will Build a Stronger Bridge” – (Remarks at Corvinus University). *U.S. Embassy in Hungary*, 28 October 2015. Source: <https://hu.usembassy.gov/will-build-stronger-bridge-remarks-corvinus-university/> (Accessed: 01.04.2018.)
- BELL, Colleen (2016): Remarks at the 2nd AmCham Business Forum Lunch. *U.S. Embassy in Hungary*, 20 January 2016. Source: <https://hu.usembassy.gov/remarks-2nd-amcham-business-forum-lunch/> (Accessed: 01.04.2018.)
- BIDEN, R. Joseph (2009): Remarks On America Central Europe And A Partnership for the 21st Century. *The White House*, 22 October 2009. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-america-central-europe-and-a-partnership-21st-century> (Accessed: 29.03.2018.)
- BUGAJSKI, Janusz – TELEKI, Ilona (2007): *Atlantic Bridges. America's New European Allies*. New York, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (2017): 2017 Investment Climate Statement – Hungary. *U.S. Department of State*, 29 June 2017. Source: www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2017/eur/269908.htm (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- BUSH, W. George (2001): *Address at Warsaw University*. The American Presidency Project. Source: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-warsaw-university (Accessed: 17.03.2018.)
- BUSH, W. George (2010): *Decision Points*. New York, Crown Publishers.
- CLINTON, Hillary (2011a): America's Pacific Century. *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011. Source: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/> (Accessed: 17.03.2018.)
- CLINTON, R. Hillary (2011b): Remarks With Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. *U.S. Department of State*, 30 June 2011. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/06/167374.htm> (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- DERCSÉNYI, Dávid – LÁSZLÓ, M. Ferenc (2015): Orbánék alig kockáztatnak, de látványosan udvarolnak az USA-nak. *hvg.hu*, 31 March 2015. Source: http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150331_Orbanek_keveset_kockaztatnak_de_latvanyos (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- DICKINSON, Mike (1998): Local firms encouraged to expand in Hungary. *Rochester Business Journal*, 16 January 1998. Source: <https://rbj.net/1998/01/16/local-firms-encouragedto-expand-in-hungary/> (Accessed: 08.03.2018.)
- DIEHL, Jackson (2002): New NATO, Old Values. *The Washington Post*, 04 March 2002. Source: www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2002/03/04/new-nato-old-values/10d89f16-4212-464b-82da-227143824218/?utm_term=.a3737017a0a7 (Accessed: 12.02.2018.)

- DoD Security Cooperation Agency (2016): *Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Construction Sales and Other Security Cooperation Historical Facts as of September 30, 2016*. Source: www.dsca.mil/sites/default/files/fiscal_year_series_-_30_september_2016.pdf (Accessed: 12.03.2018.)
- FULLER, Thomas (2003): Q&A/Peter Medgyessy: 'This European identity is a cohesive force'. *The New York Times*, 26 September 2003. Source: www.nytimes.com/2003/09/26/news/qa-peter-medgyessy-this-european-entity-is-a-cohesive-force.html (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- GORDON, H. Philip (2009): U.S. Perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe (CSIS Conference: The United States and Central Europe Converging or Diverging Strategic Interests?). *U.S. Department of State*, 04 November 2009. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/131634.htm> (Accessed: 29.03.2018.)
- GORDON, H. Philip (2011a): Remarks at the Global Security 2011 Forum. *U.S. Department of State*, 03 March 2011. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2011/157707.htm> (Accessed: 29.03.2018.)
- GORDON, H. Philip (2011b): U.S.–EU Relations Under the Hungarian Presidency. *U.S. Department of State*, 13 January 2011. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2011/154648.htm> (Accessed: 29.03.2018.)
- GORDON, R. Michael (2000): The 2000 Campaign: The Military; Bush Would Stop U.S. Peacekeeping in Balkans Fights. *The New York Times*, 21 October 2000. Source: www.nytimes.com/2000/10/21/us/the-2000-campaign-the-military-bush-would-stop-us-peacekeeping-in-balkan-fights.html (Accessed: 17.03.2018.)
- Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency (2017): *Shared Service Centres in Hungary*. Source: <https://hipa.hu/main#publications> (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- HVG (2017): Simicskó: 2024-re a Magyar védelmi költségvetés eléri a GDP 2 százalékát. *hvg.hu*, 07 October 2017. Source: http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20171007_simicsko_2024re_a_magyar_vedelmi_koltsegvetes_eleri_a_gdp_2_szazalekat (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- JESZENSZKY, Géza (2010): An unfair portrayal of Hungarian politics. *The Washington Post*, 24 July 2010. Source: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/23/AR2010072305178.html (Accessed: 10.03.2018.)
- KUSHLIS, H. Patricia ed. (1997): Promoting Trans-Atlantic Security Through NATO Enlargement. President Clinton responds to questions from U.S. Senators. *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*, Vol. 2, No. 5–10.
- LARRABEE, F. Stephen (2003): *NATO's Eastern Agenda in a New Strategic Era*. Pittsburgh, RAND.

- MAGYARICS, Tamás (2004): Magyarország és a transzatlanti kapcsolatok. In GAZDAG, Ferenc – KISS, J. László eds.: *Magyar külpolitika a 20. században*. Budapest, Zrínyi Kiadó. 243–259.
- MAGYARICS, Tamás (2008): *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok története 1914–1991*. Budapest, Kossuth Kiadó.
- MAGYARICS, Tamás (2013): Hungary in NATO: The Case of a Half Empty Glass. In HAALAND, M. Janne – PETERSSON, Magnus eds.: *NATO's European Allies*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan. 232–261. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137035004_12
- Magyar Közlöny (1998): Az Országgyűlés 94/1998. (XII. 29.) OGY határozata a Magyar Köztársaság biztonság- és védelempolitikájának alapelveiről. *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 120. 8271–8274.
- Magyar Közlöny (2014): A Kormány 1730/2014. (XII. 12.) Korm. határozata az afganisztáni Eltökélt Támogatás Műveletben (RSM) történő magyar katonai szerepvállalásról. *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 173. 24186.
- Magyar Közlöny (2017): Az Országgyűlés 12/2017. (VI. 14.) OGY határozata a Magyar Honvédségnek az Iszlám Állam elnevezésű terrorszervezet elleni nemzetközi fellépésben való további részvételéről. *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 90. 8809–8810.
- MARTON, Péter – RADA Péter – BALOGH István (2015): *Biztonsági tanulmányok: Új fogalmi keretek, és tanulságok a visegrádi országok számára*. Budapest, Antall József Tudásközpont.
- Ministry of Defence (2012): *Hungary's National Military Strategy*. Government of Hungary. Source: http://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/b/ac/e0000/national_military_strategy.pdf (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)
- Ministry of Defence (2014): Afghanistan–Hende: Hungary Sends More Than 100 Troops to New Mission. *Ministry of Defence*, 17 October 2014. Source: www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-defence/news/afghanistan-hende-hungary-sends-more-than-100-troops-to-new-mission (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (2004): *The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary*. Source: www.files.ethz.ch/isn/157029/Hungary_English-2004.pdf (Accessed: 21.03.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (2011): *Hungary's Foreign Policy after the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. Government of Hungary. Source: http://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/e/cb/60_000/foreign_policy_20111219.pdf (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (2012): *Hungary's National Security Strategy*. European Defence Agency. Source: www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/documents/hungary-national-security-strategy-2012.pdf (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)
- MTI (2013): Kölcsönadott 12 harcjárművet az USA a magyar honvédségnek. *hvg.hu*, 26 November 2013. Source: http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20131126_Kolcsonadott_Magyarorszagnak_12_harcjarmu (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- MTI (2016): A Magyar nemzetgazdaság érdeke a minél akadálymentesebb kereskedelem. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, 26 September 2016. Source: www.kormany.hu/hu/kulgaszdasagi-es-kulugyminiszterium/hirek/a-magyar-nemzetgazdasag-erdeke-a-minel-akadalymentesebb-kereskedelem (Accessed: 01.04.2018.)
- MTI–HVG (2010): Megszavazták a válságadókat. *hvg.hu*, 18 October 2010. Source: http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20101018_valsgado_k_megszavaztak_parlament (Accessed: 31.03.2018.)
- MURPHY, Peter – STANISZEWSKA, Anna – DERLATKA, Ewa – IZSÁK, Erzsébet – HARTMANOVA, Lenka (2007): *BPO in the CEE region*. DTZ research on Central and Eastern Europe, January 2007. Source: <http://itonews.eu/files/f12269256311.pdf> (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- MÜLLER, B. Tamás (2015): A Magyar Honvédség békemijsziós tevékenysége. *Képviselői Információs Szolgálat*, 30 March 2015. Source: www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/303867/2015_7_MH_missziok/a44d53e2-7a4e-4aa4-bac7-906d2e4b4e00 (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- MÜLLER, B. Tamás (2017): A Magyar Honvédség békefenntartó missziói 2. *Képviselői Információs Szolgálat*, 06 June 2017. Source: www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/1202209/Infojegyzet_2017_49_MH_missziok_2.pdf/ab17dc18-6ce7-47e2-99b9-1b4638cf3bf0 (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- NIELSEN, Nikolaj (2014): Hungary's Orban stonewalls US corruption allegations. *euobserver*, 24 October 2014. Source: <https://euobserver.com/justice/126244> (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- OBAMA, Barack (2014): Remarks by the President at Clinton Global Initiative. *The White House*, 23 September 2014. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative> (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- O'DONNELL, Katy (2018): Hungarian minister: We prefer Trump to Obama, or Europe. *Politico*, 20 January 2018. Source: www.politico.eu/article/hungarian-minister-we-prefer-trump-team-over-obama-team/ (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- ORBÁN, Anita (2003): Washington and the “New Europe”: an Ad Hoc Alliance or a Long-term Partnership? *Külügyi Szemle*, Vol. 2, No. 4. 16–30.

- ORBÁN, Viktor (2016): Speech at the conference “Reinvigorating Growth, Competitiveness and Investment”. *Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister*, 10 November 2016. Source: www.miniszterelnok.hu/pm-viktor-orbans-speech-at-the-conference-reinvigorating-growth-competitiveness-and-investment/ (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- RACZ, Gergo (2011): Hungary Hopes Libya Involvement Will Boost Chance for U.N. Role. *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 October 2011. Source: <https://blogs.wsj.com/emergingEurope/2011/10/19/hungary-hopes-libya-involvement-will-boost-chance-for-un-role/> (Accessed: 01.04.2018.)
- RÁCZ, András (2013): Hungary and the WikiLeaks Cables. In RÁCZ, András ed.: *The WikiLeaks Cables and Their Impact on the Visegrad Countries and the Baltic States*. Budapest, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. 85–100.
- RADA, Péter (2018): The V4–US Relation and the American Foreign Policy towards Central and Eastern Europe. In STEPPER, Péter (2018): *Central Europe and the Visegrad Cooperation: Historical and Policy Perspectives*. Budapest, Antall József Knowledge Centre. 298–309.
- SMITH, S. Craig (2003): Chirac Upsets East Europe by Telling It to ‘Shut Up’ on Iraq. *The New York Times*, 18 February 2003. Source: www.nytimes.com/2003/02/18/international/europe/chirac-upsets-east-europe-by-telling-it-to-shut-up-on.html (Accessed: 20.03.2018.)
- SPOULAR, Christine (1997): Aging Armies Grapple with Costly Overhaul. *The Washington Post*, 19 June 1997. Source: www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/06/19/aging-armies-grapple-with-costly-overhaul/6302bcf1-68f0-4982-81e3-d695ae37017d/?utm_term=.24ef989915b2 (Accessed: 09.03.2018.)
- TAGLIABUE, John (2007): Eastern Europe Becomes a Center for Outsourcing. *The New York Times*, 19 April 2007. Source: www.nytimes.com/2007/04/19/business/worldbusiness/19prague.html?mtrref=www.google.com&mtrref=www.nytimes.com&gwh=E5999738B4867456A14E553EC4B72743&gwt=pay (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- The American Hungarian Federation (2018): *About the American Hungarian Federation*. The American Hungarian Federation. Source: www.american-hungarianfederation.org/about.htm (Accessed: 31.05.2018.)
- The White House (1994): *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. National Security Strategy Archive. Source: <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1994.pdf> (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)
- The White House (2010): *National Security Strategy*. National Security Strategy Archive. Source: <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf> (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)

- U.S. Census Bureau (s. a.): *Trade in Goods with Hungary*. All figures are on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted. Source: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4370.html (Accessed: 21.03.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2000): *FY 2001 Country Commercial Guide: Hungary*. U.S. Department of State. Source: https://1997-2001.state.gov/about_state/business/com_guides/2001/europe/hungary_ccg2001.pdf (Accessed: 01.06.2018.)
- VANDRIVER, John (2008): U.S. troops to staff NATO base in Hungary. *Stars and Stripes*, 04 October 2008. Source: www.stripes.com/news/u-s-troops-to-staff-nato-base-in-hungary-1.83773 (Accessed: 26.03.2018.)
- World Bank (s. a.): Data based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Yearbook on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. Source: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2016&locations=PL-CZ-HU-SK&order=wbapi_data_value_2012+wbap&start=1991&view=chart (Accessed: 12.03.2018.)

This page intentionally left blank.

Relations between the United States and Poland: From Enemy to the Main Security Guarantor

*Tomasz Smura*¹

1. Introduction

The U.S. remains a crucial ally of Poland. Regardless of its membership in the EU, and the quite good relations with major European powers, e.g. Germany – the Poles consider the U.S. the main guarantor of their security.²

Poland as a country with brutal experiences in its history has suffered many times from its geopolitical position between Russia (the Soviet Union) and Germany, treats its security very seriously. Poland is one of the very few countries in NATO which fulfil the commitment to spend at least 2% of the GDP on defence. It maintains its armed forces with 120,000 members, and around 750 main battle tanks, 1,500 infantry fighting vehicles and 100 combat fighters. Nevertheless, such potential is insufficient regarding the strength of the armed forces of the country considered by the Poles the most threatening one – the Russian Federation. It seems to be the main reason why Poland seeks to have the U.S. on its side and tries to bolster bilateral relations. The will of keeping close relations with the U.S. is implemented even at the expense of cooperation with European partners (and Poland's own interests), as the case of the operation in Iraq in March 2003 proved. The question is, however, why the Polish people treat the U.S. as a major security guarantor and consider Washington as more willing to defend Poland than the European allies? The chapter

¹ Tomasz Smura, Head of the Research Office, Casimir Pulaski Foundation (Poland).
Email: tsmura@pulaski.pl

² According to a poll ordered by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation in March 2018, 35.3% of the Polish people consider the U.S. the most important ally of Poland. In contrast, Germany was described as the most important ally by only 22.2% of the interviewees (Casimir Pulaski Foundation 2018).

argues that the Polish society and elites treat the U.S. as a more important ally than the European partners because of two reasons: first, their historic experience; and second, the U.S. seems more eager to use force in foreign policy matters than any European nation.

2. U.S.–Polish Relations after the Cold War

During the Cold War, the U.S. was considered in Poland a symbol of freedom and prosperity, in opposition to the oppressive Soviet Union (KUŹNIAR 2008, 93). Thus, it was the U.S. and the West as a whole, which became a beacon for the new Polish Government. As Roman Kuźniar, diplomat, professor at the Warsaw University, and advisor to the President of Poland indicated: “Polish reforms in domestic and foreign policy which started in 1989 reflected a wish of return to Europe. Pro-European orientation became a primary vector of our foreign policy after regaining sovereignty. Implementation of this project was expected to take years, but from the beginning the Polish leaders made it clear that their goal is to return Poland to Europe and to the West as a whole and turn Poland into a European (Western) country” (KUŹNIAR 2008, 44).

2.1. The transition period

One of the most important supporters of the Polish transformation was the U.S. As early as July 1989 George H. W. Bush announced in the Polish Parliament a programme of American aid for Poland. “The reform of the Polish economy presents a historic challenge. There can be no substitute for Poland’s own efforts, but I want to stress to you today that Poland is not alone. Given the enormity of this moment, the United States stands ready to help, as you help yourselves” – the U.S. President declared during his visit (BUSH 1989). Polish economic reforms were consulted in Washington and guaranteed by the special Western fund in which the U.S. share counted 20%, or \$200 million. The U.S. also reduced Poland’s indebtedness by 70%, and it supported the Polish position regarding the necessity of the recognition of existing borders by Germany after reunification, which along with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland

became priorities for the Polish foreign policy (PASTUSIAK 2015, 311–320; KUŹNIAR 2008, 48–97).

2.2. *The security and policy dimension*

The U.S.–Polish cooperation in the security dimension has been constant since the early 1990s as Poland supported politically the American operation in Kuwait (during the First Gulf War), and the Polish intelligence organised the secret evacuation of U.S. citizens from the country, which was highly appreciated by Washington. In addition, the U.S. asked Poland to represent its interests in Iraq by the Polish Embassy. The relations were blooming, and George H. W. Bush visited Poland for the second time during his tenure in 1992. Although at the beginning of the Bill Clinton tenure the fast development of the U.S.–Polish cooperation slowed down.³ The Clinton Administration needed to seriously consider the issue of NATO enlargement under pressure from Poland and the other Visegrád countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia).⁴ In 1994, Poland was embraced by the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, which Warsaw treated as a U.S.-born idea, aimed at postponing its accession to the transatlantic structures (KUŹNIAR 2008, 95–97). Nevertheless, as the former Polish Ambassador to the U.S. and Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, Robert Kupiecki indicated, Poland on the one hand officially criticised the PfP as insufficient, but on the other hand Warsaw worked in the PfP very actively after its accession to the programme to both build interoperability with NATO forces and structures, and also to show its usefulness for the Alliance (KUPIECKI 2001, 307). As the Polish Armed Forces adapted to NATO standards, and the lobbying of the Polish Americans for Polish membership in the Alliance increased, in 1996 Bill Clinton proposed to hold a summit on enlargement in the following year. It was also Clinton who negotiated with Russia its approval for NATO extension, which finally happened in March 1999 (KUŹNIAR 2008, 117–126).

³ Mainly as a result of the so-called “Russia First” policy of the Clinton Administration, the issue of intellectual property protection in Poland and the ill-treatment of Polish officials involved in the so-called “riffle affair” by the American services.

⁴ Poland began to declare its will to join NATO officially at the turn of 1992. In 1994, Poland was embraced by the Partnership for Peace programme.

Poland joined NATO in the middle of the Alliance's transformation process, which was well reflected in Operation Allied Forces, launched just two weeks after the NATO enlargement of 1999. Although Poland did not participate in the air operation against Yugoslavia, it sent an 800-strong military contingent to Kosovo within the framework of the KFOR mission (SMOLAREK 2016). Warsaw supported the U.S. vision for the Alliance as a global actor, and a platform for forming coalitions of the willing, as it happened in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq. Poland perceived the U.S. as the core of cohesion and effectiveness of NATO, and from Warsaw's perspective the Alliance was credible as long as the U.S. was a part of it. It was the reason why Poland treated European security and defence policy warily, perceiving it as a project that could separate Europe from the U.S. The fact that Warsaw shared Washington's scepticism towards a European strategic autonomy made some Western European countries perceive Poland as the U.S. advocate on the old continent (KUŹNIAR 2008, 220–221).

After the September 11 attacks, the Polish Government supported the U.S. without hesitation – also outside the framework of the NATO structure as a part of the coalition of the willing – and joined the Global War on Terrorism. The attitude of Warsaw was appreciated in Washington by the new hawkish administration of George W. Bush, and U.S.–Polish relations have been intensified more than ever. Frequent bilateral visits and consultations became a standard on various levels. Moreover, Warsaw also endorsed the American initiative to deploy elements of the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence System⁵ in the Czech Republic and Poland, and Warsaw decided to procure U.S.-manufactured multirole F-16 fighters in

⁵ The origins of the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system go back to the Cold War. During the 1990s, along with increased threat coming from the so-called “rogue states”, such as North Korea or Iran, the U.S. changed focus of its programmes related to missile defence. The issue of homeland defence was brought forward by the Rumsfeld Commission Report of 1998, which was the basis for the National Missile Defence Act passed in 1999. The law established the goals of the U.S. BMD strategy which are still true today: the defence of the homeland territory, troops and allies of the U.S. After the U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) in 2002, the Cold War limitations on BMD development disappeared. Following this step, the Bush Administration made the proposal to deploy elements of the U.S. BMD system in Poland (Ground Based Interceptors – GBI) and the Czech Republic (Ground Based Radar – GBR). This project was heavily criticised by Russia as a threat to the strategic stability between the U.S. and Russia in terms of strategic nuclear weapons.

the biggest Polish Armed Forces modernisation programme to date. This was perceived as a political choice. As Kuźniar emphasised at the time, a gradual “Americanisation” of the Polish security and defence policy was in progress, the shiniest example of which was the issue of the Iraqi War. In spite of the fact that the U.S. failed to achieve a UN Security Council resolution allowing the U.S.-led coalition to intervene in Iraq – which authority Washington tried to get based on the accusations that Saddam Hussein possessed weapon of mass destruction – Poland signed the so-called “letter of the eight”⁶ and took part in the intervention in Iraq, sending there a military contingent. Warsaw did it regardless of the lack of a solid basis in international law, regardless of the stance of the EU, despite lacking a UN Security Council resolution, and also despite the condemnation from the part of key EU member states, such as France and Germany. In light of all this, the step significantly weakened the Polish position in Western Europe (KUŹNIAR 2008, 221–234).

An all-out shift in the Polish security policy towards the U.S. was continued in the following years. In Iraq, Poland took command of a multinational division, which was expected to stabilise one of the Iraqi provinces and sent there a 2,300-strong military contingent. The cost of the engagement was high, but the Polish Government counted on offsetting the costs by gaining contracts for the reconstruction of Iraq. Nevertheless, in the end the American companies received the most lucrative contracts, while the U.S. allies could benefit only from projects that were not interesting for the Americans. Along with the unsatisfying implementation of the F-16 offset, and the maintenance of the entry visas to the U.S. for the Poles, the first wave of disappointment of American policy reached Warsaw.

Despite these problematic issues, the new pro-American government of the Law and Justice Party continued the previous course in foreign policy. The Polish Government not only agreed to deploy parts of the U.S. National Missile Defence System (Ground Based Interceptors – GBI) on Polish soil – which was a strategic system designed to protect only American territory – but they also sought this deployment by themselves. In addition, Poland increased the manpower of its contingent in

⁶ The letter was also signed by the governments of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Afghanistan and put part of it under the direct orders of the American command (KUŹNIAR 2008, 293–304).

U.S.–Polish relations became more nuanced after the U.S. elections in 2008, and the inauguration of the new Democratic administration of Barack Obama. During the campaign, Obama rarely referred to Polish or Central European issues. Obama also avoided clear declarations concerning the continuation of the deployment of parts of the National Missile Defence System in Poland. After the elections, the changes in relations between Washington and Warsaw became a consequence of the wider shift of U.S. foreign policy. President Obama – after 8 years of the Bush tenure – wanted to rebuild the picture of the U.S. as a reliable global leader, which values multilateral cooperation over unilateral actions. The new American president, among others, tried to improve relations with Russia, the symbol of which became the so-called “reset” policy, announced by U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov in March 2009. In April 2010, both states signed the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement – decreasing the limits of the deployed and non-deployed strategic launchers to 800, and the deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 on both sides.

In response to the shift of U.S. foreign policy focus towards Asia, the group of 21 influential people from Central and Eastern Europe – including former presidents, prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs – extended an open letter to Barack Obama urging him not to abandon the CEE region. Besides, the U.S. decision not to send a high level representative to Poland on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II also came as a disappointment (PASTUSIAK 2015, 215–225).

As the shift in U.S. diplomacy continued, the decision of the Obama Administration to cancel the deployment of elements of the NMD system in Poland announced on 17 September (the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939) was considered by many commentators and politicians in Warsaw almost a betrayal. Meanwhile, the Obama Administration announced the replacement of the missile defence projects in Europe by the so-called European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) programme, which was an American input to NATO’s Ballistic Missile Defence system, and, unlike the previous one, it was a system designed to protect first of all the U.S. allies and the American troops in Europe from Middle Eastern missile threats (thus it was more beneficial for Warsaw

than the previous system). In order to ease the rising concerns of the Poles, President Obama sent Vice President Joe Biden to Poland, who visited Warsaw on 20–22 October 2009.

As a consequence of the foreign policy shift in Washington, the Polish attitude towards the U.S. became more realistic. As Jimmy Carter's former National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski assessed in an interview: "I see one fundamental difference between the US approach to Poland under the Bush and Obama administration. For Obama, Europe is Europe. There are the Germans, the Brits and the French who play the first fiddle. Poland is of course partner – I use this word consciously – but there is not any special, separate US strategy towards Poland. There is not also – what is important – a tendency for using Polish geopolitical resentments as it used to be during the Bush administration. It seems that particularly in the final period of this administration there was a tendency to play on the Polish attitude to Russia to gain positive reaction of Warsaw to the missile defence system and the US strategy related to it. However, it was a strategy aimed at Iran not at Russia" (BRZEZIŃSKI 2009).

Gradually, Polish–U.S. relations became more intense. In May 2013 Obama paid his first visit to Poland, where he also met with other leaders of the CEE region. The American president announced an agreement on the rotational deployment of a U.S. Air Force contingent, including F-16 and C-130 Hercules planes to Poland. A significant turning point in the U.S. policy towards Central Eastern Europe (including Poland), was the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, and its active military engagement against Ukraine in the Donbas region. The Kremlin's actions clearly marked the failure of the Obama Administration's "reset policy", demanding from Washington significant actions to reassure the worrying allies. The Obama Administration seemed to rise to the challenge. Washington imposed on Russia – in consultations with the EU and the G7 group – several packages of severe sanctions, strengthened the U.S. forces in Europe, and established the European Reassurance Initiative – a \$1 billion-worth programme expected to enhance American military activities in the old continent, as well as the capabilities of the U.S. allies. Moreover, in June 2014 President Obama visited Poland for the second time, where he reassured the leaders of the region about the credibility of the U.S. guarantees. Obama declared on Castel Square in Warsaw that "I know that throughout history, the Polish people were abandoned by friends when you needed them most. So, I've come to Warsaw today – on behalf of the United States,

on behalf of the NATO Alliance – to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Poland’s security. Article 5 is clear – an attack on one is an attack on all. And as allies, we have a solemn duty – a binding treaty obligation – to defend your territorial integrity. And we will. We stand together – now and forever – for your freedom is ours. Poland will never stand alone. But not just Poland – Estonia will never stand alone. Latvia will never stand alone. Lithuania will never stand alone. Romania will never stand alone” (OBAMA 2014).

These words were followed by very concrete actions. The U.S. deployed to Central and Eastern Europe a heavy brigade (Armoured Brigade Combat Team – ABCT) and an aviation brigade (Combat Aviation Brigade) on a rotational basis, as a part of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). In addition, the U.S. became a framework country of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence multinational battlegroup deployed to Poland, and Washington sent an 800-strong combat battalion, armed with armoured personnel carriers Stryker to the Polish city of Orzysz.

The U.S. elections of 2016, and the triumph of the politically inexperienced Donald Trump over the seasoned politician, Hillary Clinton brought a lot of concerns in Poland as well as in many other countries of the world. Analysts and commentators speculated about the possible negative consequences of the elections with regards to European security as Trump called NATO an “obsolete” alliance during the campaign (SMURA 2016) and he declared that he would consider whether the Baltic States fulfil their commitments concerning defence spending before he decided to help them in case of an aggression (SANGER–HABERMAN 2016).

Despite the initial concerns, after more than a year of the Trump Presidency, his policy – in spite of several spectacular decisions – seems to be in line with the conservative stream of the Republican Party. The new president decided to continue the U.S. engagement in European security – even increasing spending for the European Reassurance Initiative⁷ – he maintained sanctions imposed on Russia, and publicly confirmed the U.S. commitment to NATO’s Article 5 (SMURA 2018). With regards to the relations with Poland, in July 2017 Trump paid one of his first international visits to Warsaw, on the occasion of the Three

⁷ The U.S. authorised the ERI at \$985 million in 2015, \$789 million in 2016 and \$3.4 billion in 2017. The Defense Department’s fiscal year 2018 budget request was \$4.8 billion (U.S. Department of Defense 2017).

Seas Initiative Summit. During this visit Trump showed his support for the Polish and Croatian-led project, which is focused on developing the transport infrastructure from the Northern to the Southern parts of the CEE region. As Grzegorz Małecki, former head of the Polish Foreign Intelligence Agency assessed: “Trump’s visit in Poland is undoubtedly a win for the Polish government, both domestically and outside of the country. The mere fact that it took place so early in Trump’s presidency is proof of the robustness of Polish diplomatic efforts and the country’s important role in the Trump administration’s foreign policy plans. In the aftermath of the visit, Poland’s position vis-à-vis its regional partners, as well as NATO and the EU, is sure to become stronger. Warsaw will likely grow even more assertive in relations with Brussels, where some of its initiatives were met with strong resistance from other member states” (MAŁECKI 2017). Nevertheless, in recent times the Polish–U.S. relations seem to deteriorate as the U.S. Department of State (DoS) raised its concerns connected to the Polish justice system reform (which is also an issue in Poland’s relations with the European Commission), and the amendment to the bill on the Institute of National Remembrance, indicating that it can breach the freedom of expression.⁸ Although information about the ban on meeting with top Polish officials appeared in the Polish press (this information was officially demented by the DoS spokesperson), the “crisis” seems to be short-lived, not endangering U.S.–Polish strategic relations.

⁸ As the Press Statement of the DoS states: “The history of the Holocaust is painful and complex. We understand that phrases such as ‘Polish death camps’ are inaccurate, misleading, and hurtful. We are concerned, however, that if enacted this draft legislation could undermine free speech and academic discourse. We all must be careful not to inhibit discussion and commentary on the Holocaust. We believe open debate, scholarship, and education are the best means of countering inaccurate and hurtful speech. We are also concerned about the repercussions this draft legislation, if enacted, could have on Poland’s strategic interests and relationships – including with the United States and Israel. The resulting divisions that may arise among our allies benefit only our rivals. We encourage Poland to reevaluate the legislation in light of its potential impact on the principle of free speech and on our ability to be effective partners” (U.S. Department of State 2018).

2.3. Economic ties between Poland and the U.S.

A more concerning issue in the Polish–U.S. relations seems to be the fact that economic ties between the two states lags considerably behind the strongly developed security cooperation. The Polish trade exchange with the U.S. reaches \$10 billion, while e.g. trade exchange between Poland and Germany exceeds \$100 billion. Poland is the 47th export partner of the U.S., and the 40th import partner. Polish companies export to the U.S. mainly products of electromechanical, automotive aircraft and optical instruments. In turn, Poland is the biggest U.S. foreign direct investment receiver in Central and Eastern Europe, which in case of Poland reaches \$40 billion (Export Promotion Portal 2017). The Polish Government authorities seek to bolster the economic relations with the U.S. The chance for that is seen especially in the defence and energy industry cooperation – like for example, through the modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces, and the deliveries of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) (KRYCZKOWSKI 2018).

The U.S.–Polish social relations are traditionally good. According to the public opinion poll prepared by CBOS, 43% of the Poles describe their attitude towards the Americans as “sympathy”, while only 14% of the Polish people dislike citizens of the U.S. (CBOS 2018). In the U.S. there is also a group of almost 10 million Polish Americans, who occasionally support their country of origin, as in the case of the NATO accession in 1999. However, the attitude of American Jews towards Poland is more complicated, especially in the context of compensations for lost Jewish properties as a result of World War II. Nevertheless, the Polish authorities put significant efforts into building a strong mutual understanding, and almost every important visit of Polish politicians to the U.S. include meetings with Jewish organisations (KUŹNIAR 2008, 130–131).

3. The Roots of Polish Pro-Americanism

There is no doubt that U.S.–Polish relations are highly asymmetrical. One can define asymmetry in international relations as a difference between two actors in terms of power, expectations and dependency. Asymmetry does not have to be hostile and describe imbalance of power between adversaries, it can also reflect relations among allies, when one of them is significantly more powerful than the other. Such kind of relationship, when

a stronger actor does not want to use its predominance in order to gain unilateral benefits is called “non-confrontational asymmetry”. Thus, an indispensable element of non-confrontational asymmetry is self-restraint and the prioritisation of maintaining long-term relations over short-term gains. In an asymmetric alliance, emotional engagement and common values also play a significant role and they help to balance a difference in the potential of partners (SZKLARSKI 2015).

Asymmetry in an alliance means also inequality in terms of the significance and influence of one ally on the other one. For a stronger state, such an alliance for example enhances its position in a particular region, or provides support for its policy, while for the weaker side it can have an existential meaning. The degree to which both partners can influence each other reflects this disproportion. Such kind of relationship characterise the U.S. relations with Poland. For Washington, Poland seems to be a quite important and loyal ally, located in a crucial region for European security, especially after Russia started to conduct a more assertive foreign policy. However, Warsaw is one of the many U.S. allies both in the region and over the world. Besides, the U.S. as a global superpower acts not only in Europe but also in other regions, like the Middle East and East Asia, so it sometimes needs to sacrifice its interests in one region to achieve something in another. On the other hand, from a Polish perspective, the alliance with Washington is of almost existential significance. In the Polish perception, its membership in NATO and the U.S. guarantees to secure Poland against potential Russian geopolitical resentments, which is treated by the Poles very seriously, especially after the Russian–Georgian War of 2008, the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the following Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Poland also sees NATO and U.S. guarantees as more credible than the EU ones (Casimir Pulaski Foundation 2018). In other words, the U.S. could quite easily conduct its European policy without Poland, while Poland would find it extremely difficult to assure its security without its alliance with the U.S.

The fact that Poland treats the U.S. as its basic security guarantor is very easy to prove. It is enough to cite the Polish National Security Strategy, which states: “Among the strategic partnerships of Poland, the main significance is attributed to the cooperation with the United States of America. Poland will strive for the broadest possible military presence of the U.S. in Europe, including Poland, and it will support the activities for the preservation of the U.S. security guarantees for Europe” (Republic of

Poland 2014). Besides, a recent document on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2018, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also emphasised the relations with the U.S.: “The military presence of the United States in Europe and its strong position in NATO has fundamental significance for the military security of Poland and the region as a whole. Permanent engagement of the United States and the North Atlantic Alliance in this part of the globe is in the vital interest of Poland and East-Central Europe. Poland is vitally interested in sustaining strong transatlantic bonds. Continuing to strengthen and develop these bonds is a fundamental task of Polish security policy” – stated the document, referring to the U.S. as Poland’s main ally. However, the question which should be raised is the reason of such strong pro-Americanism and trust in the U.S. commitment towards Polish security.

As Dybczyński claims, there is a lack of tradition and experience concerning alliances in Poland. Poland from the end of the 18th century, excluding a short period of the interwar period, could not conduct sovereign foreign policy and forge alliances freely. Polish elites do not have models which they can refer to (as for example the balance of power concept in the British tradition). It leaves Polish foreign policy to consider the terms of myths and romantic slogans such as “honour”, “betrayal”, “loyalty”, “tradition”, rather than “interest”, “scenario” or “alternative” (DYBCZYŃSKI 2017, 64–65). It may bring one to the conclusion that the Polish approach to alliances, including the alliance with the U.S., needs to be considered in terms of social constructivism rather than realism and *raison d’état*. It means that the meaning of the U.S.–Polish relations is created mainly by the beliefs and opinions of elites and society, and it should be analysed on this level. In turn, these beliefs and opinions are shaped in a long historical process.

The Polish approach towards the U.S. after the end of the Cold War evolved from a cautious fascination, through unreflective Americanism to a more realistic attitude. Polish pro-Americanism seems to have a long record. As Roman Kuźniar indicates “thanks to Polish emigration to America in the 20th century, cultural and social connections between both nations became very close, even if it was a one-sided sentiment [...]. At that time the fascination of America appeared among the Poles as for many of them this country became a second home and a safe haven from poverty and oppression, as well as a symbol of an ideal social order and individual happiness. The myth of America as an idyll was very popular

among the Poles” (KUŹNIAR 2008, 92). This myth became even stronger in Poland under the Communist rules as the U.S. – “the leader of the free world” was seeking to defeat the Soviet Union – a symbol of oppression. The tough policy of Reagan towards communism particularly brought a lot of sympathy for the U.S. among the Poles, while the propaganda of the communist government of Poland against America even strengthened pro-American sentiments. Thus, after the collapse of communism, the Polish fascination of America was basically uncritical and unreflective (KUŹNIAR 2008, 92–93).

On the other hand, because of historical reasons, the Poles generally seem to distrust European alliances. In the Polish collective memory, there is a lingering resentment of the abandonment – or even “betrayal” – from the side of Western European allies. Great Britain and France betrayed Poland for the first time in 1939, and the second time after World War II – the symbols of which became the conferences in Teheran and Yalta (despite the fact that it was F. D. Roosevelt, who was the first to accept Stalin’s demands concerning Poland). Thus, as Poland was never abandoned by the U.S. – which is quite obvious, considering the fact that the two countries have never been allies before – American guarantees are thought to be more credible for the Polish people. Moreover, from the Polish perspective, the Western countries are not only unwilling but also unable to defend Poland as there is a longstanding problem with the insufficient defence spending of the European members of NATO, and the readiness of their armed forces, which is particularly true for the German Armed Forces.

On the other hand, the U.S. is the unquestionable global superpower in military terms and it showed many times that it is ready to use force whenever it considers it necessary (for example in Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, or Syria). Taking all this into account, many Polish politicians and experts see the U.S. as the only power capable of defending Poland in case of threat from the East. It leads to a quite negative tendency of underestimating NATO and European allies, and overestimating the strategic significance of relations with the U.S. This tendency appeared for example in the so-called *expose* of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Daniel Rotfeld in January 2005, who said that: “Our relations with the United States are important because, first of all, only the US is able to give Poland security guarantees” (ROTFELD 2005). He is not alone with his opinion on U.S.–Polish relations. However, sometimes totally opposite

views also appeared, as in case of Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radek Sikorski, who in a private conversation in 2014 said “the US–Polish alliance is ephemeral and even harmful, it creates a false sense of security” (PASTUSIAK 2015, 242).

The Polish approach to the U.S. changed over time. As it was mentioned above, as a result of the negative experience connected to the operation in Iraq for example, many Polish people were disillusioned with the U.S. or at least took a more realistic approach to this country. Also, in the Polish expert community, there is more and more in-depth analysis concerning the characteristics of U.S.–Polish relations, focusing on the asymmetry in these relations and the nature of alliances in general (SZKLARSKI 2015; DYBCZYŃSKI 2014; ZIĘBA 2015). The U.S.–Polish relations gradually seem to evolve towards maturity; however, it is still an asymmetric partnership. As Longin Pastusiak emphasised: “Today in US–Polish relations we have a clean sheet. There is no serious issue, which remain unresolved and which can cast a shadow over the future of bilateral relations in all dimensions. Simultaneously, the Polish phenomenon, which I call American mythology – what is a mix of fascination with the United States (it is in fact a fascinating country) with ignorance on reality and politics of the US – gradually weakens” (PASTUSIAK 2015, 243).

Bibliography

- BRZEZIŃSKI, Zbigniew (2009): Krach pewnych złudzeń. *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 February 2009. Source: <http://archiwum.rp.pl/artykul/892435-Krach-pewnych-zludzen.html> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- BUSH, George H. W. (1989): Excerpts from Bush’s Speech to Polish Parliament on Refashioning Europe. *The New York Times*, 11 July 1989. Source: www.nytimes.com/1989/07/11/world/excerpts-from-bush-s-speech-to-polish-parliament-on-refashioning-europe.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Casimir Pulaski Foundation (2018): *Polityka zagraniczna i bezpieczeństwo zewnętrzne Polski: Badanie opinii publicznej*. Warsaw, Casimir Pulaski Foundation.
- DYBCZYŃSKI, Andrzej (2014): *Sojusze Międzynarodowe*. Warsaw, Scholar.
- DYBCZYŃSKI, Andrzej (2015): Zarządzanie sojuszem asymetrycznym, Polska–USA. In SZKLARSKI, Bohdan ed.: *Niekonfrontacyjna asymetria w relacjach polsko-amerykańskich*. Warsaw, MSZ.

- DYBCZYŃSKI, Andrzej (2017): Dwutorowa asymetria – Sojusze Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w XXI wieku. *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, No. 2.
- Export Promotion Portal (2017): Wymiana handlowa między Polską a Stanami Zjednoczonymi w 2016 roku. *Portal Promocji Eksportu*, 31 March 2017. Source: <https://usa.trade.gov.pl/pl/usa/analizy-rynkowe/237098,wymiana-handlowa-miedzy-polska-a-stanami-zjednoczonymi-w-2016-roku.html> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- KRYCZKOWSKI, Wojciech (2018): Kwieciński: Obroty handlowe między Polską a USA ‘nie rzucają na kolana’. *PAP*, 10 February 2018. Source: www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news,1282809,kwiecinski-obroty-handlowe-miedzy-polska-a-usa-nie-rzucaja-na-kolana.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- KUPIECKI, Robert (2005): Kierunek atlantycki w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa po 1989 roku. In KUŹNIAR, Roman ed.: *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989–2000*. Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Scholar.
- KUŹNIAR, Roman (2008): *Droga do wolności. Polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej*. Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Scholar.
- MAŁECKI, Grzegorz (2017): Trump Visit a Win for Polish Government. *Pulaski Commentary*, 7 July 2017. Source: <https://pulaski.pl/en/commentary-trump-visit-a-win-for-polish-government/> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- OBAMA, Barack (2014): Remarks by President Obama at 25th Anniversary of Freedom Day. *The White House*, 4 June 2014. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/04/remarks-president-obama-25th-anniversary-freedom-day> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- PASTUSIAK, Longin (2015): *Prezydent dobrych intencji: polityka zagraniczna Baracka Obamy*. Warsaw, Akademia Wistula.
- Republic of Poland (2014): *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*. Warsaw, BBN. Source: www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/01/NSS_RP.pdf (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- ROTFELD, Adam Daniel (2005): *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2005 roku*. Source: www.msz.gov.pl/resource/40ad75d8-16c0-4641-8f72-2bb88391f22a:JCR (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- SANGER, David E. – HABERMAN, Maggie (2016): Donald Trump Sets Conditions for Defending NATO Allies Against Attack. *The New York Times*, 21 July 2016. Source: www.nytimes.com/2016/07/21/us/politics/donald-trump-issues.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- SMURA, Tomasz (2016): NATO na celowniku Trumpa. *Komentarz Pulaskiego*, 2 August 2016. Source: <https://pulaski.pl/nato-na-celowniku-trumpa/> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)

- SMURA, Tomasz (2018): America (still) first? – assessment of the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency. *Pulaski Policy Paper*, No. 2. Source: <https://pulaski.pl/en/analysis-america-still-first-assessment-of-the-first-year-of-donald-trumps-presidency/> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- SMOLAREK, Mirosław (2016): Udział Wojska Polskiego w operacjach pokojowych na Bałkanach. In KOZERAWSKI, Dariusz ed.: *Międzynarodowe operacje pokojowe i stabilizacyjne w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa w XX i XXI wieku*. Warsaw, AON.
- SZKLARSKI, Bohdan (2015): Niekonfrontacyjna asymetria – konceptualizacja pojęcia. In SZKLARSKI, Bohdan ed.: *Niekonfrontacyjna asymetria w relacjach polsko-amerykańskich*. Warsaw, MSZ.
- U.S. Department of Defense (2017): *2018 Budget Request for European Reassurance Initiative Grows to \$4.7 Billion*. Source: www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1199828/2018-budget-request-for-european-reassurance-initiative-grows-to-47-billion/ (Accessed: 19.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2018): Legislation in Poland Regarding Crimes Committed During the Holocaust. *U.S. Department of State*, 27 January 2018. Source: www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/01/277802.htm (Accessed: 19.08.2018.)
- ZIĘBA, Ryszard (2015): Implikacje stosunków polsko-amerykańskich dla polityki zagranicznej Polski. *Przegląd Politologiczny*, No. 2.

Relations between the United States and Romania: Changing Dynamics?

*Mihai Vladimir Zodian*¹

1. Introduction

This chapter offers a short but broad review of the foreign relations between the U.S. and Romania after 1989. Since the middle of the 1990s, there has been a trend of intensifying cooperation, especially in the security and defence domain, but also regarding democratisation efforts, and the development of civil society. U.S. influence is felt not only in the urban popular culture, but also in the way foreign policy is studied and thought in Romania. By contrast, the economic relationship between Romania and the U.S. has been less developed.

There are two general explanations for the evolution of the U.S.–Romania relationship after the fall of the communist regime in 1989: first, the ideological-cultural one, which stresses as a main factor democratisation and Westernisation; and second, the strategic or politico-military explanation, which emphasises factors such as the general distribution of power and the changes in the threat or vulnerability assessments. For the U.S. attitude towards Romania, general ideological concerns (such as extending democracy and free trade) had priority at least until 9/11. After the terrorist attacks of 2001, politico-military interests rose in importance, and they stimulated a more pragmatic form of cooperation which intensified during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also after the Russian actions in Crimea. For Romanian decision-makers and public opinion, the cooperation with the U.S. was, at first, a security assurance in an unstable

¹ Mihai Vladimir Zodian, Researcher, Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies, National Defence University (Romania). Email: zodian@gmail.com

neighbourhood, then a guarantee for democratisation, and finally, the main alliance and source of protection when Moscow started to become more powerful and militarised again.

The main prediction is that the cooperation between the U.S. and Romania will continue along these lines, as long as some of the above mentioned factors do not change.

2. The Political Rapprochement between Romania and the U.S.

Since 1989, the relations between the U.S. and Romania have gone through several stages, and have involved both bilateral and multilateral interactions. The main trends were: 1. a gradual cooperation in the early years, including in the military domain (through programs such as military-to-military exchanges), leading to the accession to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994; 2. an accelerated rapprochement during the second half of the 1990s; and 3. the strategic partnership, which became the main framework of cooperation between the two actors (TOBOȘARU 2013; MIROIU–SOARE 2007). The relationship has always had a more pronounced political and military nature, rather than an economic one (PHINNEMORE 2001).

Multilateral links also influenced the relationship, such as Romania's interactions with the WTO, the IMF, or the World Bank, where the U.S. has an agenda-setting capability. Similarly, organisations where the superpower was not a member, but which were still considered to be components of the Washington-backed international order, such as the EU, must also be mentioned as important factors of influence. In this multilateral context, Romania's accession to NATO had a privileged role, becoming one of the central elements of the Romanian–American cooperation and partnership. The bilateral and multilateral connections are not identical, but they intersect in many domains.

The relationship between the U.S. and Romania deepened after the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina ended by the Dayton Agreement at the end of 1995, showing that U.S. and NATO involvement was necessary to achieve the Western political goals in Southeast Europe (DUFOR 2006; GLENNY 1999; TUDOROIU 1999). The democratisation process in the Balkans has turned out to be sometimes problematic, and diplomatic

means, the involvement of the UN and even the deployment of European forces have not been enough to settle the disputes. This led to a greater U.S. attention on this region. During the 1990s, Bucharest formulated an increasingly pro-Western policy, mobilising domestic public support before the NATO Summit in Madrid in 1997 (PHINNEMORE 2001, 248–264).

Following the Madrid Summit, U.S. President William Clinton paid a visit to Bucharest in July 1997, and the bilateral partnership was formalised by an exchange of letters, aiming to enhance the relations in the political and military fields, among others (CLINTON 1997; TOBOȘARU 2013). It was based on a flexible cooperation formula, related to the so-called conditionality policy, through which the West stimulated internal reforms in the former communist states (LAKE 1993; SMITH 2004; CSIS 2017). The partnership was not the equivalent of an alliance, nor did it guarantee certain benefits, but it served as means of coordinating decisions, cooperative efforts and technical assistance. It gained more complexity over the years, and a higher degree of institutionalisation, as well (CSIS 2017; TOBOȘARU 2013, 1).

During the Kosovo conflict in 1998–1999, Romania supported NATO's intervention, promoted by the Clinton Administration and the Blair Government against the Belgrade regime, and denied the Russian air force overflight over its territory (LAMBETH 2001; SIMONEN 2000). It was a difficult decision, given the existence of critical voices in Romania, invoking the relatively good ties with Serbia. However, in the absence of security guarantees in the post-Cold War period, the leadership decided in favour of the orientation towards the Western structures, and domestically it justified its support to NATO's military action by that notion (TOBOȘARU 2013, 3). At the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1999, when Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined the Alliance, Romania was included in the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which was a method to increase the efficiency of military reforms, especially to ensure interoperability – one of the conditions of membership (NATO 1999).

Bucharest expressed solidarity with the U.S., declaring Romania a “de facto ally of NATO”, in the context of the 11 September 2001 attacks and supported the campaign in Afghanistan (Romanian Parliament 2001). Romania took part in the efforts of the international community within the ISAF mission, and it opened the air base of Mihai Kogălniceanu in Dobrudja to the U.S. forces (U.S. Army Europe 2014; U.S. Department of State 2005). Public opinion has also supported these decisions.

The success of this approach for Romania has become evident very soon. In November 2002, Romania was invited to join NATO, after the member states determined that the main reforms had been implemented, and Romania became an official member in 2004, after the ratification process was completed. Although it was a multilateral decision adopted by consensus, it must be stressed that Washington's role was decisive in setting up the decision about NATO's expansion.

The Romanian–American cooperation was further strengthened during the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, carried out between 2003 and 2009 (MATEI 2007). Romanian contingents were deployed in operations led by Washington, and the Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base served as a transit point for U.S. forces. Romania later offered this base, together with other facilities, to the U.S. for the *Black Sea Area Support Team* which hosted U.S. forces on a principle of rotation, and it was also used to enhance regional cooperation by exercises and trainings (MATEI 2007; U.S. Army Europe 2014; U.S. Department of State 2005). This policy was criticised by the president of France, Jacques Chirac, but it did not cause controversy in the public opinion, which was generally pro-U.S. (TRAYNOR–BLACK 2003).

Romania was interested in cooperation in regions such as the Wider Black Sea Area, which involved the development of relations between the West and states such as Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as the political climate between these states and the Russian Federation began to deteriorate (IONESCU 2006; MATEI 2007). Moscow's intervention in Georgia in 2008 signalled the resumption of its traditional expansionist ambitions in this space. But Bucharest continued its policy of deepening the co-operation with the U.S., embarking on an intensified partnership based on a political declaration in 2011, and it also approved the deployment of components of the U.S.–NATO missile defence shield (U.S. Department of State 2011a).

The East–West tensions have significantly increased due to the conflict in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, starting in 2014. Romania has promoted within NATO the idea of strengthening the defence of the member states of Southeast Europe, and it has supported decisions such as the joint rotational air patrols, conducting exercises and creating a multinational brigade – these decisions were also promoted by the Obama Administration (Reuters 2016). Bucharest also supported the decision to increase NATO members' military budgets to 2% of the GDP. Romania currently spends about 1.5% of its GDP on defence (Administrația Prezidențială 2015).

The general framework of the rapprochement between the U.S. and Romania was defined by the change in the distribution of global and European power. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism led to a general acceptance of liberal ideas. Since a position of power created good grounds to extend ideology, after a short period of uncertainty, the American elites decided to promote the liberal policies of the Western order in Eastern Europe. In turn, Romania has embarked upon a series of complex transition processes, in exchange for much needed security guarantees, which became important again in light of the new threats arising in its neighbourhood.

The political relations played an important role in Romania's accession to NATO, and in the promotion of a reform package, which was needed for the democratisation and interoperability of the security sector, including the defence industry. In the past two decades, political ties with the U.S. have also helped to legitimise certain internal changes.

In recent years, the changes inside Moscow, a more assertive Russian foreign policy, the intervention in Georgia and the conflict in Ukraine have put an increased emphasis on the military dimension of the two states' cooperation. Considering that the new Trump Administration has continued both the support for NATO, and the sanctions policy against Russia, it is highly probable that the partnership between Washington and Bucharest will further develop (MIROIU 2017).

3. An Economic Relaxation

The above described deepening of the political-military relations between the U.S. and Romania was not accompanied by a similar intensification of economic ties. This is explained by the geographical proximity of the EU, and also by some institutional and structural features. Not only is the total volume of U.S. investment in Romania low, but the U.S. is not a significant trading partner either. In fact, Washington has a trade deficit with Romania.

The U.S. has promoted multilateral cooperation and institutions such as the IMF and the WTO, alongside a series of bilateral agreements to open the former communist states (COX 2006; BAN 2014). The parallel enlargement processes of NATO and the EU were based implicitly on the

acceptance of a European priority in the economy, which was determined by geographical proximity and cultural ties. As far as Romania is concerned, the acceptance of Western rules in these areas was in line with the general political interests of the U.S., as well.

Bilateral trade exchanges intensified since 1989, but at a slower pace than the ones with the EU. In 1992, the value of Romanian exports of goods to the U.S. was close to \$150 million (adjusted to the value of 2018), which rose to about \$960 million in 2003, \$1 billion in 2004, and \$2 billion in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Imports from the U.S. had a less impressive evolution, amounting to about \$437 million (in 2018 value) in 1992; \$483 million in 2003; \$669 million in 2004, and \$948 million in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018).

Even from a country-comparative perspective, the Romanian–American trade relations are not well developed (BONCIU 2017). In 2003, the main destinations of Romanian exports were Italy, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Turkey. With regards to imports, Italy, Germany, Russia and France were the main partners of Romania (CIA 2004). In 2004, there were similar trends with Germany, Italy, France, Hungary and the United Kingdom in terms of exports, and Germany, Italy, Hungary, France and Poland in imports (CIA 2005; CIA 2017).

U.S.-based companies were ranked 14th among the top foreign investors in Romania in 2018, accounting for 1.92% of all foreign investment. By comparison, companies registered in the Netherlands accounted for about 20%; Austria around 12%; and Germany just over 11% of foreign investments (Trade Register 2018).

In January 2003, U.S. companies accounted for around 8% of the total foreign investment, occupying the third place, after the Netherlands and Germany. A rough estimate suggests that the absolute value of the American investments, calculated in value of 2018, is only about 10% higher, while the total investments in Romania simply exploded from 2004–2005, mainly due to the EU states (Trade Register 2018).

Romania used to have an energy sector with strategic value, but the forced industrialisation and other factors led to a reduction in its value. However, Romania can still benefit from a lower dependence on energy imports compared to other states in Central and Eastern Europe (Energy Information Administration 2018). Regarding natural gas, the local market

is dominated by a state-owned company, Romgaz and OMV Petrom, an Austrian majority company with an important public presence. Natural gas imports accounted for around 25% in 2013 and there are hopes for the development of maritime operations (VISENESCU–BARTELET 2017; LAZĂR–LAZĂR 2015; KATONA 2018). The main oil companies are OMV Petrom, Rompetrol (Kazakhstan) and Lukoil (Russia) with imports rising to 60% (LAZĂR–LAZĂR 2015). The National Institute of Statistics considered that Romania's energy independence was about 78% in 2016. In the meanwhile, the cooperation with American firms exists but is relatively a niche in the energy sector (TUDOREL 2018).

Several features and trends are easy to see. Regarding trade, investment, energy and the financial sector, Romania is closely linked to the EU, where it has been a member since 2007. Its main partners are large states such as Germany, Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Central European countries, like Austria, Hungary and Poland, while imports from China have also shown an interesting trend of growth (CIA 2017).

It is difficult to estimate whether the accession to the EU has affected Romania's economic relations with the U.S., since it involves judging counterfactual arguments. The trade between the two actors has been on an increasing trend, but it was virtually overtaken by the exchanges with the EU market. It should be noted that as an EU member, Romania is also part of the all trade liberalisation agreements in the transatlantic space.

The evolution of Romanian–American relations in this field is thus influenced by the quadripartite structure of the world economy (where the core of the developed world is composed of the U.S., the EU, Japan and China); the average development level of Bucharest; and the geographical proximity of the partner. Romanian–U.S. bilateral exchanges increased impressively in the first decade after 1989, but this development slowed down afterwards; none of the two partners has a significant share in each other's trade portfolio. There is a contrast between the political-military and the economic ties, which partly explains the foreign policy trajectory pursued by Bucharest. Thus, any divergence of interest between Washington and Bucharest in terms of the European agricultural regime, steel, or the trade deficit are somewhat secondary in comparison to political-military relations.

4. Themes of Bilateral Cooperation

The Romanian–U.S. security cooperation is centred around NATO, but it also involves bilateral issues such as the strategic partnership, or other formulas. For example, Romania has actively supported the nuclear non-proliferation and counter-terrorism policies of the U.S. in recent years, including the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, which aims to protect vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials (WNN 2009). Bucharest also agreed with the 2% GDP target for the military budgets of NATO member countries, adjusting its own spending and reaching that target in 2017 (Administrația Prezidențială 2015; IISS 2018).

NATO membership led to a new emphasis on missions and training, while the tensions between the alliance members and Russia following the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine have underlined the value of readiness. According to a study made by Polish analyst, Lukasz Kulesa, Romania took part in five major allied exercises between 2014 and 2016 (KULESA 2016). These included, among others, land and naval units, training and force deployment activities and multinational cooperation practices.

For Romania, international missions were both a means of reform, and an important aspect of strengthening the relationship with the U.S. Participating in these missions was motivated either by the bilateral ties or by multilateral structures, such as NATO coalitions, or UN and EU operations. According to the IISS Military Balance, the number of annual military posts filled by Romanians in these types of activities varied from around 1,500 in 2004, to a peak of just over 2,000 in 2011, then it went down to around 1,000 in 2017 (IISS 2005; IISS 2012; IISS 2018). This is a direct result of Romania's military cooperation with the U.S. These numbers reflect the involvement of Romania in various operations during the Afghanistan conflict, especially the ISAF mission, and in the Iraqi theatre with over 8,000 personnel in total. But they also include Romania's participation in the Balkans, especially in the KFOR mission (IISS 2005; IISS 2012; IISS 2018; POPESCU 2009; VIȘAN 2014; RĂPAN 2016).

Bucharest accepted in 2011 the placement of elements of the European Phased Adaptive Approach ballistic missile defence project, launched by the U.S. and linked to similar NATO assets (U.S. Department of State 2011a). The missile "shield" in Romania is composed mainly of land-based interceptors, and it was installed after the Obama Administration changed the ambitious anti-ballistic program of its predecessor to a more flexible

and limited system (Arms Control Association 2018). It is designed to give protection to NATO allies in Europe against ballistic missiles coming from the Middle East, but it also symbolised the consolidation of political relationship between Washington and Bucharest (KRISHNA 2016). Germany, Poland, Turkey and Romania were chosen as the main hosts of the different elements of the system, in what was also seen at the time as a more pragmatic attitude towards Russia, who fiercely protested against both proposals (Arms Control Association 2018).

Romania's military is going through a process of technical modernisation, which was accelerated by the recent increase in expenditures. This includes a variety of procurement programs, and some of the most important ones involve acquisitions and technical assistance from the U.S., or buying American technology, like F-16 fighter jets from Portugal. With U.S. support, Romania also acquired HIMARS artillery, and the Patriot 3+ system (MIHAIL 2017; Camera Deputaţilor 2017). These programs will continue in the future, since the deals are made for multiple years.

Thus, the security cooperation has been closely linked with, and has followed the main trends of the political relations: first, a gradual approach, then the preparation for NATO membership, and finally, the intensification in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. Even if there are some differences of opinion, for example in the case of the recognition of Kosovo's independence, the common interests have been more important (at least in the last two decades). It is expected that this type of cooperation will be deepened in light of the regional tensions, and the deterioration of East–West relations.

For example, in the 1990s acquiring a U.S. visa was a symbol of belonging to the Western Community, but after joining the EU, these visas became less desired by the public. An explanation is that at least a few million Romanian citizens migrated towards the West inside the EU, and American visas became less attractive (UN 2017). The problem of continued asymmetry in the visa practices of the U.S. and certain European states was Europeanised, and now it is handled by the EU Commission, which aims at introducing Romania on the list of countries which enjoy U.S. visa waivers (European Commission 2017).

Regarding the issue of threat perceptions, according to an IRES survey published in April 2015, for 77% of the respondents there was nothing from the regional or international security agenda among the first five issues of concern (the respondents included the following issues on the

list: corruption, poverty, the state of the economy, unemployment and the pension system) (IRES 2015). Besides, 40% of those questioned believed that there was no danger of territorial losses, 29% said that there was little risk to their security, and 44% did not think that national identity was threatened (IRES 2015). In contrast, according to another survey conducted by Gallup, 57% of the respondents considered the Russian Federation a threat (RAY–ESIPOVA 2016a).

The Romanian public opinion is usually favourable to the U.S., NATO and the EU, and there are no far-reaching challenges regarding the ways in which the fundamental political interests of the country are defined and pursued (TOBOȘARU 2013). Consensus is often stressed, illustrating the importance of approaching a classic model of foreign and security policy. For example, the decision to increase defence expenditures to reach a minimum of 2% of the GDP for the next decade enjoyed a strong internal political consensus (Administrația Prezidențială 2015). The document announcing this decision was promoted by the Romanian President, and approved by the representatives of the main political parties.

As far as the Western policies are concerned, according to Gallup, 50% of Romanians saw a source of protection in the Alliance in 2016; 47% approved the U.S. leadership in 2007, but only 41% approved it in 2017. Although this shows a declining trend, it is still among the firsts in Europe, suggesting that the image of the U.S. here does not necessarily depend on the political orientation of the administration (ENGLISH 2009; SMITH 2017; Gallup 2018). Regarding the Ukrainian crisis, 52% of the respondents declared themselves in favour of sanctions imposed on Russia in 2016 (RAY–ESIPOVA 2016b).

Romanian–American cooperation on issues such as democratisation, the rule of law, or the promotion of human rights is foreseen, *inter alia*, in the Declaration on Strategic Partnership, which was adopted in 2011 (U.S. Department of State 2011b). It takes over and continues the objectives of the conditionality policies, and it is basically in line with the strategies of the 1990s, as well as the reform of the security system that has prepared Romania for NATO membership. It is interesting to note that, according to the document, there is now an Eastern dimension of this form of collaboration.

There are no significant areas of disagreement between the U.S. and Romania on security and economic matters, and this is explained by the global and regional context, as well as by local conditions. The

U.S. insistence on promoting democratisation meant that the strategic partnership includes not only classical foreign policy issues, but also questions about political regime and human rights, which sometimes can be controversial. This dual nature of the partnership is also expected to continue, since it is the product of a long-term tradition in the American foreign policy establishment.

5. Conclusions

This chapter showed how the international context, the U.S. and Romanian definition of interests have led to a partnership and an alliance once the communist system fell in 1989. After the end of the Cold War, Bucharest has gained an opportunity for security guarantees and ideological recognition.

The 1990s witnessed a complex process that led to a political-military rapprochement between the U.S. and Romania. It started with Bucharest's aspirations to join NATO, and led to the conclusion of the strategic partnership. The Kosovo crisis has strengthened the pro-Western orientation of Romania, and the 1999 Washington Summit of NATO led to the adoption of the technical reform criteria for Romania's integration through the MAP. Following the attacks of 9/11, the security relations have developed exponentially.

The acceptance of Romania's NATO candidacy in 2002, its participation in the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the use of the Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base highlighted these strengthening ties. Besides, consultations on the economy and the democratic reforms have also continued, and the strategic partnership has been deepened and institutionalised, most notably through the 2011 joint declaration. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was followed by new forms of military co-operation, including enforcing the 2% GDP target for military spending that had previously stagnated, exercises, confidence-building measures and procurement projects.

Besides the rapprochement with the U.S., Romania has also developed political and economic ties with the EU, focusing on cooperation and integration policies. The trade, the investment, and the financial sectors have been liberalised after the fall of the communist regime, and European

companies have soon become the main external partners of the country. The 2007 EU accession continued these trends but did not initiate them.

By reviewing the thematic areas, it is not surprising that the security field is the strongest aspect of Romanian–American relations. The main foreign policy decisions relating to the U.S. and NATO are generally supported by the Romanian public, as well as specific policies such as the sanctions against the Russian Federation. Moscow has a rather negative image in the eyes of the Romanian public due to historic reasons.

Regarding the future, it is expected that the security environment in the vicinity of Romania will still be characterised by the East–West confrontation, and the ongoing tensions between great powers. It is likely that Romania will continue to promote the strengthened presence of the U.S. and NATO in Southeast Europe. In the meanwhile, despite the initial promises of the Trump Administration, the U.S. is likely to maintain its commitment towards the alliance, and continue to give assurances to the Eastern European states. However, a greater emphasis might be put on sub-regional cooperation efforts, especially in the face of the security problems of the Middle East, Southeast Asia and North Asia.

The chances of intensifying bilateral economic relations are less likely, due to the importance of the EU for Romania, but also because there are different perspectives between Washington and Bucharest regarding key issues in agriculture, or iron and steel. Much will depend on the trade policy of President Trump, and the U.S. negotiations with Brussels.

In particular, the military dimension and the strategic partnership will probably enjoy a priority in the future, as well. This will include exercises, new acquisitions, the exchange of experience and best practices, and technical assistance. Romania has already decided to allocate 2% of its GDP to the defence, which corresponds with the U.S. policy goals. However, a plea for stronger regional involvement from Washington is not excluded.

Conflicts such as the Ukrainian crisis highlight for Romania the importance of NATO, and its partnership with the U.S., as well as the potential problem areas such as the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and Transdniester. Together with other recent developments, such as Brexit, and the uncertainties about the future of the EU, there is an increased need for prudent policies and a more profound reassurance of NATO's cohesion.

In contrast to previous expectations, the security risks have diversified. Thus, both the general political relationship, and the specific issue-areas

point towards a more intense cooperation between the U.S. and Romania during the Trump Administration. Considering Washington's overall strategic interests, Bucharest's contributions, including its participation in military missions, its political support, its exemplary defence spending, and the current conflicts in the former Soviet space, further strengthening the bilateral ties would also align with Washington's best interests. Here, the security dimension will play an important part, but due to political and cultural reasons, issues such as the democratisation in Southeast Europe will also matter. In the meanwhile, trade and investment ties will probably remain secondary issues in the foreseeable future.

Bibliography

- Administrația Prezidențială (2015): *National Political Agreement on increasing defence funding*. Source: www.presidency.ro/ro/presedinte/documente-programatice/acord-politic-national-privind-cresterea-finantarii-pentru-aparare-13-ianuarie-2015 (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Arms Control Association (2018): *European Phased Adaptive Approach at a Glance*. July 2017. Source: www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Phasedadaptiveapproach (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- BAN, Cornel (2014): *Dependență și dezvoltare. Economia politică a capitalismului românesc*. Cluj, Editura Tact.
- BONCIU, Florin (2017): Considerații asupra dimensiunii economice a parteneriatului strategic pentru secolul XXI dintre România și SUA. In MUREȘAN, Bogdan ed.: *Relația de securitate transatlantică la 20 de ani de la semnarea Parteneriatului Strategic România-SUA*. Institutul European din Romania Policy Briefs, November 2017. Source: http://ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Final_Policy-Brief-4_Relatia-Transatlantica_web.pdf (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- CBOS (2018): Stosunek do innych narodów. Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej. Source: www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2018/K_037_18.PDF (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Camera Deputaților (2017): *Lege pentru realizarea "Capabilității de apărare aeriană cu baza la sol" aferentă programului de înzestrare esențial "Sistem de rachete sol-aer cu bătaie mare (HSAM)"*. 20 November 2017. Source: www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/upl_pck2015.proiect?idp=16684 (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- CIA (2004): *The World Factbook*. Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/download/download-2005/index.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)

- CIA (2005): *The World Factbook*. Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/download/download-2005/index.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- CIA (2017): *The World Factbook*. Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- CLINTON, William J. (1997): *Remarks to the Citizens of Bucharest, Romania*. The American Presidency Project. Source: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-citizens-bucharest-romania (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- CSIS Conference Report (2017): Twenty-First Century Partnerships: Examining U.S. Partnerships Worldwide. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, July 2017. Source: https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/170808_Summary_Twenty-First%20Century%20Partnerships.pdf?4UE_zipkfzvfzXAEN-F7uuPXrJulouoWd (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- COX, Robert W. (2006): Problems of Power and Knowledge in a Changing World Order. In STUBBS, Richard – UNDERHILL, Geoffrey R. D. (2006): *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- DUFOUR, Jean Louis (2004): *Crizele internaționale. De la Beijing (1900) la Kosovo (1999)*. București, Corint.
- Energy Information Administration (2018): *Romania's Key Energetic Statistics*. Source: www.eia.gov/beta/international/country.cfm?iso=ROU (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- ENGLISH, Cynthia (2009): U.S. Leadership Gets Approval Boost in Parts of Europe. *Gallup*, 19 October 2009. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/123710/Leadership-Gets-Approval-Boost-Parts-Europe.aspx> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- European Commission (2017): Visa reciprocity: Political and diplomatic efforts continue to yield results. *European Commission*, 20 December 2017. Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5314_en.htm (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Gallup (2018): Rating World Leaders: The U.S. vs. Germany, China and Russia. *Gallup 2018*. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/reports/225587/rating-world-leaders-2018.aspx> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- GLENNY, Misha (1999): *The Balkans, 1804–1999, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers*. London, Granta Books.
- IONESCU, Mihail (2006): *Marea Neagră. De la “lacul bizantin” la provocările secolului XXI*. București, Editura Militară.
- IISS (2005): *The Military Balance 2005–2006*. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Routledge.
- IISS (2012): *The Military Balance 2012*. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Routledge.

- IISS (2018): *The Military Balance 2018*. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Routledge.
- IRES (2015): România înfricoșată. *IRES*, April 2015.
- KATONA, Viktor (2018): Romania Poised To Ramp Up Gas Output. *OilPrice*, 14 January 2018. Source: <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Natural-Gas/Romania-Poised-To-Ramp-Up-Gas-Output.html> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- KRISHNA, Rahul (2016): The curious case of the NATO missile shield in Romania. *ORF*, 8 July 2016. Source: www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-curious-case-of-the-nato-missile-shield-in-romania/ (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- KRAJŠNIK, Milenko – ŽUTIĆ, Aleksandra (2017): Impact of the Enlargement of the European Union on the Foreign Trade and Development of the New Members. *Economics*, Vol. 5, No. 1. 36–51. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/eoik-2017-0010>
- KULESA, Lukasz (2016): Towards a New Equilibrium: Minimising the risks of NATO and Russia's new military postures. *European Leadership Network*, 8 February 2016. Source: www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/policy-brief/towards-a-new-equilibrium-minimising-the-risks-of-nato-and-russias-new-military-posture/ (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- LAKE, Anthony (1993): From Containment to Enlargement – Address at the School of advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. *Mount Holyoke College*, 21 September 1993. Source: www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- LAMBETH, Benjamin S. (2001): *NATO's Air War for Kosovo. A Strategic and Operational Assessment*. RAND Corporation.
- LAZĂR, Cornel – LAZĂR, Mirela (2015): Romanian Oil Industry Decline. *Economic Insights – Trends and Challenges*, Vol. 4 (67), No. 4. 37–44. Source: www.upg-bulletin-se.ro/archive/2015-4/ (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- MATEI, Florina Cristina (2007): Parteneriatul strategic SUA–România. In ZODIAN, Mihai Vladimir (2007): *România în Europa și în lume*. București, Editura Militară.
- MIHAIL, Anca-Cristina (2017): *Romania 2017*. Ministry of National Defence – Information and Public Relations Directorate.
- MIROIU, Andrei (2017): România–SUA 2017–2021: realități și oportunități. In MUREȘAN, Bogdan ed.: *Relația de securitate transatlantică la 20 de ani de la semnarea Parteneriatului Strategic România–SUA*. Colecția Policy Briefs, Nr. 4.
- MIROIU, Andrei – SOARE, Simona (2007): Politica de securitate a României (1878–2006). O perspectivă istorică. In GHICA, Luciana Alexandra – ZULEAN, Marian eds.: *Politica de securitate națională. Concepte, instituții, procese*. Iași, Polirom.

- NATO (1999): Membership Action Plan (MAP). *NATO*, 24 April 1999. Source: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27444.htm (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- PHINNEMORE, David (2001): Romania and Euro-Atlantic Integration since 1989: a Decade of Frustration? In LIGHT, Duncan – PHINNEMORE, David eds.: *Post-Communist Romania. Coming to Terms with Transition*. Basingstoke, Palgrave. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780333977910_13
- POPESCU, Andrei Luca (2009): România trage linie după 6 luni în Irak. *România Liberă*, 30 July 2009. Source: <http://romanioliberal.ro/actualitate/eveniment/romania-trage-linie-dupa-6-ani-in-irak-161098> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- RĂPAN, Daniela (2016): The Contribution of NATO and EU Expeditionary Missions to Strengthening Security. In ANTON, Stan ed.: *International Scientific Conference Strategies XXI*. București, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare.
- RAY, Julie – ESIPOVA, Neli (2016a): Eastern Europeans, CIS Residents See Russia, U.S. as Threats. *Gallup*, 4 April 2016. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/190415/eastern-europeans-cis-residents-russia-threats.aspx> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- RAY, Julie – ESIPOVA, Neli (2016b): Russians, EU Residents See Sanctions Hurting Their Economies. *Gallup*, 28 April 2016. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/191141/russians-residents-sanctions-hurting-economies.aspx> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Reuters (2016): Bulgaria says will not join any NATO Black Sea fleet after Russian warning. *Reuters*, 16 June 2016. Source: www.reuters.com/article/nato-bulgaria-blacksea/bulgaria-says-will-not-join-any-nato-black-sea-fleet-after-russian-warning-idUSL8N19835X (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- Romanian Parliament (2001): *Decision of the Romanian Parliament no. 21/2001 on the participation of Romania along with NATO member states, to the missions for combating the international terrorism*. Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna. Source: www.osce.org/fsc/31661?download=true (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- SIMONEN, Katarina (2000): *L'Operation Force Aliee, un cas d'intervention humanitaire*. Collège de Defense de l'OTAN.
- SMITH, Karen (2004): *Politica externă a Uniunii Europene*. București, Editura Trei.
- SMITH, Michael (2017): Most NATO Members in Eastern Europe See It as Protection. *Gallup*, 10 February 2017. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/203819/nato-members-eastern-europe-protection.aspx> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- TOBOȘARU, Nicolae (2013): *The Romania–U.S. Strategic Partnership. History and Geopolitical Significance*. Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Trade Register (2004): *Societăți cu participare străină la capital. Sinteză statistică 2003*. Ministerul Justiției, Oficiul Național al Registrului Comerțului.

- Trade Register (2018): *Societăți cu participare străină la capital. Sinteză statistică 2017*. Ministerul Justiției, Oficiul Național al Registrului Comerțului.
- TRAYNOR, Ian – BLACK, Ian (2003): Eastern Europe dismayed at Chirac snub. *The Guardian*, 19 February 2003. Source: www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/19/iraq.france (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- TUDOREL, Andrei (2018): *Anuarul statistic al României, 2017*. Institutul Național de Statistică.
- TUDOROIU, Theodor (1999): *Dimensiunea balcanică a securității europene*. București, Lucretius.
- UN (2017): *International Migration Report 2017*. United Nations, Population Division, 2017. Source: www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- U.S. Army Europe (2014): *Mihai Kogălniceanu Air Base Passenger Transit Center*. Source: www.army.mil/standto/2014-02-27 (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- U.S. Census Bureau (2018): *Trade in Goods with Romania*. Source: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4850.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2005): Agreement between the United States of America and Romania regarding the activities of the United States forces located on the territory of Romania. *U.S. Department of State*, 6 December 2005. Source: www.state.gov/documents/organization/75826.pdf (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2011a): Agreement between the United States of America and Romania on the Deployment of the United States Ballistic Missile Defense System in Romania. *U.S. Department of State*, 13 September 2011. Source: www.state.gov/t/avc/trty/172915.htm (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2011b): Joint Declaration on the Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century Between the United States of America and Romania. *U.S. Department of State*, 13 September 2011. Source: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/172241.htm> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- VIȘAN, George (2014): România, la 10 ani de la integrarea în NATO. *Civitas Politics*, 31 March 2014. Source: <https://civitaspolitics.org/2014/03/31/romania-la-10-ani-de-la-integrarea-in-nato/> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- VISENESCU, Ramona – BARTELET, Henry (2017): How Romania can become a key player in the European gas market. *Energy Post*, 6 November 2017. Source: <http://energypost.eu/romania-key-player-gas-eu/> (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)
- WNN (2009): Romanian uranium return. *World Nuclear News*, 6 July 2009. Source: www.world-nuclear-news.org/RS_Romanian_uranium_return_0607092.html (Accessed: 21.08.2018.)

This page intentionally left blank.

Relations between the United States and Serbia: Asymmetric Confrontation and Relation¹

Slobodan Janković²

1. Introduction

The U.S. and Serbia are highly asymmetrical in size, in international position and in their respective roles. In the period of 1989–2017, Serbia existed in the framework of four different countries. It was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – SFRY (1989–1991), then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – FRY (1992–2003), afterwards Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006), and finally the Republic of Serbia (re-established its nationhood in June 2006). During these times, it suffered changes in size and in political position.

Despite several setbacks due to the role of the U.S. in the Balkans, the U.S. and Serbia had a significant level of cooperation in the examined period, in particular in the security sector. However, most of the determinants shaping these relationships are not of a bilateral nature.

Serbia at the beginning of the 1990s was designated as a ‘bad guy’ in the Balkans. It wanted to keep Yugoslavia together, and safeguard the interests of the Serbs and Serbia in the Yugoslav framework.

¹ This chapter was created within the project “Serbia in contemporary international relations: Strategic directions of development and firming the position of Serbia in international integrative processes – foreign affairs, international economic, legal and security aspects”, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, number 179029, for the period 2011–2018.

² Slobodan Janković, PhD, Head of the Centre for Neighbourly and Mediterranean countries; Research Fellow, Institute of International Politics and Economics (Serbia). Email: slobodan@diplomacy.bg.ac.rs

Clearly, the changes in the status of Serbia, its political elite and the policies it pursued, along with the different accentuation of the European and Middle Eastern policies of the U.S. gave different results.

2. The 1989–1991 Period

2.1. *The political situation*

Yugoslavia in 1991 had a mixed population of 23,542,815 where neither group was dominant, nor did it possess control, or the necessary mechanisms to impose itself over the others.³ The Yugoslav identity was weak.

Table 1.
Yugoslav census 1991

Ethnicity	Percentage of the entire population
Croats	19.70%
Slovenes	7.50%
Bosniaks	10.00%
Serbs	36.20%
Albanians	9.30%
Macedonians	5.80%
Montenegrins	2.30%
Others	9.20%

Source: Popisi stanovništva Jugoslavije 1991

In January 1989, under the leadership of President Slobodan Milošević (elected in 1986) Serbia became the strongest member of the Yugoslav federation. At the same time, Croatian retired General Franjo Tuđman and few politicians from Slovenia had already established ties with Germany and Austria in order to pursue their independence (JANKOVIĆ 2017, 39–68) – “they prepared the ground for the positive attitude and support of the Western nations for their cause before the conflict” (PAVKOVIĆ–RADAN 2016, 147–155; JANKOVIĆ 2017).

³ Publications of the Census Returns of 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991. Belgrade, SZS.

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia ceased to function after February 1990. Thus, one of two federal pillars (the Army being the second) crumbled. This situation coupled with an economic crisis led the CIA to conclude: “Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within one year and will probably dissolve within two. Economic reform will not stave off the breakup. [...] There will be a protracted armed uprising by Albanians in Kosovo. A full-scale, interrepublic war is unlikely, but serious intercommunal conflict will accompany the breakup and will continue afterward. The violence will be intractable and bitter” (CIA 1990, iii).

2.2. The U.S. factor and the dissolution of Yugoslavia

While the White House was supporting the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and the international financial institutions were backing economic centralisation, members of the U.S. Congress lobbied against the Yugoslav interests. Joseph DioGuardi, Tom Lantos and Robert Dole were among the most prominent members of the U.S. Congress advocating against the SFRY. Later they would become lobbyists for Kosovo’s independence. In the period of 1989–1991, U.S. policy vis-à-vis Yugoslavia was to promote economic and politic reforms in order to transform (not disintegrate) the state.

Despite its original intention to keep Yugoslavia together, the U.S. in 1990 decided to finance solely the ‘democratic forces’ in the Yugoslav republics and not the Yugoslav structures themselves. The U.S. Congress passed the 1991 Foreign Operations Appropriations Law 101–513 on 5 November 1990, the side effect of which was a blow for the already fragile Yugoslav unity.

Without previous warning, a section of Law 101–513 cut off all aid, trade, credits and loans from the U.S. to Yugoslavia within six months. It also ordered separate elections in each of the six republics that make up Yugoslavia, requiring State Department approval for the election procedures before aid would be resumed to the separate republics. The legislation also required U.S. personnel in all international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF to enforce this cut-off policy for all credits and loans. Unlike for CEE countries, where the U.S. advocated these types of policy prescriptions at the national level, here the

U.S. adopted an approach that favoured the reform within internal units, and not at the national level. Per se, it was a signal of an important change in the foreign policy of Washington.

Only forces that the U.S. defined as “democratic forces” would receive funding. This meant an influx of funds to small right-wing nationalist parties in a financially strangled region, which was suddenly thrown into crisis by the overall funding cut (Appropriations Act 1991).

Serbian insistence on a strong federation, and its desire to maintain the red pentagram (star) on the flag in the moment of the general demise of communism in Europe exposed it as a designated bad guy.

3. The U.S. and Serbia and the Wars between 1991–2000

3.1. 1991–1992: The war begins

The U.S. did not react in vacuum, but in concomitance with other foreign and internal actors. After the series of referenda on independence, Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed its independence on 25 June 1991.

In this period, the U.S. acted multilaterally through NATO and the UN, and it also intervened directly. In response to the war that emerged between the central government and the separatist states, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 713 on 25 September 1991 and imposed a “general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia” (UN SC Resolution 713 1991).

NATO announced in November 1991 that: “All attempts to change existing borders through the use of force or a policy of *fait accompli* are unacceptable; we will not recognise any unilateral change of borders, external or internal, brought about by such means” (NATO 1991). On the same day, the Alliance proclaimed its new Strategic Concept that introduced a broader framework and space for action. It acted as a guarantor of the internal administrative lines as future borders. This line was followed by the Badinter Commission, which on 20 November declared that the (internal) boundaries of Croatia, and BiH with Serbia are to be considered as frontiers (PELLET 1992). With the dissolution of the country, the Serbian and Montenegrin leadership agreed in October 1991, during the Badinter

Arbitration Commission to remain in Yugoslavia.⁴ These two republics would form the FRY in April 1992 (ĐUKANOVIĆ 2014).

In the meantime, U.S. diplomats, Secretary of State James Baker and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger (Ambassador in Belgrade in the 1960s) tried to prevent the collapse of Yugoslavia on several occasions, urging compromise and reforms that would allow the country to survive (FRIEDMAN 1991). Nevertheless, the conflict was evolving towards a full-blown civil war in Croatia starting in 1991, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) starting in 1992.

The war in Bosnia, in particular, came after the last U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmermann advised Alija Izetbegović, the leader of the Party of Democratic Action in BiH to back out from José Cutileiro's plan which was previously signed by all parties. According to *The New York Times*, Zimmermann said: "He said he didn't like it. I told him, if he didn't like it, why sign it?" (THOMAS 2003, 9). Thus, the leader of Bosnian Muslims withdrew his signature on 28 March 1992. The European Commission recognised BiH on 6 April 1992 and the war began the same day the Axis powers attacked Yugoslavia 51 years before.

3.2. Serbia vis-à-vis the U.S. and the end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia

The room to manoeuvre in the international arena was shrinking, and it was utterly aggravated with the outbreak of the war in BiH. On 13 May, the European Commission and the U.S. removed their ambassadors from Belgrade. The UN imposed sanctions against the FRY on 30 May 1992, accusing Serbia of not respecting UN SC Resolution 752 of 15 May 1992, and admonishing Croatia for not respecting it. Milošević tried to mitigate Western hostility by finding persons who would be more acceptable

⁴ It was established by the European (Economic) Community (EC) as a body of the Conference on Yugoslavia (the 'EC Conference') convened through the Declaration of 27 August 1991 by the EC as a tool for reaction to the dissolution of the former SFRY.

to both the internal public and the foreign powers.⁵ The Presidential candidate of the third Yugoslavia (FRY, formed on 27 April 1992) was a Serbian intellectual, Dobrica Ćosić. Ćosić together with Milošević named American businessman, Milan Panić the first Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (from 14 July 1992). Ćosić and Panić tried to fulfil the conditions of lifting the UN sanctions. The FRY recognised Slovenia and BiH, and announced the possibility of recognising the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Croatia according to the boundaries arranged by the communists in the SFRJ, in August 1992. However, in response, the UN Security Council decided that there was no continuity of the SFRY and that the FRY cannot automatically be a member of the UN, instead it had to apply for a new membership.⁶ Besides, the sanctions were augmented in November 1992 (UN SCR 787). Thus, instead of giving signs of reconciliation, the U.S.-led Western community sent a message that suggested to Serbia (and Montenegro) that whoever ruled Serbia, it would be ostracised and condemned.

After an all-out war, and the rejection of several propositions of peace, Washington decided to end the war in 1994. The first step was the creation of a Muslim–Croatian Federation in BiH on 18 March 1994 (Washington Agreement 1994). The Croatian actions against the Serbian held territories in May and in August 1995 (with the assistance and advice of the U.S. private military company, Military Professional Resources Incorporated – MPRI) ended the war in Croatia, and hastened the peace in Bosnia. With the Dayton Agreement signed on 20 November 1995 in an American military base in Ohio, the war in Bosnia was over. The FRY, and BiH recognized “each other as sovereign independent States within their international borders” (UN 1995). This was the time when former U.S. military intelligence officer, James Pardew started a fruitful diplomatic

⁵ UN Security Council, Resolution 757 (1992) sanctions international trade, scientific and technical cooperation, sports and cultural exchanges, air travel and the travel of government officials. Further sanctions imposed by UN SC were: UN SCR 787 (16 November 1992): shipping sanction; UN SCR 820 (17 April 1993): prohibition of import-export in Serb entities; UN SCR 942 (23 September 1994): economic sanctions on Bosnian Serbs.

⁶ UN SCR 777 (19 September 1992). In addition, on 6 October the same year, the UN SC continued to condemn Serbs in Croatia accusing them of ethnic cleansing in UN protected areas but refused to do the same regarding ethnic cleansing of Serbs in parts of Croatia held by the government in Zagreb.

career in the Balkans. The U.S. and the Western world lifted most of the sanctions, except for the outer wall of sanctions. The economy was performing better since reforms were implemented in January 1994, and in particular after the loosening of the isolation. A crucial result of the peace agreement for the Serbs was the creation of the Republika Srpska, one of two entities forming BiH with close to 49% of its territory.

For a while, Milošević has been described in Western press as a guarantor of peace (WELLER–WOLFF 2013; LEBOR 2005). The British ambassador in Belgrade, Sir Ivor Roberts, and the U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, Richard Miles, were shown in the Yugoslav media during their visit to state-owned factories during the election campaign. This was a symbolic sign of a support to the coalition led by Slobodan Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia (NIKŠIĆ 1996). It seemed that the relations between Serbia and the U.S. might be normalised.

3.3. *The Kosovo issue from 1996–2000*

In November 1996, an important and dangerous situation was underway in the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija. Foreign intelligence services were engaged in organising and training the Kosovo Albanians, mostly in the neighbouring Albania (DELISO 2007). *The Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo* (FARK; in Albanian: Forcat e Armatosura të Republikës së Kosovës), a paramilitary organisation of the Ibrahim Rugova Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) was liquidated by the more aggressive and U.S.-oriented UCK by 1998.⁷ In addition, Bin Laden’s Al Qaeda was also operational previously in Bosnia.⁸ Despite this, the U.S. capitalised on the terrorist activities⁹ and the subsequent armed rebellion of Albanians in Kosovo to test NATO and its new strategy of collective security and out of area missions (NATO 1999).

⁷ On assassinations see Government of Serbia 2003, 11.

⁸ On Al Qaeda and Mujaheedin in Bosnia and in Albania see LA VERLE 2002, 9; HOGG 1992.

⁹ About the ties of the U.S. with the criminal and terrorist UCK organisation see CRAIG 1999.

German and other Western media channels claimed that Serbian police massacred civilians in Rugovo and in Račak (Kosovo).¹⁰ U.S. diplomat, William Walker played an important role in the start of the war. He claimed that the clash of the Serbian police and armed terrorists in the village of Račak resulted in the death of 40 or 45 Albanian civilians, but he did not have hard evidence for such allegations¹¹ (European Union 1999; JOHNSTONE 2002, 242–244). Besides Račak, Western governments also claimed that Serbia was preparing for a so called Operation Horseshoe to forcefully push out Albanians from Kosovo. “A retired brigadier general in the German Army, however, later stated that the claims of a plan were faked from a vague intelligence report in order to deflect growing criticism in Germany of the bombing” (ABRAHAMS 2001, 59). As Kelly Greenhill explains, evidence suggests that the primary objective of the Serbian forces was to destroy Albanian separatists (GREENHILL 2010, 132–133).

Serbia was under pressure from NATO countries. In the Rambouillet peace talks, the U.S. was a biased mediator. After Serbia accepted initial proposals, new requirements were added. Kissinger himself noted that “the Rambouillet text, which called on Serbia to admit NATO troops throughout Yugoslavia, was a provocation, an excuse to start bombing. Rambouillet is not a document that an angelic Serb could have accepted. It was a terrible diplomatic document that should never have been presented in that form” (KISSINGER 1999).

On 24 March 1999, NATO and the U.S. started an illegal war under international law. It was conducted without the approval of the UN Security Council.¹² This was the first post-Cold War war of NATO, and since 1945 the first grand scale war effort on European soil with the participation of regular armies from more than one continent. All NATO countries with the logistical support of the FRY neighbours attacked Serbia. This invoked a change in Russian politics.

¹⁰ For this see a collection of papers with testimony of the Head of UN civilian mission in Bosnia (HERMAN 2011).

¹¹ He even used force against Helena Ranta, Finnish pathologist, head of the forensics team in Račak – the American diplomat, William Walker “the head of the OSCE Kosovo monitoring mission broke a pencil in two and threw the pieces at her when she was not willing to use sufficiently strong language about the Serbs” (RANTA 2008; KÜNTZEL 2000).

¹² The resolution was sponsored by Joseph Biden Jr. a day before the attack on the FRY was rejected in Congress (Congress 1999).

From Serbia's perspective, this war was seen as an opportunity for NATO to promote the new just war doctrine, and to affirm the role of NATO as the major guarantor of security in Europe. In fact, during the intervention, NATO adopted its new strategy calling for humanitarian interventions and emphasising its role as the guarantor of European security.

As a result, NATO occupied Serbia's Southern province. In response to the former atrocities by Belgrade, ethnic cleansing or "the onslaught led by Kosovo Albanian extremists" took place against Serbs and other non-Albanians.¹³ Milošević was still in power in Belgrade despite having lost the war. He was facing isolation and a new round of sanctions. Kosovo and Metohija came under a UN temporary mandate defined in UN SC Resolution 1244 that envisaged its status inside Yugoslavia (and Serbia) (UN SC Resolution 713 1991). KFOR also started its operation in the region: "The resolution provides for an interim period of autonomy for Kosovo of undefined length, until negotiations on the future status of the province take place" (WOEHREL 2006). The special representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of the UN leads UNMIK, while NATO has a majority component and control of KFOR, reduced from 50,000 to 3,500 in the year 2018.¹⁴

It seemed that better bilateral relations between the U.S. and Serbia had to wait until a regime change happened on either side.

4. Democratic Governments in Belgrade: 2000–2017

Milošević lost power after massive demonstrations in Belgrade on 5 October 2000 (with active U.S. financial support in the background) (YORK 2001). The demonstrations with the participation of people from all over the country were organised after Milošević did not recognise his defeat in the first round of the presidential elections, and tried to set up a second round.

¹³ UN officials described the ethnic cleansing as an inter-ethnic crime towards the Serbs. However, independent sources portray massive violence and expulsion as ethnic cleansing (Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2006; Human Rights Watch 2004).

¹⁴ Based on UN SCR 1244 and on the Military Technical Agreement signed between KFOR (NATO) and the Yugoslav Army on 9 June 1999.

Serbs had hopes for a better future, better relations with the EU and eventually with the U.S. Washington and Belgrade exchanged official letters of full diplomatic recognition, in November 2000.

4.1. Economic and development relations

In the period of 2001–2017, USAID invested more than \$750 million in economic growth, the infrastructure and in the NGO sector involved in promoting reforms in governance, human rights and in the rule of law. U.S. companies made several important investments and purchases, totalling in \$4 billion. The support from USAID and the projects organised by *Bearing Point* were particularly important for the pension system, and the insurance and banking sector reforms. USAID contributed decisively, cooperating with reform minded people heading the National Bank of Serbia “to conduct financial and regulatory diagnostic reviews of 26 Serbian banks which accounted for more than 70 percent of banking system assets. [...] Within four months, six banks were placed in the Central Bank’s Problem Bank Unit, seven banks had their licenses revoked, and four small banks were deemed insolvent. In January 2002, the Central Bank then closed the four biggest and most powerful state-owned banks” (USAID 2013, 49).

Major investments included the acquisition of the Nis Tobacco Factory (DIN) by Philip Morris Corporation in August 2003. This company invested €636 million. The Ball Corporation (Colorado) made the largest green-field investment worth \$75 million to produce beverage cans. “In February 2005 the Coca-Cola Company purchased bottled water producer Vlasinka, for €21.5 million. In January 2008, Merrill Lynch purchased a 25% stake in real estate firm MPC Properties. In August 2008, PepsiCo invested over €200 million to acquire Marbo” (U.S. Embassy in Serbia 2018).

U.S. Steel was present in Serbia from 2003–2012, when it sold the mill for \$1 plus 40 million in debts. The American NCR Company came to Serbia in 2011, as a subsidiary of its Dutch branch (NCR Dutch Holdings B.V.). Thanks to the subsidies to foreign companies, and the skilled and low paid workforce, NCR had 2,134 workers in March 2017, when it signed the contract with the Serbian Ministry of Economy. They agreed on the allocation of a grant for the investment project “NCR Campus – the

expansion and consolidation of operations of NCR in the Republic of Serbia” that is expected to add another 1,500 employees to the company. Cisco also signed a ‘Country Digitization Agreement’ with Serbia in 2017 (U.S. Department of State 2017).

Serbia is a relatively small market, with shrinking protection of labour rights, a huge underpaid workforce with a state ready to discriminate in favour of foreign companies. It remains among the worst countries when it comes to the possibility to retain or attract talent (SCHWAB 2017, 257).

The main Serbian trade partners are the countries of the former SFRY – Germany, Italy and Russia. Trade between Serbia and the U.S. in 2015 represented only 1.2% of all Serbian foreign trade in goods. Still, in parallel with the trade relations of the U.S. and the SFRY, Serbia has a positive trade balance with the U.S. since 2010 (see Table 1).

Table 2.

U.S. Trade in goods with Serbia (chosen years in millions of USD)

Year	Export	Import	Balance
2017	125.3	292.8	-167.5
2016	145.1	309.5	-164.4
2015	126.3	272.6	-146.4
2014	135.0	280.0	-145.0
2013	142.0	524.4	-382.4
2010	104.5	164.3	-59.8
2007	109.6	58.3	51.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018

4.2. Political relations

The FRY, and later Serbia and Montenegro, and after the secession of Montenegro in 2006, Serbia opted for the policy of European integration and cooperation with the U.S. as a facilitator of this process. This was a major change regarding the period of Milošević’s rule. It meant the adaptation to the general foreign orientation of Balkan countries. After 9/11, the U.S. was withdrawing a major part of its troops deployed in Bosnia and in Kosovo (and Metohija), redirecting them to the greater Middle East. The U.S. left the leadership role in the region to the EU. Still, NATO served as a controlling tool, since no Balkan country progressed

fully towards the EU without joining the Alliance first. The EU mission EULEX mostly replaced UNMIK after February 2008. On the other hand, the U.S. did not leave the region entirely. In Montenegro, it continues to support the building of a new identity and the creation of the unrecognised self-nominated Montenegrin Orthodox Church (RAKOVIĆ 2015, 106).

After the ouster of Milošević and the victory of the democratic opposition in the early elections in December 2000, Serbian foreign policy was substantially changed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given to Goran Svilanović. Since then, the foreign policy of Belgrade is mostly seen as a plan presented by a small number of pro-Western liberals, researchers, diplomats and other members of the once communist elite. They have published in 1997 an informal alternative foreign policy strategy (*Proposed Alternative Foreign Policy Platform*). This was the beginning of the promotion of the Euro-Atlantic integrations of the FRY and later of Serbia. It suggests that: “Our relations with the U.S. should be a priority in the foreign engagement of Yugoslavia” (DRAGOJLOVIĆ et al. 2011, 163).

Although the U.S. was not and still is not among Serbia’s major trade partners, its influence and military personnel is present in the Southern province, and it also used to be in Bosnia during the SFOR mandate. Svilanović was the first to announce in October 2001 that there was no alternative to the EU integration. This new foreign policy emphasised the need to reformulate the relations of Serbia and Montenegro, with strong reliance on the U.S. (DRAGOJLOVIĆ et al. 2011, 279–286). The new minister of Foreign Affairs, Goran Svilanović added the necessity that after the EU, the FRY needs to develop open and constructive relations with “Russia, the USA, China, Japan, India...” (DRAGOJLOVIĆ et al. 2011, 288). Hence, at the Zagreb Summit, held on 24 November 2000 between the Western Balkan countries and the EU, the FRY joined the Stabilization and Association Process.

Cooperation based on mutual respect was mentioned as a strategy but “based on reality” with the “contemporary notion of sovereignty”. These phrases meant a subservient relationship, as *desiderata* in relation to the U.S. and the EU. Albeit, this policy had, and still has strong influence on the behaviour of Serbia, and its writers never had a significant support among the Serbs. Vojislav Koštunica, the candidate of the united opposition parties who won more votes than Milošević, wanted to resolve the secessionist intentions of the Montenegrin leadership by calling a referendum in Montenegro in 2001. The EU and the U.S. urged Milo Đukanović,

the Montenegrin strongman to cancel the referendum and to continue his policy without a referendum. The European Stability Initiative with the support of USIP – United States Institute of Peace, published a report on the need to settle differences without a public consultation, (they needed more time to convince enough people to support secession) (European Stability Initiative 2001).

The reform oriented Prime Minister of Serbia, Zoran Đinđić, to publicly announce in February and March 2003 that he thought that Western states were allies of Serbia, but they did not want to help, or respect Serbia. However, his reform of foreign policy was not realised because he was assassinated on 12 March 2003 (DJINDJIC 2012).

In 2004 the new president, Boris Tadić and the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vuk Drašković expressed three strategic orientations for Serbia and Montenegro (the FRY was transformed in 2003, with the assistance of the EU, leading to a loose confederation of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro): EU integration, and priority cooperation with the U.S. and Russia (DRAGOJLOVIĆ et al. 2011, 311).

In the period of 2004–2008, conservative Prime Minister Koštunica (DSS) successfully promoted the new constitution in 2007, strongly confirming Kosovo and Metohija as central parts of the Serbian identity and parts of Serbia, and declaring “the neutral status of the Republic of Serbia towards effective military alliances until a referendum is called” (Government of Serbia 2007).

However, Koštunica fell out of the government after he announced early elections in 2008. The three strategic pillars of foreign policy were updated in 2009 when, then President of the Republic of Serbia, Tadić, added China to the previous three pillars (TADIĆ 2009). This policy never conceptualised – and it has never been formally institutionalised. After 2012, the governments led by the coalition of Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) did not mention these four pillars, but in practice continued to act correspondingly, nurturing strong relations with the above mentioned four powers, among them the U.S.

The U.S. leads two informal groups of Western ambassadors (the *Friends of Sandžak* and the *Friends of South*), which exerts additional influence in the internal policy of Serbia. Both groups lack regular meetings and activities, but they are the framework for the U.S., the U.K., Italy, Germany and France to cooperate more closely with the leadership of Slavic Muslims and Albanians in the South and the Southwest of Serbia. The involvement of

the former U.S. ambassador to Serbia, Ambassador Montgomery in the SNS political campaigns was very disliked among the majority of citizens, since the U.S. has been very unpopular due to its role in the Balkan Wars, and in the secession of Kosovo. Already in 2009, Serbia along with Pakistan was heading the world list of animosity toward the U.S. in public opinion polls (BAKOVIĆ 2009). This did not change in the coming years as U.S. support for the Albanian secessionists in Kosovo has continued.

Another source of disagreement is the public activity of the U.S. through USAID, the think tanks and civil society organisations. During the Obama Administration, the U.S. paid more attention on LGBTQ rights than on the rights of the national minorities. In Serbia, the constant support for Gay pride is particularly problematic. In 2012, public opinion polls showed that only 8% of people supported the Gay Pride, while 70% were totally against it (SRNA Agency 2012).

On the other hand, U.S. movies, TV shows and music have been popular. In 2016, direct flights between New York and Belgrade were established. As U.S. ambassador to Serbia, Mr. Kyle Scott emphasised, today more than 20,000 Serbs visit the U.S. each year and 1,000 Serbs study in the U.S.

Although Serbs were cheering for the election of Donald Trump as a new President of the U.S., this did not alter significantly the U.S. policy on the Kosovo issue (VOA 2017). In the context of the policy of the wider confrontation with Russia, the U.S., under both Obama and Trump, has continued to promote the American export of gas (which is costlier and with dubious capacity of transport) instead of Russian (KOLEKA 2016). In fact, although Serbs had mostly good expectations of Trump, mostly due to his anti-system promises to 'drain the swamp' and to better the relations with Russia, uncertainty over relations with Moscow, and the unchanged attitude towards Kosovo would disperse the positive expectations of the general public.

The activity of former Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, Hoyt Brian Yee in the Balkan states seems to have been detrimental to relations with the U.S. as there are rumours of undiplomatic behaviour in conversations with the highest Serbian and Macedonian officials (sources known to the author). His replacement in October 2017 leaves room for the further improvement of relations.

The U.S. became the supporter of Serbia's EU integration, and its institutional and economic reforms. U.S. companies were engaged in

the reorganisation of the National Bank of Serbia and the programme of privatisations. Furthermore, the U.S. together with the EU was pressing Serbia to deliver Slobodan Milošević to the U.S. sponsored International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia – ICTY (Hague Tribunal) that was acting as a UN court of law. At the same time, cooperation with the ICTY was repeatedly mentioned as a prerequisite for EU integration.

Cooperation in arresting and delivering the highest officials from Serbia, Croatia and BiH lasted for many years. Finally, all Serbian wartime presidents, many high-ranking generals, ministers and prime ministers were delivered to The Hague, but the EU and the U.S. pressure did not stop. More than two thirds of all convicted are Serbs at the ICTY (at least 62 convicted are Serbs of the total 89).¹⁵ Major war criminals from the ranks of Bosnian Muslims, Kosovo Albanians or Croatians were not convicted or had their convictions minimised, thus allowing the conclusion for Serbia that the Hague Tribunal served to punish the Serbs.

The U.S. support for the reforms, and the importance of Washington is evident together with Germany and the United Kingdom.

Until today, the U.S. continuously supports Serbia's path towards full EU membership, in order to tie Serbia firmly to the West, disenfranchise it from eventual Russian influence, and finish the unresolved issue of Kosovo. This implies fostering the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina with the commitment to *normalise relations* with Pristina (DELAWE 2017).

In 1994, NATO established a tool for cooperation with the former communist countries: the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative. PfP is devised as a framework for bilateral cooperation and was often a prelude to NATO integration.

Serbia and Montenegro applied to join the PfP in 2003, but as relations in the loose confederation were shaky, NATO did not invite the Government of Belgrade to join the initiative. Still, other forms of cooperation were further developed. Thus, a transit agreement for the KFOR mission (led by NATO) was signed in July 2005. In February 2006, NATO and Serbia formed a joint Defence Reform Group (DRG) to serve as a mechanism for the transformation of the armed forces in line with NATO standards (and

¹⁵ The list of the ICTY lacks information on ethnicity – the Tribunal has indicted 161 Persons (ICTY 2018). Wikipedia has listed them with data of ethnic affiliation (Wikipedia 2018).

objectives). The work of the group was temporarily suspended, after the one-sided proclamation of independence of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) in Priština (European Parliament 2014). In the meantime, Serbia participated in numerous NATO military exercises and reached the highest level of bilateral cooperation in 2015, after it adopted the IPAP (Individual Partnership Action Plan). Because of the previous NATO aggression, Serbia does not aspire to become full member of the Alliance, which has been understood by the secretary generals of NATO.¹⁶ The Serbian population constantly see Russia as the main partner in providing political and security stability (Survey Research 2015).

The Ohio–Serbian State Partnership program is active since the year 2006, when the PfP started. It resulted in joint exercises and the combined military medical engagement between the Serbian, Angolan and Ohio National Guard members in 2017 (U.S. Embassy in Serbia 2017). Serbia is also a *Global Peace Operations Partner* of the U.S. since 2011. The U.S. donated 40 military vehicles (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles) to Serbia, and helped build the Jug military base (South), which is important for the training of army units from different countries (Office of the Vice President 2016).

5. Open Issues

The bilateral relations of the two countries are asymmetrical in many aspects, particularly in the economic and military fields. Several issues remain unresolved or represent an obstacle to deepen the cooperation. Two issues remain to be investigated. First, the U.S. keeps asking Serbia to conclude the investigation of a person or persons responsible for the attack on the U.S. embassy during the huge public rally held in Belgrade on 21 February 2008.¹⁷ Second, the U.S. requests an investigation about the killing of three Albanian–U.S. citizens (the Bitići brothers), former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, who were shot dead after their release from custody.

¹⁶ For example, Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of the Alliance on the occasion of the agreement on IPAP (TANJUG 2015).

¹⁷ Organised as a protest of Serbia against the proclamation of independence of Kosovo (and Metohija) by former terrorists and members of the local Albanian criminal syndicate.

In addition, three major differences exist: 1. the status of Kosovo and Metohija, which Serbia and 82 other countries do not recognise; 2. public animosity towards NATO, and particularly towards the U.S. because of the 1999 war; and 3. good relations between Serbia and Russia, and the U.S. pressure on the Serbian Government to diminish its cooperation with Moscow.

6. Conclusions

The relations between Serbia and the U.S. oscillated from cooperation to confrontation. Serbian governments from 2001, and in particular after 2008, tried to cooperate more closely with Washington. Despite this, the foreign policy orientation of the U.S. did not change, and the U.S. did not accept or understand the interests of Serbia in the seceded province of Kosovo. The American approach towards Serbia is determined by several factors, which impede important change in its Balkan policy:

1. The U.S. policy towards the Balkans is aimed at supporting those political forces who would block Russia to project its interests toward the Mediterranean. Serbia is a partner of Russia with significant foreign trade relations.
2. Washington considers Serbia a Russian ally due to the historical and cultural roots and the relations between the two Slavic, Christian orthodox nations.
3. The U.S. decision to consider the administrative boundaries of the former Yugoslavia as the new international borders. This was maybe the primary problem between Serbia and the U.S., since many Serbs lived and still live in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia.
4. The American confrontation with Russia, and its rivalry with China (two of the four major strategic allies of Serbia) induce pressure from Washington on Belgrade to choose sides, while Serbia wants to keep a military and a *de facto* political neutrality.

These four factors negatively affect the relations of the two countries, which could cooperate even better. The U.S. could use a little bit more flexible approach, as Serbia is already as flexible as it can be.

Bibliography

- ABRAHAMS, Fred (2001): *Under Orders: War Crimes in Kosovo*. Human Rights Watch, New York.
- Appropriations Act (1991): *H.R.5114 – Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1991*. 101st Congress (1989–1990). Source: www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/5114 (Accessed: 02.06.2018.)
- BAKOVIĆ, Biljana (2009): Zašto ne volimo Ameriku? *Politika*, 12 July 2009. Source: www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/95239/Politika/Zasto-ne-volimo-Ameriku (Accessed: 02.06.2018.)
- CIA (1990): NIE 15–90: Yugoslavia Transformed. *CIA*, 18 October 1990. Source: www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1990-10-01.pdf (Accessed: 03.06.2015.)
- Congress (1999): *S.Con.Res. 21 (106th): Kosovo resolution*. Source: www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/106/sconres21/text/es (Accessed: 02.06.2018.)
- CRAIG, Larry E. (1999): The Kosovo Liberation Army: Does Clinton Policy Support Group with Terror, Drug Ties? From ‘Terrorists’ to ‘Partners’. *United States Senate, Republican Policy Committee*, 31 March 1999. Source: <http://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/fr033199.htm> (Accessed: 03.06.2015.)
- DELAWIE, Greg (2017): Ambassador Delawie’s Interview with KTV. *U.S. Embassy in Kosovo*, 5 December 2017. Source: <https://xk.usembassy.gov/ambassador-delawies-interview-ktv-3/> (Accessed: 05.12.2017.)
- DELISO, Christopher (2007): *The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West*. Westport, Praeger Security International.
- DJINDJIĆ, Zoran (2012): Zoran Djindjić poslednji intervju. *YouTube*, 14 January 2012. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4__F3im7o0 (Accessed: 25.03.2018.)
- DRAGOJLOVIĆ, Nataša – SRETENOVIĆ, Stanislav – ĐUKANOVIĆ, Dragan – ŽIVOJINOVIĆ, Dragan eds. (2011): *Spoljna politika Srbije: strategije i dokumenta*. Belgrade, Evropski pokret u Srbiji. 260–275.
- ĐUKANOVIĆ, Dragan (2014): “Identitetska pitanja” i linije unutrašnjih podela u Crnoj Gori. [“Identity issues” and lines of internal divisions in Montenegro.] *Medjunarodni problemi/International Problems*, Vol. 66, No. 3–4. 395–422. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2298/MEDJP1404395D>
- European Parliament (2014): *NATO’s relations with Serbia*. Source: www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede130411natoserbia_/sede130411natoserbia_en.pdf (Accessed: 09.04.2018.)
- European Stability Initiative (2001): *Politics, interests and the future of Yugoslavia. An agenda for dialogue, 11 November 2001, Podgorica and Berlin*. Source: www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=24 (Accessed: 09.04.2018.)

- European Union (1999): Report of the EU Forensic Expert Team on the Racak Incident. *United States Information Agency*, 17 March 1999. Source: <https://phdn.org/archives/www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/Kosovo/Kosovo-Massacres2.htm> (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)
- FRIEDMAN, Thomas L. (1991): Baker Urges End to Yugoslav Rift. *The New York Times*, 22 June 1991. Source: www.nytimes.com/1991/06/22/world/baker-urges-end-to-yugoslav-rift.html (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)
- Government of Serbia (2003): *Албански тероризам и организовани криминал на Косову и Метохију*. [Albanian Terrorism and Organised Crime in Kosovo and Metohija.] Source: <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/kosovo-metohija/en/8925> (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)
- Government of Serbia (2007): Resolution of the National Assembly on the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the Republic of Serbia. *Government of Serbia*, 26 December 2007. Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/resolution-protection-sovereignty-territorial-integrity-and-constitutional-order> (Accessed: 25.05.2018.)
- GREENHILL, Kelly M. (2010): *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*. Cornell University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801458668>
- HERMAN, Edward S. ed. (2011): *The Srebrenica Massacre, Evidence, Context, Politics*. Evergreen Park, IL, Alphabet Soup.
- HOGG, Andrew (1992): Arabs Join Bosnia Battle. *Sunday Times*, 30 August 1992.
- Human Rights Watch (2004): *Failure to Protect: Anti-Minority Violence in Kosovo, March 2004*. Source: www.hrw.org/report/2004/07/25/failure-protect/anti-minority-violence-kosovo-march-2004 (Accessed: 25.05.2018.)
- ICTY (2018): The ICTY indicted 161 individuals for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. *ICTY*, July 2018. Source: www.icty.org/en/cases/key-figures-cases (Accessed: 09.04.2018.)
- Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2006): *The Kosovo Report*. Source: www.law.umich.edu/facultyhome/drwcasebook/Documents/Documents/The%20Kosovo%20Report%20and%20Update.pdf (Accessed 25.05.2018.)
- JANKOVIĆ, Slobodan (2017): Involvement of Foreign Factor in Balkans War and Peace. *Nacionalni Interes*, Vol. 28, No. 1. 39–68. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22182/ni.2812017.2>
- JOHNSTONE, Diana (2002): *Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO and Western Delusions*. London, Pluto Press.

- KISSINGER, Henry (1999): *Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1999. Source: https://archive.org/stream/KISSINGERANDCHILETHEDECLASSIFIEDRECORDONREGIMECHANGE/Gwu.edu5/Henry%20Kissinger%E2%80%99s%20Lies%20about%20Bosnia%2C%20Kosova%20and%20The%20Balkans-5_djvu.txt (Accessed 25.05.2018.)
- KOLEKA, Benet (2016): U.S. urges Serbia, Slovenia to diversify their energy sources. *Reuters*, 9 September 2016. Source: www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-balkans-energy-idUSKCN11F2S9 (Accessed 11.06.2018.)
- KÜNTZEL, Matthias (2000): *How Germany paved the way to the Kosovo War*. Contribution to the 2nd International Hearing of the European Tribunal concerning NATO's war against Yugoslavia. Hamburg, 16 April 2000. Source: www.matthiaskuentzel.de/contents/germany-and-the-kosovo (Accessed: 25.06.2018.)
- LA VERLE, Berry – CURTIS, Glenn E. – HUDSON, Rex A. – KOLLARS, Nina A. (2002): *A Global Overview of Narcotics-Funded Terrorist and other Extremist Groups*. A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Defense. Source: www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/NarcsFundedTerrs_Extrems.pdf (Accessed: 19.04.2018.)
- LEBOR, Adam (2005): Comment: Milosevic the Peacemaker. *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 29 April 2005. Source: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/comment-milosevic-peacemaker> (Accessed: 08.06.2018.)
- NATO (1991): The Situation in Yugoslavia. *Press Release S-I(98) 88*, 8 November 1991. Source: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23849.htm?mode=pressrelease (Accessed: 02.04.2018.)
- NATO (1999): The Alliance's Strategic Concept. *Press Release NAC-S(99) 65*, 24 April 1999. Source: www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- NIKŠIĆ, Stevan (1996): Koga podržava Amerika. *NIN*, No. 2390, 17 October 1996. Source: www.nin.co.rs/arhiva/2390/2390c.html (Accessed: 18.04.2018.)
- Office of the Vice President (2016): Fact Sheet: U.S.–Serbia Relations: Progress through Partnership. *The White House*, 16 August 2016. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/08/16/fact-sheet-us-serbia-relations-progress-through-partnership> (Accessed: 19.04.2018.)
- PAVKOVIĆ, Aleksandar – RADAN, Peter (2016): *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. London, Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315574622>
- PELLET, Allain (1992): The Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration Committee: A Second Breath for the Self-Determination of Peoples. *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 3, No. 1. 178–185. Source: <http://ejil.org/pdfs/3/1/1175.pdf> (Accessed: 10.06.2018.)

- Popisi stanovništva Jugoslavije (1991): Popis stanovništva 1991. u SFRJ. Source: https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popis_stanovni%C5%A1tva_1991._u_SFRJ (Accessed: 10.06.2018.)
- RAKOVIĆ, Aleksandar (2015): *Srbi i religijski intervencionizam 1991–2015*. [Serbs and Religious Interventionism 1991–2015.] Belgrade, Zoon Politikon.
- RANTA, Helena (2008): Foreign Ministry tried to influence Kosovo reports. *Helsingen Sanomat*, 16 October 2008. Source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20090629224554/http://www.hs.fi/english/article/1135240292632> (Accessed: 25.6.2015.)
- SCHWAB, Claus ed. (2017): *The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018*. World Economic Forum. Source: www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2017%E2%80%932018.pdf (Accessed: 10.06.2018.)
- SRNA Agency (2012): Protiv parade ponosa 70 odsto građana. *Nezavisne*, 3 October 2012. Source: www.nezavisne.com/novosti/ex-yu/Protiv-parade-ponosa-70-odsto-gradjana/161371 (Accessed: 10.06.2018.)
- Survey Research (2015): *Survey of Serbian Public Opinion November 24 – December 3, 2015*. Source: www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/serbia_november_2015_poll_public_release.pdf (Accessed: 09.06.2018.)
- TADIĆ, Boris (2009): Tadić on Serbia’s “four pillars of diplomacy”. *B92*, 30 August 2009. Source: www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2009&mm=08&dd=30&nav_id=61454 (Accessed: 02.04.2018.)
- TANJUG (2015): IPAP “improves Serbia–NATO cooperation”. *B92*, 16 January 2015. Source: www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=01&dd=16&nav_id=92890 (Accessed: 08.06.2018.)
- THOMAS, Raju G. C., ed. (2003): *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lanham, Lexington Books.
- UN (1995): *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A/50/790 S/1995/999*. Source: www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/91/13413.pdf (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- UN SC Resolution 713 (1991): Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugoslavia. *UN*, 25 September 1991. Source: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/713> (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- UN SC Resolution 757 (1992): Bosnia and Herzegovina. *UN*, 27 May 1992. Source: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/757\(1992\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/757(1992)) (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- UN SC Resolution 777 (1992): Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. *UN*, 19 September 1992. Source: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/777\(1992\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/777(1992)) (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)
- UN SC Resolution 1244 (1999): On the situation relating to Kosovo. *UN*, 10 June 1999. Source: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/172/89/PDF/N9917289.pdf?OpenElement> (Accessed: 30.03.2018.)

- USAID (2013): *20 Years of USAID Economic Growth Assistance in Europe and Eurasia: July 2013*. Source: www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/EE_20Year_Review.pdf (Accessed: 05.04.2018.)
- U.S. Census Bureau (2018): *Trade in goods with Serbia*. Source: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4801.html (Accessed: 03.04.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2017): U.S. Relations with Serbia – Fact Sheet. *U.S. Department of State – Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*, 10 October 2017. Source: www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm (Accessed: 12.06.2018.)
- U.S. Embassy in Serbia (2017): Ohio National Guard and Serbian Military First Ever Combined Medical Engagement in Angola. *U.S. Embassy in Serbia*, 8 December 2017. Source: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/ohio-national-guard-serbian-military-first-ever-combined-medical-engagement-angola/> (Accessed: 09.06.2018.)
- U.S. Embassy in Serbia (2018): *Commercial Partnership*. Source: <https://rs.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/commercial-partnership/> (Accessed: 01.04.2018.)
- VOA, Tanjug (2017): If Trump goes to Serbia, he'll find that Serbs like him. *B92*, 13 October 2017. Source: www.b92.net/eng/news/world.php?yyyy=2017&mm=10&dd=13&nav_id=102548 (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)
- Washington Agreement (1994): *Washington Agreement*. USIP – Washington, D.C., 1 March 1994. Source: www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/washagree_03011994.pdf (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)
- WELLER, Marc – WOLFF, Stefan (2013): *Internationalized State-Building After Violent Conflict: Bosnia Ten Years After Dayton*. London, Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315869445>
- Wikipedia (2018): *List of people indicted in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia*. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_indicted_in_the_International_Criminal_Tribunal_for_the_former_Yugoslavia (Accessed: 09.04.2017.)
- WOEHREL, Steven (2006): Kosovo's Future Status and U.S. Policy. *CRS Report for Congress*, 9 January 2006.
- YORK, Steve (2001): Interview: Col. Robert Helvey, A force more powerful, January 29, 2001. Source: www.aforcemorepowerful.org/films/bdd/story/otpor/robert-helvey.php (Accessed: 05.06.2018.)

Relations between the United States and Slovakia: Friends and Allies between 1989 and 2017

*Dušan Fischer*¹

1. Introduction

We can trace the roots of Slovak–American relations back to long before the establishment of an independent Slovak state that took place in 1993. Slovakia drafted its founding documents on previous state structures, and therefore the year 1993 was a natural outfall of a country that was largely influenced by the idea and politics of the U.S. and the free Czechoslovak state established in 1918. During the 25 years of Slovakia’s existence, its relationship with the U.S. has been important and the U.S. Government played a key role in the country’s transition during the 1990s. However, the public often did not reflect the positive declaratory positions of Slovak governments towards the U.S. Even today we can find examples and expressions of well-established anti-Americanism based on a combination of disinformation, misunderstanding, and growing anti-globalisation. The following chapter will offer a detailed analysis of the bilateral relations between the U.S. and Slovakia, its historical roots and current issues. This chapter argues that while the U.S. seems to lose interest in the region, it may be a good sign for Slovakia regarding the status of its democratic integration. Thus, the Slovak Government should eventually use this opportunity to focus on its domestic issues rather than accusing the U.S. with lack of interest.

¹ Dušan Fischer, Analyst, Slovak Foreign Policy Association (Slovakia). Email: fischer@sfpa.sk

2. The Pillar of Culture

The spirit of the U.S. nation building is engraved in Slovakia's constitution, which was published on 1 September 1992, four months before the independent state was created. "We the People of Slovakia", is the first sentence of its Preamble, almost identical with the beginning of the U.S. Constitution. However, the document is much longer and compared to the U.S. Constitution, easier to change and amend. Thus, the influence is visible even today.

Historically, the Slovak–American relationship stands on four pillars: culture, politics, investment and strength. The ultimately close relations and the Czechoslovak connections in the U.S. caused that many Slovaks decided to travel to the U.S. One of the unique sources of the beginning of the relationship is tied to the Slovak immigrants who found their home in the U.S.

Today, a number of bankers, investors, politicians and average people belong to a large group establishing Slovak cultural roots in America. In January 2009, Slovakia became one of the countries whose citizens can travel to the U.S. without a visa. The partnership undoubtedly achieved a significant step allowing the Slovak citizens to travel under the visa waiver program.

The U.S. Government offers several programs for Slovaks to keep the cultural exchange going, including the Fulbright Program, summer courses, and small grants to support projects related to strengthening the relations between the two countries. The relationship is still close, people travel and work in the U.S. Students still find the Work & Travel programs that allows university students to spend a summer in the U.S. with a J-1 visa attractive. When it comes to Slovak Americans, the Regional Director of the International Republican Institute, Jan Erik Surotchak argues that today's relationship does not rely on the fact that Slovaks "have cousins in America", but the relationship is much more pragmatic (News Now 2018). However, after conducting a content analysis of two social media groups, the "Bohemians in America" and the "Slovak Genealogy", it seems that the spirit in Americans with Slovak roots is strong and they have a willingness to maintain close connections, and preserve their heritage even though they are often second or third generation Americans. The primary motivation, however, is mostly because of family connections rather than pure pragmatism. The uniqueness of the American immigration system,

including the comprehensive documentation, allows people to find detailed information about their relatives and thus keep the relationship alive.

The U.S. embassy is a crucial multiplication of sharing U.S. culture in Slovakia. The work strongly depends on the head of the embassy. For example, Ambassador Theodor Sedgwick, appointed on the symbolic date of 4 July 2010 and presented his credentials in August, was one of the most memorable U.S. ambassadors. To get to know the Slovak people better, he often rode a train from Bratislava to the Eastern parts of Slovakia, which did not always make his security detail happy, but it helped him measure the temperature of the Slovak society and understand the viewpoints of Slovaks on the U.S. better. His successor did not continue with this unique approach. The relationship went through stagnation for a couple of years when the U.S. did not appoint its ambassador to Bratislava. However, the U.S. ambassadors publish regularly on the topics of trade, security, foreign policy and domestic issues to contribute their point of view to the debate, and explain the importance of Slovak–U.S. relations.

3. The Policy Pillar

The most consequential pillar is the political one. It is difficult to assess the first steps of the newly established Slovak republic towards the U.S. Compared to its larger neighbour and close friend the Czech Republic, strong pro-transatlantic politicians are not so easy to spot as the Slovak Government was holding a more ambivalent position towards both the Eastern and Western world. The head of state differed from the rest of the executive and legislative branches. The first Slovak president Michal Kováč visited the U.S. shortly after his inauguration in February 1993. As an early step in establishing close relations with the U.S., it was helpful that his team was strongly pro-Atlantic, including Pavol Demeš who later became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Kováč's visit took place on 23 April 1993. In Washington, D.C. he met the also recently inaugurated President Bill Clinton at the event of the opening of the Museum of Holocaust. Both presidents met in Prague during the Visegrád summit one year later. In 1995, Kováč travelled to Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he attended the opening of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library. Czech President Václav Havel accompanied him. The first steps of President Kováč and the fact that his first foreign trip as president was

to the U.S. clearly illustrated the importance of the relations between the two countries, including maintaining the Slovak heritage of the people residing there. His visits were not only for official business, but they sent an important message to Slovakia's domestic politics, as well. In 2008, Kováč told the press that he had asked Bill Clinton to accept then Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, despite his known anti-democratic policies. Clinton reacted with no words. According to Kováč, Clinton was aware of the hostile relationship between the President and the Prime Minister (NAGYOVÁ 2008).

Mikuláš Dzurinda sought to maintain the strong transatlantic relations. The most recent visit of a U.S. president took place during his tenure. George W. Bush attended the 2005 Bush–Putin summit with his Russian counterpart. During the high-profile visit, the U.S. President delivered a speech on the largest square in Bratislava. In the first part of his talk, he acknowledged the historical importance of the square that holds the name of Pavol Orsagh Hviezdoslav, a Slovak writer. The Hviezdoslav Square was a key witness of the most important events that led to the Velvet Revolution (the peaceful political transition of Czechoslovakia at the end of the Cold War), including the 1988 Candle Manifest. President Bush embraced the path Slovakia had taken, its EU and NATO membership and its economic stability. He also reminded the standing crowd that it took “almost a decade after the Velvet Revolution for democracy to fully take root” in Slovakia (BUSH 2005). Before mentioning the Slovak contributions to missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Bush recalled the importance of Americans with Slovak roots.

With the election of Barack Obama, many people in Slovakia welcomed the change in the White House. The Transatlantic Trends 2009 issued by the German Marshall Fund showed that the president's approval rating among Slovaks spiked from Bush's 2008 19% to 71% for Obama in 2009 (GMUF 2009). The 2010 report also showed that in 2008 more Slovaks were in favour of closer EU–U.S. ties than in 2006, although there is no causation between their answers and the results of the 2008 elections (GMUF 2008). Róbert Fico became Prime Minister in 2006, and given his background as a member of the Communist Party, and personal ambivalence or even negative attitude towards the U.S., the relationship continued at a slower pace. The reason behind the worsening relations is the fact that since 2001 and 2003, the U.S. was involved with two large conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Washington devoted its diplomatic

and military resources to these countries rather than spending them in Central Europe. There was an overwhelming understanding by present and former leaders of Central European countries that the region slipped from the U.S. radar. Their common initiative was a letter penned by such figures as Vaclav Havel. In 2009, Vice President Joe Biden spoke in Romania. His speech, which did not receive a lot of media attention because President Obama delivered one of his first major speeches in Prague, included some important statements to give a better picture of U.S. foreign policy towards Central Europe. The purpose of Biden's speech was to introduce the so-called European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) ballistic missile defence system after the administration dismantled the Bush Administration's plans to build a European leg to its homeland missile defence system in the Czech Republic and Poland. There are no public data as regards Slovakia's position in the system. However, Prime Minister Fico criticised the defence system, and claimed that he would never agree with such a radar to be built in Slovakia (SITA 2008). Then President Gašparovič, on the other hand, welcomed and supported the U.S. initiative as an "important addition to the security of allies" (VASILKO–KONÍK 2008). Biden acknowledged the achievements Central Europe had done and encouraged the countries to act more like partners than protégés (BIDEN 2009). This was not accepted by the leaders of the Central European countries as they remained sceptical of Obama's good intentions vis-à-vis the region, in particular in connection to Russia (Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe 2009).

After the election of Donald Trump in 2016, Slovak politicians congratulated the new leader without any reservations or conditions. President Andrej Kiska expressed his gratitude for the continuation of the partnership between the U.S., the EU and Slovakia. He did not comment on Trump's campaign rhetoric that was aimed against the traditional U.S. allies, including European countries (TASR 2016). National Council President Andrej Danko hoped for the improvement of U.S.–Russia relations, and he said that in case of an improvement, the EU should not stand out. Prime Minister Fico also took a position in the media and revealed his analysis of the election results. Although the vast majority of the mainstream media expected Hillary Clinton to win, Fico recalled that the election results proved that "Slovakia and the world are completely different than portrayed by the media". The rest of the Slovakian politicians analysed the election results in light of their own mindset. Those

with a populist agenda welcomed the change from “traditional politics”, while more mainstream politicians hoped for friendly relations with the EU, and expected the U.S. to continue to play a crucial role in NATO (TASR 2016).

Since the inauguration of President Donald Trump, there is a serious possibility for the relationship to go in the wrong direction between Slovakia and the U.S. So far, Washington has been the evident partner of Slovakia, based on the cultural and historical connections, supported by common values. However, since the U.S. seems to significantly shift its foreign policy from the value-based approach, the partnership might suffer some damage. Slovakia is in the position to pick its partners, and in the short term, there will be no partner more reliable than the U.S. However, Slovakia should be ready to stand behind its values, such as the support of democracy, free and open society, and the rule of law. The declaration of common values was often a generic statement, but the Trump White House is not supporting these declarations. The above-mentioned values without tangible support will remain empty gestures. So far, the Slovak foreign policy towards the U.S. has been reactive and nostalgic. There are no signs that this is going to change, and the partnership should continue to focus on the values and priorities that both countries still have in common. In the long-run, however, there is a potential for the list to get smaller.

Slovakia is not a priority on the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Lukáš Kovanda argues that by joining the EU, the Czech Republic lost its unique position, by suddenly becoming a part of something bigger (KOVANDA 2015). Slovakia suffered through the same fate. For one thing, it is a good development because it means that Slovakia successfully transformed into a democracy. On the other hand, this gives Slovakia and the Slovak people more opportunities to criticise the U.S., and unlike in the 1990s, it also allows domestic politicians to do whatever they want, without facing strong resentment from the U.S.

4. The Pillar of Investments

One of the most important pre-conditions to get Czechoslovakia and Slovakia back on their feet after decades of planned economy was the country’s accession to the IMF and the World Bank. Czechoslovakia had already been a member between 1945 and 1954 as one of the 45 founding

members of both institutions. Czechoslovakia renewed both memberships in 1990, and after their 1993 break-up, the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined these institutions separately as successor republics.

Slovakia is currently home to more than 120 U.S. companies, employing together nearly fifty thousand people (KVAŠŇÁK 2017). Concerning trade, many bilateral treaties morphed into treaties between the U.S. and the EU as part of the EU legislation after Slovakia's accession to the EU in 2004. In July 2015, the countries strengthened their cooperation in tax policies. Slovakia and the U.S. agreed to the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FACTA), and later to the Act on the Automatic Exchange of Information on Financial Accounts, which required the Slovak financial institutions to report to the Slovak Government information on the American account holders. The Slovak authorities then forwarded this information to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. In 2016, the U.S. Foreign Direct Investment in Slovakia was \$568 million, a decline from 2015 (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2017). The largest investment by far has been the acquisition of Východoslovenské železiarne in Košice by U.S. Steel. It was transformed into U.S. Steel Košice in 2000. The company became one of the largest employers, and with its ten thousand employees, it significantly changed the economic situation for the region that was not attractive for investment before. U.S. Steel took over the company, including its debts from the past. It has become the largest steel company in Slovakia with a revenue of €2 billion in 2016 (Trend 2017).

Another area of business that connects both countries is innovation investments. In 2012, Peter Kmec became the Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. Immediately after presenting his credentials, his agenda expanded to include IT start-up development, innovation and entrepreneurship. During his tenure, he spoke publicly on these topics at the University of Virginia and other public forums. His initiatives focused on closer cooperation with Google, participation in the TechCrunch annual conference, and attending the Southwest festival organised every year in Austin, focusing among other topics on interactive media and IT development. The newly elected President Kiska visited San Francisco in 2014. He later came to the U.S. to visit the Silicon Valley to promote better relations in innovation and development with Slovakia.

In 2015, the efforts on both sides led to the establishment of the Slovak–American Business and Innovation Council (SABIC). SABIC, according to its own website is “a joint platform established to promote

Slovak–American trade and investment opportunities and support innovation and start-ups”. The president of SABIC is Theodore Sedgwick, former U.S. ambassador to Bratislava from 2010 to 2015. Anton Zajac is also among the founding members, who is one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Slovakia, founder of ESET. SABIC is *ex officio* directed by the Slovak Ambassador to the U.S.

Slovakia is in the bottom half of the list of countries by the monetary amount of export from the U.S. Among the main commodities, Slovakia is importing from the U.S. automobiles (including parts), engines, pharmaceutical drugs, and pharmaceutical technological equipment such as surgical, dental and veterinary (MFA 2017a). Slovakia is exporting mostly to the EU countries (85.2%). The three most important export countries are Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland. The U.S. is eleventh. According to U.S. data, Slovakia is exporting commodities such as Bellow to the U.S.²

The Trump Administration seeks to renegotiate some of the most important trade agreements, including the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). On the other hand, it left the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) because of trade deficits with partners involved in the treaties. He abandoned these proposals without any suggestions for replacement. Particularly the latter treaty may have had an impact on the future of U.S.–Slovak trade relations. The Russian factor continuously plays a role in the energy and business sector of Slovakia. Since 2014, the Russian Federation is, through the embassy in Bratislava, pushing the narrative that Russia is a crucial partner for Slovakia (Veľvyslanectvo Ruskej Federácie v Slovenskej Republike 2018). Some Slovak politicians often support this strategy. For example, the President of the National Council Andrej Danko told the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Saint Petersburg that the sanctions on Russia should be lifted soon (MFA 2017b). However, export numbers show a different story. Slovakia is mostly exporting to, and importing from EU countries (over 80%) (SARIO 2018).

The business partnership between Slovakia and the U.S. is a major one. The size and scope cannot normalise U.S. relations with other countries in

² The MFA report concluded that data from the U.S. Government are in favour of Slovak export to the U.S., compared to the data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Western Europe, but the innovation skills of Slovaks living and working in the U.S. allow this business partnership to continue in the long term. One of the biggest advantages of such relationships is that they are often immune to political changes in either side of the partnership, and therefore they are much more stable.

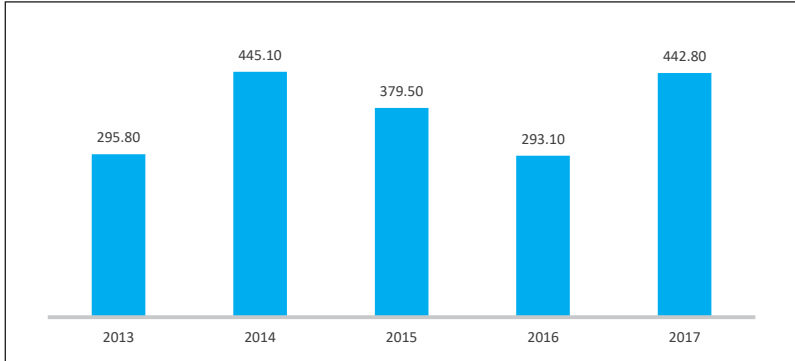


Figure 1.

Exports of NAICS – Total all merchandise (in mil USD)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018

5. The Pillar of Strength

“Slovakia and the United States retain strong diplomatic ties and cooperate in the military and law enforcement areas. The U.S. Department of Defense and the Slovak Armed Forces have partnered together to attain significant military reforms and achieve Slovakia’s admission to NATO” says the U.S. European Command’s website (U.S. EUCOM 2018). One of the strongest cooperation with the U.S. has been in the area of military operations and armed forces. This cooperation took shape in two forms. The first form is in the framework of missions and operations, while the other area of cooperation in the domain of armed forces is in the procurement of military equipment. On 26 June 2017, Slovakia purchased the first two Black Hawk helicopters (UH-60M) out of nine in total from the U.S. Government for \$261 million. The UH-60Ms will eventually replace the old Mi-17s helicopters currently in operation. The business relationship with the U.S., as well as the procurement process was questionable,

including the analysis, which was the cornerstone of the procurement, and which is still behind the curtain of military classification. The acquisition should continue as the Ministry of Defence took the first steps to talk to Lockheed Martin in their effort to modernise supersonic jets and replace their MiG-29s with F-16s. However, the subscription agreement with the Russian Federation regarding MiGs is valid until 2021.

Even before the establishment of Slovakia, its armed forces participated in some U.S. military activities. In the early 1990s, Czechoslovakia was among the thirty-four nations in the UN, creating a coalition on the side of the U.S. After the Iraqi forces annexed Kuwait, the UN Security Council Resolution 660 called for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces. Allied forces started to attack Iraqi forces in order to force them out and liberate Kuwait. A small but well-trained special chemical unit consisting of 169 soldiers³ joined the allied forces in Saudi Arabia. One service member was killed in action, and two others were wounded (PURDEK–VITKO 2014).

Another test of the close commitment of Slovakia to the U.S. came in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq. The response from European countries led then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to divide Europe into “New Europe” and “Old Europe”, where emerging democracies fell in the former basket and countries criticising the U.S. for its actions (notably Germany and France) were in the latter. In 2003, the heads of eight European countries signed a letter in support of fulfilling the UN Security Council Resolution 1441, “Saddam Hussein’s last chance to disarm using peaceful means” (Global Policy Forum 2003). Slovakia’s Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda was not among the signatories. Despite this fact, Slovakia played an important role in the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. The Slovak Government agreed to send 85 engineers to Iraq as de-mining and Explosive Ordnance Disposal team (EOD). This proposal passed the parliament on 19 June 2003 (Vláda SR 2003). Slovakia had also contributed with 5 instructors and \$53,000 in support funding for the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (SHARP–BLANCHARD 2007). The

³ It is difficult to calculate the number of Slovaks, given the mixed marriages between Czechs and Slovaks. Based on an interview with Pavel Vitko, it is estimated that 38 of the 169 soldiers were Slovaks, with an additional 11 Slovaks who joined the unit later. Eventually, the battalion was consisting of 198 soldiers with 49 Slovaks.

government of Róbert Fico withdrew all Slovak forces from Iraq in 2007. Despite this action from the Slovak Government, the armed forces were supporting the Enduring Freedom mission in Afghanistan (2002–2005)⁴ and the following missions, the International Security Assistance Force and the Resolute Support led by NATO. Slovakia later contributed its forces to the Resolute Support Mission, although currently the mandate is higher than the actual number of troops present in Afghanistan.

Slovakia established a partnership with the Indiana National Guard, the armed forces of the state of Indiana, in 1994 and it has grown into a strong partnership, due to the annual visits of the Guard Commander to Slovakia to meet the highest representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the Slovak Armed Forces. Throughout the partnership, the main areas of cooperation were crisis management, cybersecurity, interoperability, chemical, biological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) threats. Both units participated in the Slovak Warthog 2016 exercise. The latest visit of the commander of the Indiana Guard took place in May 2018. Three U.S. military personnel stayed in Slovakia's NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU). General Courtney P. Carr met with Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš. The main topic of their conversation was cybersecurity (MO SR 2018).

The cooperation in military exercises and procurement is crucial for the support of the Transatlantic partnership and should continue in the future as the relationship not only provides proof of Slovakia's commitment to strong U.S. relations, but Slovakia also benefits from the cooperation in developing and maintaining its essential training capabilities. The latest developments in European security, including the continuation and expansion of the Permanent Structural Cooperation (PESCO) can strengthen the defence and security pillar of the EU. By participating in the project, Slovakia proved to be a formidable and reliable ally. However, this partnership is not to replace the Euro-Atlantic or the Slovak–U.S. partnership. Instead, it is mostly to develop and improve Slovakia's defence capabilities and create better partnerships across the EU.

⁴ Slovak engineers arrived to Afghanistan on August 19, 2002. Their role was to rebuild the Bagram Airfield, the largest U.S. military base in Afghanistan.

6. What Can It All Bring Down To?

Anti-Americanism affects current Slovak–American relations negatively. Ellwood distinguishes three types of anti-Americanism. The first is where people oppose the U.S. Government and the way the U.S. conducts its foreign, security and defence policy. The other group is consisting of people who are against the American way of life, criticise consumerism and describe people living in the U.S. as shallow, they also make fun of patriotism. The last group includes the people who are against the American values, the idea of democracy, the rule of law and liberal ideals (ELLWOOD 2003).

Although it is difficult to measure the tendency because we lack data in the field. There are several reasons behind anti-Americanism, which are similar in other European countries. First, one source of anti-Americanism is rooted in U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. People on both the extreme left and the extreme right see the U.S. as the world's policeman and have the tendency to ascribe the instability in the Middle East and North Africa to U.S. military missions and operations in the region. This pillar of anti-Americanism was getting the strongest traction during the later years of Bill Clinton's presidency, and during the presidency of George W. Bush. Event after the 9/11 attacks, 23% of the public opinion preferred to support the U.S. less than before, or stop the support entirely. In the meanwhile, 19% asked for greater support for the U.S. from Slovakia (GYARFÁŠOVÁ–VELŠIČ 2002). Concerning Clinton, the resentment took place around the time of the U.S. military operations in Serbia, conducted with NATO support. There are very limited sources on the public opinion, but the strong pan-Slavistic tendencies connected with xenophobic views towards Muslim countries, resulted in some of the political parties of Slovakia to strongly condemn the actions in the former Yugoslavia. The measures punished the regime of Slobodan Milošević and led to the establishment of a free Kosovar state. The political parties, among them the Slovak National Party, used the Serbian official statements to support their opposition (MESEŽNIKOV 2001). Until today, Slovakia remains one of the five EU countries that have not officially recognised Kosovo. During the Bush era, anti-Americanism was strong due to the invasion in Iraq in 2003. As it was shortly before the official accession of Slovakia to NATO, the government pledged the support and the Slovak armed forces later joined the NATO training mission in Iraq. Based on

the public perception, and the author's interactions with the public, the fact that Slovakia often participates in U.S.-led missions and operations is uniquely unbeknownst to the critics of U.S. foreign policy.

However, anti-Americanism did not stop with the new president in the White House. It is true that Europe viewed Barack Obama with higher approval ratings than in the U.S., and many Europeans welcomed the change (SAAD 2017), but anti-Americanism continued to thrive in Slovakia. The most recent poll conducted by GLOBSEC, in cooperation with the FOCUS polling agency showed that 59% of Slovaks view the U.S. role in the world negatively, in comparison to the 51% of Czechs and the 39% of Hungarians. According to the poll, Slovaks are the least ambivalent in their opinions on the U.S. as only 9% of the responders replied that they did not know how they felt about the U.S.'s role in the world, comparing to the 14% and 15% coming from the Czech Republic and Hungary respectively (GLOBSEC 2016).

Another explanation for anti-Americanism is cultural, in particular, the culture of consumerism. Given the nature of the U.S. media and movie industry, the old continent was flooded with movies and TV shows from the U.S. Naturally, reality shows made their way into Slovak living rooms and thus we can assume that Slovaks started to create an image of the U.S. based on what they saw on TV. This image was, however, far from the general objective analysis of the U.S. When we add nostalgia for the Soviet times and continuous disinformation campaigns to the mix, there is a strong potential for anti-Americanism. It would be ignorant to argue that criticism of the U.S. has no merit. However, the basis for such critique draws on emotions rather than facts. As it is very difficult to spot, measure, or examine anti-Americanism, it seems that it is even more difficult to do something about it. Education and cultivated debate can help in the end, but there are no short-term remedies for calming down people with fired-up feelings towards the U.S. From a research based on the content and the quantity of online anti-American posts, the trend of anti-Americanism is concerning but fixable. It would help, however, if politicians would not fuel the already established and often mixed view, or if the country's representatives were advocating for a balanced foreign policy towards all cardinal directions.

Below is the figure of Slovakia's public opinion on the U.S. leadership from Gallup's Global Leadership Reports.

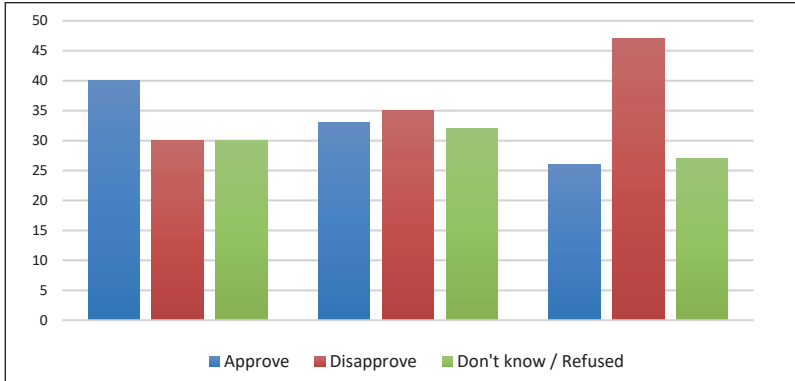


Figure 2.

Slovakia's public opinion on the U.S. leadership

Source: Gallup 2016

7. Conclusions

The Slovak–American relations were never so strategic as some hoped them to be. The U.S. did play a significant political, financial and cultural role in Slovakia during the 1990s, supporting a free and open civil society eventually leading to the establishment of a democratic regime that joined the civilised Western world with its EU and NATO membership. The road did not stop there. It is now for the Slovak Republic to acknowledge the help and continue its journey. The world is too complex and the U.S. attention span, the domestic problems and the budgetary constraints are too large for Slovakia to expect that it will be on the top priority list of one of the most powerful countries in the world. Slovakia should aspire for a good relationship with the U.S. To do so, it could find positions and opportunities to help strengthening the North-Atlantic partnership in the form of military, economic, political and cultural relations. It has been more than a century since the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Agreement. The relation is nowhere near perfect, but no one can say that it has got significantly worse. It is up to the political representatives, civil society and academia to remind people of the importance of a well-defined relationship with the U.S. and tell them how they can benefit from it. The work is difficult, but it begins at home.

Bibliography

- BIDEN, Joe (2009): Remarks By Vice President Biden On America Central Europe And A Partnership for the 21st Century. *The White House*, 22 October 2009. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-america-central-europe-and-a-partnership-21st-century> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Bureau of Economic Analysis (2017): Position on a historical-cost basis, financial transactions without current-cost adjustment, and income without current-cost adjustment. *Bureau of Economic Analysis*, 21 July 2017. Source: <https://bea.gov/international/xls/usdia-current/USDIA-DetailedCountry-2009-2016.xlsx> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- BUSH, George (2005): President Addresses and Thanks Citizens of Slovakia. *The White House*, 24 February 2005. Source: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050224-1.html> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- ELLWOOD, David (2005): Anti-Americanism: Why Do Europeans Resent Us? *History News Network*, 8 August 2005. Source: <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/1426> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- FEDOR, Helen (2016): The Slovaks in America. *European Reading Room, Library of Congress*, 14 April 2016. Source: www.loc.gov/rr/european/imsk/slovakia.html (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Gallup (2016): *The U.S. Global Leadership Reports 2016*. Source: <https://news.gallup.com/reports/191807/us-global-leadership-report-2016.aspx> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- GLOBSEC (2016): Globsec Trends 2016: Stredná Európa pod paľbou ruskej propagandy: skúmanie postojev verejnosti v Čechách, Maďarsku a na Slovensku. *GLOBSEC*, September 2016. Source: www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/globsec_trends_2016_sk.pdf (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- GMUF (2008): *Transatlantic Trends 2010*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States. Source: www.flad.pt/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/livro10.pdf (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- GMUF (2009): *Transatlantic Trends 2009*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States. Source: www.flad.pt/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/livro09.pdf (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- GYARFÁŠOVÁ, Oľga – VELŠIC, Marián (2002): Public Opinion. In MESEŽNIKOV, Grigorij – KOLLÁR, Miroslav – NICHOLSON, Tom eds.: *Slovakia 2001: A Global Report on the State of Society*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs.

- KOVANDA, Lukáš (2015): The Czech–US Economic and Trade Relations After 1989. In GLENN, John K. – JACKSON, Bruce P. – KOVANDA, Lukáš – MITCHELL, A. Wess – MUNTER, Cameron – POJAR, Tomáš – SCHEUNEMANN, Leah – SCHNEIDER, Jiří – VONDRA, Alexandr eds.: *Czech–American Relations: A Roadmap for the Future*. Prague, Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations.
- KVAŠŇÁK, Lukáš (2017): Americké spoločnosti priniesli prácu, no aj novú firemnú kultúru. *Trend*, 29 November 2017. Source: www.etrend.sk/trend-archiv-rok-2017/cislo-47/americke-spolocnosti-priniesli-pracu-no-aj-novu-firemnu-kulturu.html (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- LUKEŠ, Igor (2014): *Československo nad propastí*. Prague, Prostor.
- MESEŽNIKOV, Grigorij (2001): Domestic Politics. In MESEŽNIKOV, Grigorij – KOLLÁR, Miroslav – NICHOLSON, Tom eds.: *Slovakia 2000: A Global Report on the State of Society*. Bratislava, Institute for Public Affairs.
- MFA (2017a): *Ekonomická informácia o teritóriu: Spojené štáty americké*. Bratislava, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Source: www.mzv.sk/documents/752200/620840/Spojen%C3%A9+C5%A1t%C3%A1ty+americk%C3%A9+ekonomick%C3%A9+inform%C3%A1cie+o+terit%C3%B3riu+2017 (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- MFA (2017b): *Predseda NR SR A. Danko pri príležitosti 137. zasadnutia Medziparlamentnej únie v Sankt Peterburg navštívil Ruskú federáciu*. Bratislava, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Source: www.mzv.sk/web/moskva/detail/-/asset_publisher/bZtjMy3iNwbo/content/predseda-nr-sr-a-danko-pri-prilezitosti-137-zasadnutia-medziparlamentnej-unie-v-sankt-peterburg-navstivil-rusku-federaciju/10182?p_p_auth=TtIExSg2 (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- MO SR (2018): Minister Gajdoš rokoval s veliteľom Národnej gardy štátu Indiana genmjr. C. P. Carrom. *Ministerstvo obrany Slovenskej republiky*, 2 May 2018. Source: www.mod.gov.sk/41786-sk/minister-gajdos-rokoval-s-velitelom-narodnej-gardy-statu-indiana-genmjr-c-p-carrom/ (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- NAGYOVÁ, Linda (2008): Michal Kováč: Mečiar prišiel za mnou s podpísanou abdikáciou. *Hospodárske noviny*, 4 January 2008. Source: <https://style.hnonline.sk/rozhovor-1/270455-michal-kovac-meciar-prisiel-za-mnou-s-podpisanou-abdikaciou> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- News Now (2018): Jan Erik Surotchak Hosted by Pavol Demes in Our Studio. *News Now*, January 23, 2018. Source: <http://newsnow.tasr.sk/video/world-right-now-jan-erik-surotchak-hosted-by-pavol-demes-in-our-studio/> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)

- PURDEK, Imrich – VITKO, Pavol (2014): *Naši v Perzskom zálive: Slovenskí a českí vojaci v operáciách Púštny štít a Púštna búrka 1990–1991*. Bratislava, Ministerstvo obrany SR, Vojenský historický ústav. Source: www.vhu.sk/data/files/684.pdf (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe (2009): An Open Letter To The Obama Administration From Central And Eastern Europe. *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe*, 16 July 2009. Source: www.rferl.org/a/An_Open_Letter_To_The_Obama_Administration_From_Central_And_Eastern_Europe/1778449.html (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- SAAD, Lydia (2017): George W. Bush and Barack Obama Both Popular in Retirement. *Gallup*, 19 June 2017. Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/212633/george-bush-barack-obama-popular-retirement.aspx> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- SARIO (2018): *Exportné trhy*. Source: www.sario.sk/sk/exportujte-do-zahranicia/exportne-trhy (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- SITA (2008): Fico sa pustil do USA pre víza i radar. *Pravda.sk*, 6 March 2008. Source: <https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/157049-fico-sa-pustil-do-usa-pre-viza-i-radar/> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- SHARP, Jeremy – BLANCHARD, Christopher M. (2007): Post-War Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Training, Peacekeeping, and Reconstruction. *Congressional Research Service*, 25 September 2007. Source: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL32105.pdf> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- TASR (2016): Rupublikán D. Trump sa stal 45. prezidentom USA. Postupne prinesieme názory politickej scény na Slovensku. *TASR*, 9 November 2016. Source: www.teraz.sk/slovensko/lblaha-o-trumpovom-vitazstve-ludia/227162-clanok.html (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- TASR (2018): Jan Erik Surotchak Hosted by Pavol Demes in Our Studio. *TASR*, 23 January 2018. Source: <http://newsnow.tasr.sk/video/world-right-now-jan-erik-surotchak-hosted-by-pavol-demes-in-our-studio/> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- The Times (2003): Europe and America Must Stand United. *The Times*, 30 January 2003. Source: www.thetimes.co.uk/article/europe-and-america-must-stand-united-j9m07hm3qfv (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Trend (2017): Firmy na Slovensku – najväčšie americké firmy pôsobiace na Slovensku. *Trend*, 23 November 2017.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2018): *Foreign Trade Division – Export from the United States to Slovakia*. Source <http://tse.export.gov/tse/MapDisplay.aspx> (Accessed: 20.08.2018.)

- U.S. EUCOM (2018): Slovakia. *U.S. EUCOM*, 2018. Source: www.eucom.mil/about/the-region/central-europe/slovakia (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- VASILKO, Tomáš – KONÍK, Juraj (2008): U susedov vyrastie radar USA. *SME.sk*, 4 April 2008. Source: www.sme.sk/c/3810139/u-susedov-vyrastie-radar-usa.html (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Veľvyslanectvo Ruskej Federácie v Slovenskej Republike (2018): *Rusko–slovenské vzťahy*. Source: <https://slovakia.mid.ru/web/svk/9> (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)
- Vláda SR (2003): *Návrh na vyslanie ženijnej jednotky ozbrojených síl Slovenskej republiky do Irackej republiky*. Bratislava, Úrad vlády SR. Source: www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-56327?prefix-File=m_ (Accessed: 30.04.2018.)

Relations between the United States and Slovenia: From U.S. Adverseness to Acceptance and Cooperation

*Mark Kogoj*¹

1. Introduction

Slovenia is a parliamentary democracy, with a population of 2 million inhabitants, getting independence for the first time in history in 1991 after the disintegration of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Geographically situated on the line between Central Europe and the Western Balkans, the Slovenian territory historically represents the crossroad for migration, military campaigns and security threats moving in both directions – from Southeast Europe to Italy and the Alpine region, as well as from Western and Central Europe to the South and East. According to CIA Factbook data, the country had been recognisable for its solid economy until the economic recession in 2009 ended it. The positive economic trend became noticeable again after 2014. Slovenia is a post-socialist country, which became a member of the EU and NATO in 2004. As a small state, it is not in the position to realise its interests and ambitions in the international community unilaterally, which forces the country to cooperate within the framework of international institutions (MALEŠIČ 2013, 321; CIA Factbook 2018).

The relationship of the U.S. with Slovenia goes back to 1990 – which marks the beginning of the dissolution of the SFRY. Therefore, to understand the early history of U.S.–Slovenian relations it seems necessary to briefly describe the Cold War relations between the U.S. and the SFRY – out of which the Republic of Slovenia finally emerged. The Tito–Stalin

¹ Mark Kogoj, Affiliate, Institute for Political Management (Slovenia). Email: mark.kogoj@siol.net

break-up in 1948 led to the exclusion of Yugoslavia's Communist Party from the Cominform (Informbiro) and later to the establishment of the movement of the non-aligned states. These events turned out to be beneficial for Yugoslavia, which was later getting financial and military support from the U.S., without any requests or Western interference in its domestic affairs. From the Western perspective, the rivalry between the communist states was perceived as a first sign of the disintegration of the communist monolithic bloc. Moreover, Yugoslavia became a unique "buffer zone" between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, enjoying a special status in U.S. foreign policy. In these geopolitical circumstances, Tito was able to successfully "navigate" Yugoslavia's diplomacy between the two blocs until his death in 1980. However, the fall of the Soviet-led communist bloc neglected the privileged position that the SFRY had occupied in American foreign policy and turned the U.S. focus to the democratic transition occurring in Central and Eastern Europe (BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82; PIRJEVEC 2003).

The paper approaches Slovenia–U.S. relations from five interconnected perspectives: bilateral diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy within the framework of international organisations (NATO and the UN), bilateral military cooperation, military cooperation through NATO and bilateral economic relations. The timeframe goes from 1990 (marking Slovenian endeavours to establish an independent state) to early 2018. The aim of the chapter is to articulate the main events, disputes and dispatches that characterised the relations between the two countries in the past 28 years.

2. Establishing an Independent Slovenian State

In 1990, when the inevitable factors of the SFRY's disintegration² were already well underway, the U.S. proved to be a hesitant player in the Balkans, seeing the ongoing problems in Yugoslavia merely as distractions from the fall of Soviet communism in Central and Eastern Europe (BUKOWSKI 2002, 53). Ignoring the gravity of evident interior tensions

² The factors contributing to the SFRY's disintegration included economic crises, ethnic and religious conflicts within SFRY, the rise of Slobodan Milošević and his ambitions of a "Great Serbia", the federal government losing control over the Yugoslav People's Army, the democratic pluralism in Slovenia and Croatia.

between the Yugoslav socialist republics, the first Bush Administration strongly supported the reform-oriented federal government, led by Prime Minister Ante Marković, who tried to introduce market reforms in a fully indebted and economically broken state. This kind of approach underlines the main U.S. interest regarding the Yugoslav crisis in the early nineties – the preservation of the SFRY as a united political entity. However, the Bush Administration did not expand economic resources to assist Marković's reforms (BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

As the crisis in Yugoslavia deepened, U.S. diplomacy was operating on the side-lines, leaving the primary responsibility for crisis management to the Western European states. In the chaotic political atmosphere that shocked the federation, Slovenia decided to declare its economic independence from the federal economy in March 1990. In April, the first democratic elections brought into power President Milan Kučan and a new coalition in the republic's assembly – it was called the democratic opposition (DEMOS), which immediately started legislative preparations for the declaration of independence. After a strong majority success of the independence referendum in December 1990 (88.2% of the total electorate voted for independence), the republic's assembly decided to proclaim independence on 25 June 1991. Meanwhile, on 21 June 1991, Secretary of State James Baker visited Belgrade, communicating a strong U.S. support for the preservation of the SFRY, opposing the use of force and the suppression of democratic processes. The day after the declaration of independence, the Yugoslav People's Army occupied Slovenia, while clashes were already underway in some parts of Croatia (which declared its independence on the same day). Slovenia understood the importance of the U.S. in world politics even before its secession from Yugoslavia. Immediately after the proclamation of independence, the new-born state sent a special representative to Washington in order to present Slovenia's case to the U.S. administration and public. The main reason for this diplomatic action was the fact, that according to Article 4 of the UN Charter, Slovenia would not have been able to become a member of the organisation, if its accession would go against the interests of any permanent member of the Security Council – in this case the U.S. (JANČAR 1996; BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

Upon the separation of Slovenia and Croatia, the U.S. publicly criticised the unilateral moves of those two republics, condemning their

actions as violations of the Helsinki Declaration³ (BUKOWSKI 2002, 61). According to Bukowski, Washington also attempted to head off the European Community's recognition of Slovenia in late 1991 (BUKOWSKI 2002, 61). Moreover, the U.S. refrained itself from granting the recognition of independence to Slovenia contemporarily with the Western European states. The European Community (EC) officially recognised Slovenia as an independent state on 15 January 1992, following Germany's unilateral initiative of granting the recognition on 23 December 1991. Despite the earlier diplomatic move of the EC countries, the U.S. withheld the recognition for almost 3 months, until 7 April. And even the late recognition was not discrete, as they recognised Slovenia together with Croatia and Bosnia (JANČAR 1996; BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

3. Towards NATO Integration

3.1. The establishment of diplomatic relations and Slovenia's decision to join NATO

After the U.S. recognition of Slovenia and the establishment of diplomatic relations, Slovenian diplomacy stressed its wish to start intensive bilateral relations. Slovenia was in this context eager to talk about a wide range of topics from bilateral economic questions, financial loans, military and scientific cooperation, to issues concerning the crises in Yugoslavia. The U.S., however, was merely interested in getting as much information and analysis about the Balkan crisis as possible, being rather passive about other topics. Taking into consideration the events in the other, by that time already ex-Yugoslav republics, the relations between the U.S. and Slovenia could be labelled as the most promising in comparison to U.S. relations with any other former Yugoslav republic. From the American side, the relations between the two countries were kept on the level of State Department bureaucracy, not gaining the attention of high level officials directly connected with the White House – which has been disappointed

³ The final act of the first Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe signed in Helsinki in 1975, with the primary goal to reduce the tensions between the Soviet and the Western Blocs.

over Slovenia's secession from the SFRY a year before (JANČAR 1996; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

The goal of joining NATO has never been seriously questioned in Slovenian politics, especially after the new-born state had to defend its independence by military means during the 10-day armed conflict against the Yugoslav People's Army. In addition, the ongoing war in other parts of the former Yugoslavia (60 km at its closest range from the Slovenian border) showed deficiencies in the collective security system of the UN and the ineffectiveness of the EC to deal with the crisis. The endeavours for partnership in NATO became an official political goal of Slovenia in 1994, while the cooperation with the Alliance represented an important element of national security (GRIZOLD–VEGIČ 2002, 384). The confirmation of this statement came from the Slovenian Parliament, which accepted an amendment to the basic national security document (the Resolution on the Starting-Points for a National Security Plan), clearly expressing the will to join NATO. Slovenia also became one of the first members of the NATO sponsored programme, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative in 1994. The establishment of the PfP⁴ programme came as a solution for the dilemma of NATO enlargement and was primarily offered to former communist countries, as a temporary compensation instead of full NATO membership. Almost simultaneously Slovenia got the status of associate partner in the North Atlantic Assembly. Moreover, in January 1996, Slovenia became a permanent member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) (Dopolnilo k resoluciji o izhodiščih zasnove nacionalne varnosti 1994; BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; GRIZOLD–VEGIČ 2002, 383–401; Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018d).

3.2. Slovenia's exclusion from the first round of NATO enlargement

Persuading the U.S. to support Slovenia in its attempt to join NATO represented a difficult task for the young country, especially due to its small size and the lack of resources. An additional problem was the ignorance and misperception of Slovenia in various parts of the U.S. Government

⁴ Note that the PfP includes also several neutral states, such as Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Finland.

and Congress. As a consequence, Slovenia did not get much visibility in U.S. foreign policy concerning NATO enlargement. The enlargement of the Alliance came on the U.S. political agenda during the first Clinton Administration in mid-1993. It was slowly gaining momentum in the 1994–1996 period, and culminated in the 1997 NATO summit in Madrid. However, the U.S. decided that NATO's enlargement would encompass only three Central European countries: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic (while Slovenia was off the list). Slovenia's failure to be included in the first round of NATO enlargement could be attributed both to the country's own problems, as well as to the problems beyond Slovenia's range of competences. The most visible among the former was the ineffective lobbying in the U.S. administration and in Congress to act in Slovenia's favour. Furthermore, Slovenia was not as well-known as the other NATO aspirants, like Poland and the Czech Republic, where Presidents Walensa and Havel enjoyed a strongly positive reputation between members of the American administration. Although, a minority in the Pentagon exposed the location of Slovenia as a corridor to geographically connect Hungary with the rest of the Alliance, the majority of the U.S. leadership thought that the country's poor infrastructure outweighed this advantage. Slovenia's strongest "trump card" in the Congressional debate was its (relatively) big progress in the field of political and economic reforms. However, the American National Security Council staff simply felt that Slovenia was not offering any significant military benefits to NATO (BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

Despite the failure to become a member of NATO in the first round of enlargement, Slovenia still proved to be eager to show that it had become a committed ally of the U.S. A couple of sudden changes in its foreign policy due to the U.S. intervention revealed Slovenia's lack of orientation in the international community. In 1997 for example, despite considerable domestic issues, Slovenia radically changed its position about the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) sponsored by the U.S. In this case, the Slovenian Government feared that joining SECI would be interpreted (by the opposition) as an act of re-establishing relations in the context of the former Yugoslavia, causing serious political upheaval in the country. If Slovenia would not be joining the initiative, then Hungary would not be eager to do so either – also bordering the Balkan conflict and not willing to be associated with it. Because the whole project was jeopardised by this decision, President Bill Clinton sent a letter to Prime Minister Janez

Drnovšek, stating that the international community expects a more determined involvement of Slovenia in regional affairs. As a result, Slovenia changed its stance towards SECI and participated in the initiative, without becoming its member. The decision was also undoubtedly influenced by Clinton's hint, that Slovenia's participation would strengthen its case for NATO membership. Another case of Slovenia's foreign policy liability towards the U.S. happened in June 1998, with the Swedish UN initiative for the resolution "towards a nuclear weapons free world". Slovenia firstly cosponsored the initiative, while withdrawing its co-sponsorship after Bill Clinton expressed U.S. dissatisfaction during his meeting with Janez Drnovšek. Moreover, Slovenia even abstained the voting on the initiative in the UN General Assembly. In March 1999, NATO launched its air raid against Serbia in order to end Slobodan Milosevic's execution of violence against the Albanian population in Kosovo. Slovenia immediately authorised NATO to use its air space, despite the fact that the operation was launched in the absence of a UN Security Council resolution. This decision caused a legal dispute about prerogatives between the Slovenian Government and the Parliament. However, the dispute was never exploited in politics because it was feared that it could hinder the process of NATO integration (BUČAR-ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82).

3.3. The second round of NATO enlargement

The Madrid Summit marked an important milestone in the Slovenian–U.S. relations. Despite the deep disappointment shared by the Slovenian political elite over the decision of the U.S. not to support Slovenia's candidacy for early NATO admission, the incident had no visible influence on the two countries' bilateral relations. The official declaration of the Madrid Summit (in July 1997) was not so "catastrophic" for Slovenia, which (together with Romania) received a NATO approved recognition as a serious candidate to be reconsidered in 1999. Contrary to the initial neglect after Slovenia's secession from the SFRY, the U.S. made several efforts to expand its ties with Slovenia during the latter half of the 1990s. In late 1995, Secretary of Defence William Perry visited Slovenia, showing great contentment about Slovenia's transition to democracy, its transition to market economy and the smooth turnover to civilian control of the military. Immediately after the Madrid Summit, Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright visited Ljubljana. The purpose of the visit was the consolation of Slovenia after its exclusion from the first round of NATO enlargement. Also, the U.S. business presence in Slovenia has expanded considerably in late 1997, when Goodyear announced its investment of \$120 million to acquire a majority stake in the Slovenian tire manufacturer, Sava. The process of American high-level visits culminated in June 1999, when Slovenia hosted President Bill Clinton. During his administration, a notable change occurred in how the U.S. perceived Slovenia. In terms of America's efforts in the Western Balkans, Slovenia provided the U.S. with several benefits. In addition to functioning as a truly successful example among the Yugoslav successor states, Slovenia provided the U.S. with an excellent source of analysis. This was possible due to the fact, that many members of the Slovenian Government, as well as several other political figures, had possessed extensive professional and personal knowledge of key players in the other former Yugoslav states. Moreover, the fruitful bilateral relations resulted in the (July 2000) U.S. Senate Resolution No. 177, which supported Slovenia's accession to NATO. Despite the non-binding nature of the resolution, Slovenia was complimented for its devotions to the respect of human rights (HR), the development of a market economy, the cooperation in the PfP and helping NATO during its operation *Allied Force* (the bombardment of Serbia). A very important step showing that Slovenia was gradually increasing responsibility over the happenings in the Western Balkans was the establishment of a non-profit humanitarian foundation – the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance for BiH in 1998, which was later renamed ITF (BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–128; BUKOWSKI 2002, 53–82; LADIKA 2017, 230).

Slovenia's political decision in favour of NATO membership was clearly expressed by the Slovenian National Assembly in April 1996. According to this: "The Republic of Slovenia wishes to guarantee its basic security interest within the framework of a system of collective defense, made possible by NATO membership" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018d). In the following April, the Slovenian National Assembly adopted the Declaration of NATO Membership, while President Milan Kučan signed the establishment of the mission of the Republic of Slovenia to NATO. In February 1998, the government presented the National Strategy for the Accession of Slovenia to NATO. At the Washington Summit in April 1999, NATO member states adopted the Membership Action Plan (MAP), while in October Slovenia accepted the first Annual National

Programme (ANP) for the implementation of the NATO MAP. From 1999–2002 Slovenia prepared and completed three ANP (submitting the fourth in September), before being invited to begin the accession talks of NATO membership at the summit in Prague in November. After NATO membership was supported in a referendum (held in March 2003) by 66% of Slovenian voters, the protocol on Slovenia's accession to NATO was signed by the representatives of the nineteen NATO member countries in Brussels (in the same month), while the fifth ANP was submitted in September. Slovenia finally entered NATO in February 2004 along with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia (BEBLER 2009, 105–116; Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018d).

4. Bilateral Relations after 9/11

The 10th anniversary of Slovenia's independence (in June 2001) was marked by the first meeting between American president George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin in Ljubljana. This event was very important for Slovenia's publicity and recognition in the international community, since the meeting attracted the attention of the world media. However, the most important change in U.S. foreign policy was President Bush's declaration of war against global terrorism, which also affected Slovenian–U.S. relations. In this period, we can note two main diplomatic affairs concerning the bilateral ties: the dispute over the statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the Statement of the Vilnius Group (supporting the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003) (MMC RTV SLO 2008a).

The diplomatic conference in Rome adopted the statute of the ICC in July 1998. While 120 countries voted for its acceptance, seven were against – including the U.S. The main strategic reason for the contradiction to the ICC was the general unwillingness of the U.S. to expose its military personnel (involved in operations across the world) to any kind of universal international court (GOLOB 2004). However, despite the initial opposition to the ICC, President Clinton signed the statute in the last days of its administration (already in departure). During the first administration of George W. Bush, the U.S. diplomatically pressured 139 states not to ratify the already signed statute. To those who already ratified the Rome Statute, a bilateral agreement was offered, in order to exclude American citizens from the ICC jurisdiction. This group was mainly composed of European

states, including Slovenia. The former ratified the Statute of Rome in late December 2001. However, despite being a small state on its path towards NATO integration (in this regard heavily depending on the U.S.), Slovenia successfully opposed to American diplomatic pressure and never signed a bilateral agreement about the exclusion. In this case, Slovenia's defiance to the U.S. was undoubtedly influenced by the EU opposition to the American "strategy of bilateral agreements". In September 2002, the European Council made a statement (addressing also EU candidate states, like Slovenia), arguing that bilateral agreements would be in contrast to the states' duties towards the ICC. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Anton Rop publicly announced Slovenia's decision not to sign the deal on the non-extradition of U.S. citizens to the ICC in June 2003 – more than half a year after the country received the official invitation for membership in NATO (GOLOB 2004, 110–123; Summary of Information on Bilateral Immunity Agreements 2006).

Slovenia's participation in the so called 'Statement of the Vilnius Group' (V-10) clearly showed the small country's diplomatic lability, inspired by its relentless will to become a NATO member state. The V-10 statement was signed by the foreign ministers of ten NATO aspirant countries in February 2003: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. This happened after the Bush Administration decided to invade Iraq and was desperately trying to get support from NATO and other allies. Since the U.S. was eager to win as many supporters as possible, the V-10 countries saw an opportunity to gain additional sympathy from the world's superpower in their bid for NATO membership. In their joint statement, the V-10 countries expressed their comprehension of the threat of terrorism, and the threat that dictators possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) posed to international security. Moreover, the V-10 countries fully complied with the "supposed evidence" presented by the U.S. in the UN General Assembly about the Iraqi WMD program, the attempts of Saddam Hussein to dupe UN inspectors and his connections with terrorism. The statement also supported the UN General Assembly Resolution 1441, collectively demanding the disarmament of the WMD capabilities of Iraq. Because of the signing of the V-10 statement, Slovenia's name appeared on the list of the U.S. 'coalition of the willing'. In March 2003, the U.S. (and its coalition of the willing) invaded Iraq. However, after the intervention turned into a prolonged military mission (and the post conflict reconstruction of a new

democratic state), Slovenia tried to avoid cooperation with the coalition of the willing (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia 2003; NATO 2003).

5. Military Cooperation through NATO Missions

The military cooperation between Slovenia and the U.S. goes back to the mid-1990s. The exercise “Cooperative Nugget” in August 1995, which took place in the U.S., marked the first active involvement of the Slovenian armed forces abroad. In 1995, the Slovenian armed forces also became part of the NATO Planning and Review Process. The signing of an agreement regarding transit arrangements and the Status of Forces Agreement in Slovenia established a legal framework for its cooperation in the PfP programme. The switch of Slovenia’s foreign policy from passive to active involvement regarding the Yugoslav crisis happened almost simultaneously with the NATO summit in Madrid. Therefore, in July 1997, Slovenia finally decided to contribute ground troops to the SFOR mission in BiH (with thirty-six countries) – marking the first active cooperation of Slovenia in international peacekeeping missions (BUČAR–ŠTREBENC 2002, 103–127; Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018c).

Table 1.

Slovenian armed forces in NATO operations

Name of the mission	Period	Armed forces personnel (collectively)
SFOR BiH	October 1997 – December 2004	147
AFOR Albania	May – July 1999	26
KFOR Kosovo	January 2000 – present	240 (in 2018)
ISAF Afghanistan	March 2004 – December 2014	1273
NATO HQ Balkan (BiH, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania)	2018	9
NTM-I Iraq	February – August 2006	5
RSM NATO Afghanistan	January 2015 – present	8

Source: Ministry of Defence RS 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018c; MARKOVIĆ 2017, 30–39.

Table 1 shows Slovenia's commitment to NATO military operations and missions (MOM) in terms of military personnel. After SFOR, Slovenia's armed forces took part in several NATO MOMs in the Western Balkans and the Middle East. Between 2004 and 2014 Slovenia contributed 1,273 members of its armed forces (in different contingents) to operation ISAF – representing the biggest effort in military personnel. Slovenia also took part (contributing 6 military instructors) in the anti-ISIS Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq, led by U.S. armed forces in 2016. Moreover, a small member force is still present in Afghanistan within the RSM NATO operation, launched after the end of ISAF (MARKOVIĆ 2017, 30–39).

Table 2.

Total percentage of average annual military expenditures for international MOMs from 1997 to 2016

Organization	Total percentage of average annual military expenditures (%)
NATO	84.7
EU	8.6
UN	6.0
OSCE	0.4
Other	0.3

Source: ŠTEINER 2017, 50.

As shown in Table 2, the vast majority (84.7%) of Slovenia's military expenditures for international MOMs from 1997–2016 was spent on NATO operations and missions. This clearly shows Slovenia's foreign policy orientation towards NATO – which is seen as the primary international organisation for the country's security and defence. The relatively small percentage (8.8%) dedicated to EU MOMs is due to two reasons. The first is the rather small scope of EU MOMs in comparison to civilian missions, while the second one is the smaller percentage that Slovenia spends on civilian missions (mostly conducted by the EU) in general. However, despite the official documents and the declaratory rhetoric of the government which tries to emphasise Slovenia's commitments to the Alliance, the country's military expenditures as a share of GDP do not reach the 2% NATO requirement. In fact, they are almost half of it. Military expenditures went down from 1.17% of the GDP in 2012 to 0.92% of the GDP in 2017. Slovenia has been criticised several times by NATO officials in

recent years for not spending enough on its military. Moreover, President Donald Trump's statement of not defending the Alliance's members who are not fulfilling their duties (in terms of military burden sharing) towards NATO, could mean new discrepancies in Slovenian–U.S. military relations. An important dimension of the Slovenian–U.S. military relations are the joint military exercises. Slovenian and American soldiers have successfully conducted several joint military exercises since Slovenia joined NATO. The armed forces of the two countries cooperate closely in the areas of training and military education (CIA Factbook 2018; Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries 2010–2017; ŠTEINER 2017, 50).

The deterioration of relations between U.S. and Russia, after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 did not have much impact on the Slovenian–Russian bilateral relations. The largest and the (geographically) most Western Slavic country have traditionally conducted good and constructive political, economic and cultural relations. Slovenia is among the very few EU and NATO countries visited by President Putin after the Ukrainian crises. The purpose of Putin's visit in the summer of 2017 was the commemoration of the chapel built by Russian prisoners of war who died on Slovenian soil during WWI. Moreover, Slovenia did not expel any Russian diplomats, after the death of double agent Sergei Skriptal and his daughter in March 2018. Slovenia's position concerning the Ukraine crisis remains also relatively neutral and does not go beyond supporting the dialog between NATO and Russia. The country's aim is to conduct neither a pro-American nor a pro-Russian foreign policy, but rather a balanced one in line with its interests. However, Slovenia is aware of its obligations towards international organisations such as the EU and NATO. The Slovenian armed forces participated in military exercise Anakonda 2016⁵ in Poland as a part of NATO's response to the Ukrainian crisis with the aim to reassure countries of the Eastern flank of the alliance. Furthermore, Slovenian armed forces are present in Latvia since June 2017 – in the framework of NATO's Enhanced Forward presence (ESIH 2018; Ministry of Defence RS 2017; MMC RTV SLO 2018; MMC RTV SLO 2016).

⁵ One of the largest NATO exercises after the Cold War.

6. Economic Relations and the Slovene Diaspora in the U.S.

According to the economic programme *Mednarodni izzivi 2015–2016*, the American market, along with the Japanese and Turkish represents the top priorities for the internationalisation of Slovenia's economy. Slovenia was as an EU member included in the EU–U.S. negotiation process for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) aimed at prompting trade and multilateral economic growth, which were suspended in late 2016 and since then left without a final conclusion. Furthermore, the Trump Administration with its protective economic measures puts everything even more in question (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018a; *Izvozno okno* 2018).

Table 3.

The exchange of goods between the U.S. and Slovenia from 2012–2017 (in €1,000)

Year	Export	Import	Together
2012	339.043	288.340	627.383
2013	364.248	393.484	757.732
2014	436.411	264.442	700.853
2015	492.668	330.679	823.347
2016	523.538	326.721	850.259
2017	559.579	380.669	940.248

Source: *Izvozno okno* 2018

As shown in Table 3, the exchange of goods between the two countries is gradually increasing since 2012 reaching the highest level in 2017 with the total exchange value of almost a billion Euros. The main products that Slovenia is exporting to the U.S. are nuclear reactors, mechanical devices (and its components), pharmacological products, electric machines and equipment with their components, filming devices, devices for the projection of picture and sound, iron and coal, toys and requisites for sports and play, optical, photographic, cinematographic, and medical and surgery instruments and devices. Slovenia is importing from the U.S. mineral fuels and oil, their products and distillations, nuclear reactors and mechanical devices (and their components), electric machines and devices, filming devices, devices for the projection of picture and sound, plastic masks and plastic products, natural rubber and its products, and

optical, photographic, cinematographic, medical and surgery instruments and devices. The U.S. is the 4th most important non-EU export partner of Slovenia, while the 5th most important non-EU import partner. Slovenia is 52% self-sufficient in terms of energy supplies. The only energy source that Slovenia imports from the U.S. is oil, while gas mostly comes from Russia and North Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS 2018a; Izvožno okno 2018; Statistični urad RS 2017).

In 2000 the census of American population revealed that 175,099 U.S. citizens had Slovenian origins, although the biggest national events still only enjoy the participation of a few hundreds or even a few thousand people. Slovenian halls, societies, Catholic parishes and other support organisations are central for the preservation of the Slovenian national identity in the U.S. Most of these organisations operate both in English and Slovenian, while also publishing bulletins and newsletters such as the Slovenian American Time (Cleveland), Ave Maria (Lemont), KSKJ Voice, Prosveta and Zarja. In Cleveland there are four Slovenian radio programs and most of the associations have their web pages like ClevelandSlovenia.com. Moreover, there are a couple of Slovenian schools where Slovenian language is being taught, and a regular study program in the framework of a Slovenian language course at Cleveland State University. The former also established a Centre for Slovenian studies in 2009, and in the same year a Slovenian museum and archives were also inaugurated (Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS – General Consulate of the RS in Cleveland 2018b).

7. Relations after Joining the EU and NATO (2004–2018)

7.1. Slovenian soldiers in Iraq and the EU presidency

The U.S. military interventions in the Middle East and a strengthened European integration, the human rights violations in American prisons in Cuba (Guantanamo Bay), as well as Iraq and Afghanistan during the Bush Administration brought U.S. relations with the new democracies in Central Europe from the historical peak to the lowest point. However, despite the criticism of the media and the public towards American foreign policy, the newly elected Slovenian Government led by Janez Janša (Democratic Party) puts its efforts into the reestablishment of constructive relations with the superpower. During the NATO summit at the end of

February 2005, European member states decided to support the allied mission for training Iraqi security forces, while Prime Minister Janša publicly announced Slovenia's preparedness to contribute military instructors to the mission. At the beginning of January 2006, the Slovenian Government unanimously passed an agreement of deploying four military instructors to NATO training mission NTM-I in Iraq. With the symbolic contribution to the NTM-I, Slovenia gained great political capital in the U.S., although bilateral economic relations did not benefit much (Delo 2006; MMC RTV SLO 2006; LADIKA 2017, 198–203).

In early 2006, the U.S. ambassador in Ljubljana reported to Washington that the relations between the two countries had strongly improved, while expecting more opportunities for close cooperation during the future Slovenian EU presidency. Slovenia took over the presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2008, after fortifying its reputation in the U.S. and NATO missions in Afghanistan, BiH and Kosovo. However, the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state became the main issue during Slovenia's presidency of the EU. The U.S. saw the independence of Kosovo merely as the last chapter of the dissolution of the SFRY. Because of the block (the Russian veto) in the UN Security Council, the question had to be solved by the EU and the U.S. A peaceful solution to the Kosovo issue was extremely important for Slovenia, since the Western Balkans represented its strategically most important area in terms of security. The U.S. was expecting a leading role from Slovenia concerning the strategic questions in the Balkans, while Slovenia counted on its close cooperation with the U.S. regarding the question of Kosovo. The solution for Kosovo had to include negotiating benefits for Serbia (mainly the acceleration of Serbia's approach towards the EU) in order to avoid the serious consequences of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008. The Slovenian Parliament almost unanimously recognised Kosovo as an independent state on 5 March, despite accusations that the recognition came under direct pressure from the U.S., Slovenia proved to be susceptible for the American political positions, since in areas lacking EU consensus Slovenian interests were in line with the American interests. In the meanwhile, where interests of the two countries were diverging, Slovenia often referred to its small size as a reason for being incapable to influence European politics (Delo 2008; MMC RTV SLO 2008b; LADIKA 2017, 206–212).

7.2. Arbitration agreement and the issue of Guantanamo prisoners

The parliamentary elections in September 2008 brought the social democrats into power under the leadership of Borut Pahor. The change of power did not have significant effects on Slovenian–U.S. bilateral relations, which at the time were focused around American economic investments, strong cultural ties, smaller foreign policy projects like the ITF and the developing project of a NATO Centre of Excellence for mountain warfare. However, on the top of the foreign policy agenda of the new governments was the solution of the Slovenian–Croatian border dispute, especially because Slovenia was blocking Croatia’s entry into the EU. Slovenia tried to portray the dispute as an issue, which could hinder the stability of the Western Balkans. On the other side, the U.S. wanted the border question to be resolved by the two involved countries. The American standpoint was undoubtedly the consequence of the fact that the U.S. wanted Croatia to continue its Euro-Atlantic integration. The border dispute was characterised by sharp media campaigns (conducted by both Slovenia and Croatia), a change of power in Croatia and a set of ambiguous diplomatic manoeuvres, causing uncertainties around the interpretation of different agreement proposals on both sides. According to Prime Minister Pahor, the U.S. – along with Sweden (presiding the EU at the time) – was the most active actor, promoting the secret diplomacies of Slovenia and Croatia to reach an agreement of the border dispute (LADIKA 2017, 217). The former was signed on 4 November 2009, after a narrow success in the referendum in Slovenia (LADIKA 2017, 216–217; Vlada Republike Slovenije 2018).

The second major event that influenced Slovenian–U.S. relations during the government of Borut Pahor was connected to the change of power in the U.S. and the inauguration of the Obama Administration at the beginning of 2009, which raised high expectations across the Atlantic. In the belief of a better future cooperation, the EU and its member states were ready to support Obama and his endeavours to accomplish his campaign pledges. One of those was the closing of the contentious prison in Guantanamo Bay. In these circumstances, the Slovenian Government proved to be eager to (at least symbolically) support the new American foreign policy (and also to gain additional opportunities for strengthening the bilateral cooperation). However, helping the Obama Administration close Guantanamo meant being ready to take some of its prisoners. In

order to do so, the Slovenian Government had to cross several domestic obstacles: changing the inadequate legislation concerning foreigners, overcoming the disapproval of the parliamentary opposition, dealing with the risk of public dissent and explaining the financial costs of the decision – which was especially tough in a period of economic recession. The visit of Prime Minister Pahor to the U.S. occurred in early February 2011. The talks between the two heads of state included the Guantanamo topic, and the American diplomacy acknowledged Slovenia as a country taking the leading role in the Western Balkans. There were several diplomatic efforts to persuade Slovenia to take Guantanamo prisoners in the following months. The U.S. promised to appreciate Slovenia's humanitarian gesture, along with 13 EU countries, which already accepted Guantanamo prisoners. However, due to other internal political disputes within the coalition, Pahor's government received a no confidence vote in the parliament (in September 2011) – leaving the story of Guantanamo prisoners without conclusion (MMC RTV SLO 2009; LADIKA 2017, 222–226; Delo 2018).

7.3. The election of Donald Trump

The ITF represents a diplomatic success story for Slovenia, often acknowledged by the U.S. as one of the most concrete examples of cooperation between the two countries. In general, the field of international peace and security (including humanitarian and development operations, as well as post-conflict management) represents Slovenia's best chance for strengthening political relations with the U.S., also after the election of Donald Trump. However, the Trump Administration could represent difficulties, as well as opportunities for Slovenia's future position in American foreign policy. Firstly, Slovenia does not reach the expected level of defence spending in NATO. Therefore, President Trump's statements about denying military support to countries which are not spending enough on NATO could have a strong effect on Slovenian–U.S. relations. On the other hand, the fact that President Trump's wife has a Slovenian origin represents an opportunity to strengthen the diplomatic relations, as well as the opportunity for the promotion of Slovenia in the international community. According to Slovenian media reports, Slovenian president Borut Pahor works on securing a bilateral visit to the U.S. in order to meet with Donald Trump. Pahor (in his function as Prime Minister) was

the last Slovenian leader who conducted a visit to the U.S. in 2011. Since the election of Donald Trump there are also rumours about inviting the American President to Slovenia (Delo 2017; LADIKA 2017, 230, 238–239; Večer 2018).

8. Conclusions

The Slovenian–U.S. relations cannot be labelled as good at the beginning, since the American foreign interests included the preservation of the SFRY, therefore opposing Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia. After the American recognition of Slovenia's independence, it took a couple of years and a change of administration in the U.S. to establish decent diplomatic relations. On its way towards NATO integration, Slovenia proved to be an unexperienced actor in international relations, allowing the U.S. to influence Slovenia's foreign policy. Examples like SECI, the initiative for a nuclear weapon free world, and the Vilnius Group Statement confirm Slovenia's foreign policy lability. These cases of blind U.S. support were consequences of the country's relentless will to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions. However, in other cases, Slovenia also proved to be very determined in its foreign policy, like the American pressures over the ICC issue. The NATO Madrid Summit in 1997 represented an important diplomatic milestone, after which Slovenia got attention from high-level U.S. authorities. During the George W. Bush Administration, the public discontent with American foreign policy had been to a great extent compensated with the positive endeavours of the Slovenian governments, which worked on the reestablishment of cooperative relations. After joining NATO, the Slovenian–U.S. military cooperation became an essential part of bilateral relations. However, the domain of diplomatic relations is slightly different. In addition to President Trump's threats to deny the military support from countries who are not reaching NATO's expected level of defence expenditures, there have not been any meetings between high-level representatives of the two states since 2011. Therefore, a meeting between President Trump and President Pahor would be timely. In the context of the potential future meeting, Slovenia's foreign policy priority will be the assurance of the American support for the implementation of the arbitration agreement with Croatia.

Bibliography

- BEBLER, Anton (2009): Slovenia's Road to NATO. *Bilten Slovenske vojske*, Vol. 11, No. 3. 105–116.
- BUČAR, Bojko – ŠTREBENC, Primož (2002): Relations between Small and Large States in a Multilateral Context: A Case Study of U.S.–Slovenian Relations Concerning NATO. In ŠABIČ, Zlatko – BUKOWSKI, Charles: *Small States in the Post-Cold War: Slovenia and NATO Enlargement*. Westport, Praeger. 103–127.
- BUKOWSKI, Charles (2002): Slovenian–American Relations in the Context of NATO Enlargement. In ŠABIČ, Zlatko – BUKOWSKI, Charles: *Small States in the Post-cold War: Slovenia and NATO Enlargement*. Westport, Praeger. 103–127.
- CIA Factbook (2018): *Slovenia*. Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/si.html (Accessed: 10.03.2018.)
- Delo (2006): Slovenski vojaki v Irak. *Delo*, 12 January 2006. Source: www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/slovenski-vojaki-v-irak.html (Accessed: 04.04.2018.)
- Delo (2008): Slovenija priznala neodvisnost Kosova. *Delo*, 5 March 2008. Source: www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/slovenija-priznala-neodvisnost-kosova.html (Accessed: 04.04.2018.)
- Delo (2017): Trump sprejel Pahorjevo vabilo v Slovenijo. *Delo*, 6 July 2017. Source: www.delo.si/svet/evropa/trump-sprejel-pahorjevo-vabilo-v-slovenijo.html (Accessed: 10.04.2018.)
- Delo (2018): Slovenija bo lahko sprejela zapornike iz Guantanamo. *Delo*, 12 April 2018. Source: www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/slovenija-bo-lahko-sprejela-zapornike-iz-guantanama.html (Accessed: 12.04.2018.)
- Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries (2010–2017). Source: www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_06/20170629_170629-pr2017-111-en.pdf (Accessed: 05.04.2018.)
- Dopolnilo k resoluciji o izhodiščih zasnove nacionalne varnosti (1994). Source: www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/1994-21-0002?sop=1994-21-0002 (Accessed: 20.02.2018.)
- ESIH, Uroš (2018): Slovensko–ruski odnosi: Obetajoča rast blagovne menjave. *Večer*, 21 February 2018. Source: www.vecer.com/slovensko-ruski-odnosi-obetajo-ca-rast-blagovne-menjave-6410281 (Accessed: 21.06.2018.)
- GOLOB, Blaž (2004): Mednarodno kazensko sodišče v procesih globalizacije: Vloga in pomen Evropske unije in Slovenije. In BRGLEZ, Milan – ZAJC, Drago: *Globalizacija in vloga malih držav: Slovenija v procesih globalizacije*. Ljubljana, FDV. 110–123.

- GRIZOLD, Anton – VEGIČ, Vinko (2002): Članstvo v Natu: Rešitev sodobne varnostne dileme Slovenije? *Teorija in praksa*, Vol. 39, No. 3. 383–401.
- Izvozno okno (2018): *Bilateralni ekonomski odnosi ZDA s Slovenijo*. Source: www.izvoznookno.si/Dokumenti/podatki_o_drzavah/zda/bilateralni_ekonomski_odnosi_s_slovenijo_4224.aspx (Accessed: 22.06.2018.)
- JANČAR, Matjaž (1996): *Slovenska zunanjepolitična razpotja*. Ljubljana, Društvo 2000.
- LADIKA, Dejan (2017): *Slovensko–ameriški odnosi – prvih 25 let*. Ljubljana, FDV.
- MALEŠIČ, Marjan (2013): Slovenia. In BIEHL, Heiko – GIEGERICH, Bastian – JONAS, Alexandra eds.: *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*. Wiesbaden, Springer VS. 319–331. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-01168-0_25
- MARKOVIĆ, Zvezdan (2017): Slovenci smo v mednarodnih operacijah in misijah (MOM) prisotni že od prve MOM pred 120 leti na Kret, leta 1897 – kratek oris udeležbe slovencev v mom pred letom 1897 in po njem. In MARAŠ, Vasilije: *20 let v službi miru*. Ministry of Defence RS. 30–39.
- Ministry of Defence RS (2017): *Slovenian army*. Source: <http://www.slovenskavojska.si/odnosi-z-javnostmi/sporocila-za-javnost/novica/nov/slovenski-vojaki-v-latviji-bodo-pomagali-pri-resevanju-varnostnih-tezav-v-drzavi-ter-jasno-izkazo/> (Accessed: 21.06.2018.)
- Ministry of Defence RS (2018): *Mednarodne operacije in misije*. [International operations and missions.] Source: www.slovenskavojska.si/mednarodno-sodelovanje/mednarodne-operacije-in-misije/ (Accessed: 28.03.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia – Joint Statement of the Vilnius Group (2003). Source: www.mfa.gov.lv/en/security-policy/co-operation-with-nato-member-states-and-candidate-countries/vilnius-group (Accessed: 19.02.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS – Economic cooperation between Slovenia and USA (2018a). Source: www.washington.embassy.si/index.php?id=2794&L=si (Accessed 22.06.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS – General Consulate of the RS in Cleveland (2018b). Source: www.cleveland.konzulat.si/index.php?id=841 (Accessed: 22.06.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS – Military missions (2018c). Source: www.slovenskavojska.si/en/international-cooperation/international-operations-and-missions (Accessed: 28.03.2018.)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs RS (2018d). Source: www.gov.si teme/slovenija-v-natu/ (Accessed: 18.02.2018.)

- MMC RTV SLO (2006): Slovenski vojaki gredo v Irak. *MMC RTV SLO*, 12 January 2006. Source: www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/slovenski-vojaki-gredo-v-irak/48766 (Accessed: 04.04.2018.)
- MMC RTV SLO (2008a): Ko se srečata Bush in Putin, Slovenija obstane. *MMC RTV SLO*, 4 June 2008. Source: www.rtv slo.si/svet/ko-se-srecata-bush-in-putin-slovenija-obstane/88802 (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- MMC RTV SLO (2008b): Kosovo je razglasilo neodvisnost. *MMC RTV SLO*, 17 February 2008. Source: www.rtv slo.si/svet/kosovo-je-razglasilo-neodvisnost/83415 (Accessed: 04.04.2018.)
- MMC RTV SLO (2009): Zaporniki iz Guantanamo v Sloveniji? *MMC RTV SLO*, 4 June 2009. Source: www.rtv slo.si/evropska-unija/zaporniki-iz-guantanamo-v-sloveniji/204541 (Accessed: 05.04.2018.)
- MMC RTV SLO (2016): Slovenija prvič na Natovih vojaških vajah Anakonda. *MMC RTV SLO*, 7 June 2016. Source: www.rtv slo.si/svet/foto-slovenija-prvic-na-natovih-vojaskih-vajah-anakonda/395079 (Accessed: 21.06.2018.)
- MMC RTV SLO (2018): Slovenija se ne bo pridružila članicam EU-ja in ZDA pri izgonu ruskih diplomatov. *MMC RTV SLO*, 26 March 2018. Source: www.rtv slo.si/evropska-unija/slovenija-se-ne-bo-pridruzila-clanicam-eu-ja-in-zda-pri-izgonu-ruskih-diplomatov/450034 (Accessed: 21.06.2018.)
- National Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Slovenia to NATO (1998). Source: <http://nato.gov.si/eng/documents/national-strategy/> (Accessed: 21.06.2018.)
- NATO (2003): *Statement of the Vilnius Group*. Source: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_18912.htm?selectedLocale=en (Accessed: 23.02.2018.)
- PIRJEVEC, Jože (2003): *Jugoslovanske vojne 1991–2001*. Ljubljana, Cankarjeva založba.
- Summary of Information on Bilateral Immunity Agreements (2006). Source: www.iccnw.org/documents/BIADb_Current.pdf (Accessed: 15.02.2018.)
- Statistični urad RS (2017): *V letu 2017 je bila energetska odvisnost Slovenije 48-odstotna*. Source: www.stat.si/StatWeb/News/Index/7412 (Accessed: 22.06.2018.)
- Večer (2018): Pahor v Beli hiši? Ali Trump pri njem? *Večer*, 29 January 2018. Source: www.vecer.com/pahor-v-beli-hisi-ali-trump-pri-njem-6393011 (Accessed: 10.04.2018.)
- ŠTEINER, Alojz (2017): Slovenski prispevek v mednarodnih operacijah in na misijah in vpliv na transformacijo slovenske vojske. In MARAŠ, Vasilije: *20 let v službi miru*. Ministry of Defence RS. 44–70.
- Vlada Republike Slovenije (2018): *Zgodovina reševanja mejnega spora*. Source: www.vlada.si teme_in_projekti/arbitraza/zgodovina_resevanja_mejnega_spora/ (Accessed: 07.04.2018.)

Relations between the United States and Ukraine: Managing Transitions

*Steven Pifer*¹

1. Introduction

During the twenty-seven years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, no post-Soviet state other than Russia has commanded more attention in Washington than Ukraine. U.S. policy focused initially on the large nuclear arsenal on Ukrainian territory. Once that was resolved, U.S.–Ukraine relations blossomed in the mid-1990s as American policy sought to facilitate Ukraine’s development into a modern, democratic European state with a robust market economy, based in a large part on a calculation that such a Ukraine would be good for a more stable and secure Europe and other U.S. policy interests.

Over the years, U.S. policy has generally succeeded in achieving key foreign policy goals, such as eliminating the strategic nuclear weapons in Ukraine or securing a troop contribution to the Iraq stabilisation force. Washington has been less successful, however, in its effort to promote domestic reforms.² As Kyiv faces the dual challenges of dealing with Russian aggression and completing the reform process, in particular combating corruption, U.S. policy needs to be supportive on the first, while pressing Ukraine’s leadership to do more on the second.

¹ Steven Pifer, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution (United States).
Email: SPifer@brookings.edu

² For a more detailed history of U.S.–Ukraine relations from 1991 through 2004 see PIFER 2017.

2. The First Years and Nuclear Weapons

The final death knells of the collapsing Soviet Union sounded in late 1991. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev accepted the inevitable on 25 December. The Russian tricolour replaced the Soviet flag over the Kremlin. Washington recognised Russia, Ukraine and the ten other post-Soviet republics as independent states (the U.S. Government had never recognised the incorporation of the three Baltic states, whose independence Moscow accepted the previous September.)

As the U.S. established diplomatic relations with and shaped its policy toward independent Ukraine, one issue dominated: the presence of the world's third largest nuclear force. Ukraine found itself with 176 deployed SS-19 and SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), 44 Blackjack and Bear-H bombers, and some 1,900 strategic nuclear weapons to arm them – weapons that were designed to strike the U.S. (U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency 1996). That did not count 2,500 non-strategic nuclear warheads, which were removed to Russia by May 1992 (The White House 1996).

U.S. policy sought the elimination of all nuclear weapons systems in Ukraine and the other non-Russian republics, which would leave Russia as the sole post-Soviet nuclear weapon state. The leadership in Kyiv inclined toward non-nuclear status. President Leonid Kravchuk and his government made clear, however, that they wanted several questions answered before giving up the nuclear arms. First, nuclear weapons conferred – or were seen to confer – security benefits, and the government wanted to know what security guarantees or assurances it might receive. Second, the highly-enriched uranium in the warheads had commercial value, as it could be converted into low-enriched uranium for fuel for nuclear reactors, and Ukraine wanted to receive appropriate compensation. Third, eliminating the ICBMs, ICBM silos and nuclear bombers, as well as the associated infrastructure would be costly, and the Ukrainian Government wanted to know how that would be funded.

Initially, Washington was content to see if Kyiv and Moscow could work out these issues in bilateral channels, though U.S. officials tracked the process closely, discussing issues such as security assurances and compensation for the highly-enriched uranium with their Ukrainian and Russian counterparts. U.S. officials indicated their readiness to extend security assurances, once Ukraine acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state. They ruled out security guarantees, which in U.S. parlance would mean a military guarantee, similar to what Washington gave to its NATO allies.

The Ukrainian–Russian exchanges appeared to have run their course by September 1993. U.S. officials decided to become more directly involved in a trilateral process, and the U.S. embassies in Kyiv and Moscow began a sustained dialogue with Ukrainian and Russian officials on the issues.

Vice President Al Gore visited Moscow in December for a meeting with Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin. Their discussion about the nuclear weapons in Ukraine led to a decision to send senior U.S. and Russian diplomats to Kyiv. The discussions in Kyiv went well enough so that U.S. officials invited Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Shmarov and Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk to Washington in early January 1994. They set the goal of reaching an agreement to be signed by Presidents Bill Clinton, Kravchuk and Boris Yeltsin at a meeting later in January in Moscow.

Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States Strobe Talbott, Shmarov and Mamedov reached an agreement on the language for the security assurances that would be extended to Ukraine by the U.S., Russia and Britain once Ukraine acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. They also agreed on the compensation that Russia would provide Ukraine for the value of the highly-enriched uranium in the nuclear warheads that would be returned to Russia for elimination, and on the provision of U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction assistance to Ukraine to support the elimination of the ICBMs, ICBM silos and bombers in Ukraine. These items were spelled out in what became known as the Trilateral Statement and an accompanying annex (U.S. Department of State 1994). Despite a few last-minute hiccups – Clinton separately had to urge Kravchuk and Yeltsin not to reopen the deal – the three presidents met in Moscow on 14 January 1994 and signed the Trilateral Statement.

The last remaining piece was for Ukraine to accede to the NPT. In July, Leonid Kuchma defeated Kravchuk in the Ukrainian presidential election. Gore had scheduled a visit to Warsaw at the end of July and decided to add a brief stop in Kyiv on 2 August. Gore and Kuchma discussed the possibility to wrap up the trilateral process on nuclear questions in Budapest, as well as an autumn Kuchma visit to Washington.

Kuchma had a good visit to Washington in November, where he and Clinton signed the *Charter on American–Ukrainian Partnership, Friendship and Cooperation* and Clinton announced \$200 million in assistance for Ukraine. The Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) approved Ukraine's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty the same month.

On 5 December 1994, Ukraine formally acceded to the NPT, and Clinton, Yeltsin, Kuchma and British Prime Minister John Major signed the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances for Ukraine. In the memorandum, the U.S., Russia and Britain agreed to respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, not to use or threaten to use force against Ukraine, and not to attempt economic coercion (provisions that Moscow would subsequently violate) (Budapest Memorandum 1994).

The implementation of the Trilateral Statement proceeded. Ukraine transferred the nuclear warheads to Russia for dismantlement, Russia sent fuel rods to Ukraine, and the U.S. ramped up assistance to eliminate the ICBMs, ICBM silos, bombers and nuclear infrastructure in Ukraine. On 31 May 1996, the last two trainloads of nuclear warheads departed Ukraine for Russia (The White House 1996).

3. A Broadening Relationship

The resolution of the nuclear weapons issue closed the first chapter in U.S.–Ukraine relations and opened a path to a broad expansion. U.S. officials saw other reasons for a broader engagement. Ukraine could be a partner in addressing other proliferation challenges, such as that is posed by ballistic missiles. Increased trade and investment could benefit both countries. U.S. officials believed that a successful Ukraine – which they defined as a stable, independent, democratic state with a growing market economy – would contribute to the objective of a more stable and secure Europe. And such a Ukraine would be an asset in the eyes of those who had a lingering concern about the return of a resurgent, hostile Russia.

In May 1995, Clinton paid a two-day visit to Kyiv, in what was in effect the first post-nuclear summit. The discussions focused on Ukrainian economic reforms, the closure of Chernobyl, space cooperation and Russia. Clinton and Kuchma signed a joint statement that reflected the broadening relationship and increased attention to economic reform. Clinton's visit

opened a period of regular high-level contacts. Kuchma made four trips to the U.S. in 1997 alone.

In September 1996, the U.S. and Ukraine announced the establishment of a strategic partnership – an important political objective for Kyiv – and the creation of a binational commission, co-chaired by Kuchma and Gore. The Gore–Kuchma Commission aimed to resolve problems that could not be worked out at lower levels.

Secretary of Defense William Perry took a strong interest in the Cooperative Threat Reduction program and made several visits to Ukraine. Bilateral defence cooperation rapidly expanded into areas such as defence reform. U.S.–Ukrainian joint military exercises, first carried out in 1995, became an annual event.

U.S. assistance programs grew significantly in the second half of the 1990s. Keyed to the objective of helping Ukraine to make the transition to a democratic market economy, the programs focused on economic restructuring, democracy promotion, quality-of-life issues (e.g. public health), and initiatives such as closing Chornobyl.

Cooperation moved into new areas. In 1994, Ukraine agreed in a bilateral memorandum of understanding with the U.S. to observe the limits of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).³ In response, in 1995 Washington agreed to permit Ukrainian launch service providers access to the U.S. commercial space launch market.

Another topic for extensive discussion was Ukraine's place in Europe. U.S. officials began to consider how to ensure that Ukraine was not left in a “no man's land” between a soon-to-enlarged NATO and Russia. One part of the solution was to deepen bilateral links between Washington and Kyiv, a process that was already underway. In 1995, U.S. officials began considering establishing a special relationship between NATO and Ukraine, in parallel with NATO's preparations to enlarge and to establish a NATO–Russia relationship.

The NATO–Ukraine exchanges developed in detail in 1997. Kuchma and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana signed the *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine* in Madrid in July with Clinton and other NATO leaders watching (NATO 1997). The charter set up a standing

³ The Missile Technology Control Regime is a voluntary, multilateral arrangement designed to control the spread of ballistic missiles and related technologies.

NATO–Ukraine channel and outlined the areas for cooperation between the Alliance and Kyiv.

By summer 1997, growing bilateral ties between Washington and Kyiv, Ukraine’s formalised relationship with NATO, and its Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU had produced a web of links between Ukraine and the West. These expanding links gave Ukraine greater freedom of manoeuvre vis-à-vis Russia.

4. Some Bumps Appear

The U.S.–Ukraine relationship matured in the late 1990s. Washington continued to encourage Kyiv to pursue democratic reforms, a principal American goal, devoting \$225 million per year towards reform objectives.

Washington’s foreign policy scored a major success during Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s visit in early 1998, when the two countries agreed to align their policies on nuclear non-proliferation. Importantly, Kyiv ended Ukraine’s participation in the Russian-led project to build a nuclear power plant in Bushehr, Iran. The visit also produced an agreement permitting U.S.–Ukraine civil nuclear cooperation, and the U.S. Government began funding a project to qualify an American company to provide fuel rods for Ukraine’s nuclear reactors, which would break the Russian monopoly. The U.S. assistance program pumped additional funds into the Science and Technology Center of Ukraine, a project that helped scientists who had worked in weapons of mass destruction-related fields to pursue research with civilian applications.

One missing piece, however, was trade and investment. Bilateral trade between the U.S. and Ukraine remained low and, while the U.S. was the largest provider of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Ukraine in the late 1990s, the amount was unimpressive. American agribusiness invested in Ukraine, given the country’s large agricultural potential, but that was the exception rather than the rule. Concerns about overregulation, lack of rule of law and corruption discouraged many American businesses. Business dispute cases even led Congress to threaten to cut U.S. assistance.

Attention in the second half of 1999 in Ukraine turned to the presidential election. Kuchma faced a largely uninspiring field of opponents and was favoured. The government, however, did not provide a level playing field. It used administrative resources to support Kuchma’s campaign,

the state media supported Kuchma, and those contributing to opponents' campaigns faced the prospect of audits by the state tax administration.

U.S. officials privately raised their concerns with Ukrainian officials. Later, the embassy in Kyiv and the State Department decided that, since democracy was such a fundamental part of the U.S. vision for Ukraine, American officials had to speak out publicly. That upset the presidential administration and changed nothing – the electoral abuses continued – but the embassy received positive feedback from civil society groups and regular citizens.

Kuchma handily won the November election, just as he likely would have prevailed in a free and fair vote. While unhappy with the process, U.S. officials hoped that, with the election behind him, Kuchma would move to adopt needed economic reforms, including steps to combat corruption. During Kuchma's December visit to Washington, Gore and Clinton hammered hard on the need to make decisive reform steps.

Hopes for a serious approach to reform received a boost in late December, when Kuchma appointed Victor Yushchenko Prime Minister. Yushchenko had a reputation as a reformer, and his cabinet included a number of reform-inclined ministers.

Yushchenko got off to a rough start in 2000, however. Articles appeared alleging that in 1997 and 1998, when Yushchenko had been Governor of the National Bank, the bank had diverted funds from the IMF. Albright paid a visit to Kyiv in April, reinforcing the December message on the need for reform and discussing how U.S.–Ukraine relations might develop.

Yushchenko had delayed a March visit to Washington due to the IMF questions but visited in May. He had a full schedule, including brief discussions with Clinton and Gore, who underlined continuing high-level support for a reforming Ukraine. Other meetings were tougher. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers pressed hard on the need to move rapidly on reform and to clear up questions about past dealings with the IMF.

Clinton visited Ukraine in June, in what American officials saw an opportunity to bolster the Ukrainian reform effort and Kyiv's growing links with the Euro-Atlantic community. They used the approaching summit to push to resolve bilateral problems, particularly the question of pirate compact disc factories operating in Ukraine.

Clinton and Kuchma discussed the state of reform and Kyiv's still testy relations with the IMF. Clinton had just visited Moscow, and he

talked to Kuchma and Yushchenko at some length about the newly-elected Russian President, Vladimir Putin. Clinton thought it was possible to work with Putin. Kuchma was more sceptical.

U.S. attention in the summer stayed focused on reform questions. Disturbingly, the gap that had appeared in spring between Kuchma and the presidential administration, and Yushchenko and the cabinet had widened. Dan Fried, the deputy coordinator for the new independent states, travelled to Kyiv in September with one message: Kuchma needed to support Yushchenko fully if the Prime Minister was to succeed in implementing reform. The response offered little grounds for encouragement.

5. The Relationship Sours

The bilateral relationship entered a more difficult period at the end of 2000, reaching a low point in 2002. U.S. policymakers found Kyiv unwilling to take steps that would enable deeper engagement by the George W. Bush Administration. That led to a dearth of contacts at the highest level.

The murder of Heorhiy Gongadze in fall 2000, followed by the lack of a genuine investigation, prompted concern about how far those around Kuchma would go against independent journalists and opposition figures. Yulia Tymoshenko, a controversial but effective first deputy prime minister, was sacked in January 2001, and Yushchenko was fired three months later.

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice nevertheless travelled to Kyiv in July, where she met with Kuchma. She stressed the importance of a free and fair Rada election in early 2002. She also raised the Gongadze case, as well as NATO's concern about Ukraine's provision of heavy weapons to Macedonia at a time when NATO was considering deploying a peacekeeping force there. She suggested that Bush, Kuchma and Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski might meet on the margins of the UN General Assembly session in September if progress were made on these two issues. Kuchma responded that law enforcement authorities would solve the Gongadze case and agreed to terminate the arms transfers.

Two months later, however, with no progress on Gongadze and Ukrainian arms continuing to flow to Macedonia, the White House nixed a meeting with Kuchma. A quick and positive response to the U.S. request for overflight permission in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and preparations for military action in Afghanistan won Kyiv some credit in

Washington, and the arms transfers finally ended in early 2002, which improved the atmospherics of the relationship.

U.S. officials, however, had concerns about the Rada election process. The Ukrainian Government threw its support and administrative resources behind the pro-Kuchma party. In February 2002, Volodymyr Horbulin, a respected senior advisor to Kuchma, visited Washington. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told him that the Rada election offered a chance to turn the page; if the process was a good one, Kuchma could expect an invitation to Washington.

The election process did not go well. A second opportunity for a Bush–Kuchma meeting faded away.

At about the same time, Kyiv raised an unexpected question: how would the U.S. Government react if Ukraine adopted the objective of joining NATO? American officials responded that Washington would support that goal – provided that Ukraine was prepared to do the necessary military, defence sector, democratic and economic reforms. Ukraine publicly announced its objective to join NATO in May, but U.S. officials saw little subsequent evidence that Kyiv was doing the needed preparatory work.

U.S.–Ukraine relations plunged to a low point in the second half of 2002. A former Kuchma security guard produced a recording in which the Ukrainian President approved the transfer of the Kolchuga air defence system to Iraq, at a time when U.S. and British fighters were operating over Iraq in accordance with a UN Security Council resolution. Ukrainian officials denied that Kuchma had ever agreed and invited a U.S.–British team to travel to Kyiv. The team's October visit yielded mixed results. Team members reported that officials from the Security Service of Ukraine and the National Security and Defense Council had been evasive in answering questions.

As a result, U.S. officials decided not to support a NATO–Ukraine summit that November in Prague. The Alliance proposed instead that the NATO–Ukraine meeting be held at the level of foreign ministers – it was intended to be a specific rebuke to Kuchma.

A U.S. policy review concluded in January 2003 that it remained in the U.S. interest to continue to engage Ukraine, but American officials worried about the course of democratic reform. They expressed frustration that, while Kyiv regularly asked for a Kuchma–Bush meeting, the Ukrainians had taken none of the steps that Washington suggested could facilitate such a meeting.

Iraq prevented a near total meltdown. As the Bush Administration prepared to go to war against Saddam in early 2003, the Ukrainian Government committed a nuclear, chemical and biological weapons defence battalion to Kuwait. Following the fall of Baghdad, Ukraine provided some 1,800 troops for the international stabilisation force. For a period (up until late 2005), the Ukrainian military contingent was the fourth largest in Iraq. That provided a degree of stability to the U.S.–Ukraine relationship.

In September 2003, a Ukraine–Russia crisis erupted over the Tuzla Island, a tiny spit of land in the Kerch Strait between Crimea and Russia’s Taman Peninsula. Tuzla had been treated administratively as part of Crimea since the 1920s. However, with no consultations with Kyiv, the Russians began building a causeway from Taman toward Tuzla. The U.S. Government internally agreed with the Ukrainian position, but the National Security Council decided to adopt a neutral stance, at least at first. Ukrainian–Russian consultations at the end of the year seemed to resolve, or shelve, the problem. But U.S. unwillingness to stand up robustly for Ukraine’s territorial integrity did not pass unnoticed in Kyiv or in Moscow.

The major issue for U.S.–Ukraine relations in 2004 was the approaching presidential election in Ukraine. American officials hoped that a free and fair election process would allow a level playing field when the Ukrainian electorate chose Kuchma’s successor. Unfortunately, early signs suggested otherwise, as administrative resources lined up to support the candidacy of Victor Yanukovych against Victor Yushchenko.

Washington devoted a significant amount of assistance to election-related programs, including improving electoral administration, support for the independent media, voter education and election-related civil society organisations. U.S. officials – including Armitage, whose visit to Kyiv in March 2004 was the highest-ranking since Rice’s visit in July 2001 – made clear the stress that Washington placed on a free and fair election, including for Kyiv’s ambitions to draw nearer to the EU and NATO. American officials coordinated with EU officials to ensure a consistent Western message to the Ukrainian authorities. Those messages appeared to have little effect.

6. The Orange Revolution and Its Aftermath

The first round of the presidential election of 2004 was conducted on 31 October and, as expected, Yanukovich and Yushchenko headed into a run-off, which took place on 21 November. The Central Electoral Commission's report of a Yanukovich win was contradicted by exit polls that gave a clear victory to Yushchenko. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) election monitoring mission issued a scathing report on the process (OSCE 2004).

Demonstrators took to the streets in Kyiv in what became known as the Orange Revolution. U.S. embassy officials closely monitored developments on the ground, but it was Polish President Kwasniewski and EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Solana who led the international effort to help mediate a solution. Kwasniewski and Solana had personal relationships with Kuchma, who remained a major player, and having Europeans take the lead avoided introducing a competitive U.S.–Russian dynamic, which would not have helped the Ukrainians to resolve the crisis.

In the end, with European assistance, the Ukrainians decided to hold a second run-off ballot. The most closely monitored election in Ukraine's history met the free and fair standard. Yushchenko handily defeated Yanukovich.

Yushchenko had maintained his reputation as a reformer, and his vision for Ukraine – a democratic state that was fully anchored in Europe and European institutions – comported well with the U.S. vision. He received an exceptionally warm welcome in the U.S. capital in April 2005, as U.S. officials agreed to support Ukraine's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and create a closer NATO–Ukraine relationship.

Domestic political discord quickly broke out in Ukraine, however. Yushchenko had named Tymoshenko Prime Minister, but that relationship quickly ran into trouble. She stepped down in September. The March 2006 Rada elections resulted in a striking comeback by Yanukovich and his party. After months of political indecision, the Rada proposed Yanukovich as Prime Minister, and Yushchenko reluctantly agreed in August.

The long period of political indecision affected U.S.–Ukraine relations. Bush had intended to visit Ukraine in June, but the White House scrubbed the trip due to the political squabbling there. Yanukovich's appointment

had another impact on Ukrainian foreign policy: during a September visit to Brussels, he told NATO that the cabinet did not support a Membership Action Plan. What had appeared a near certainty fell off the table months before, as NATO was not about to give a Membership Action Plan to a country whose executive branch did not fully support it.

The inability of Yushchenko and Yanukovych to agree on a plan for long-term reform made it difficult for the U.S. to engage. A full-blown political crisis erupted in April 2007 when Yushchenko tried to dismiss the Rada in a constitutionally questionable way. Yushchenko and Yanukovych asked Ambassador Bill Taylor to mediate their differences. He brought in the German Ambassador, and the four met privately over the course of a month, but the differences were too deep. The crisis ended with an agreement to hold early Rada elections in September.

The election produced a slender majority for the parties led by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, and Tymoshenko regained the prime ministership. Feuding between the presidential administration and the cabinet resumed almost immediately, and reform efforts continued to languish.

Yushchenko was able to secure Tymoshenko's agreement on a request to NATO for a Membership Action Plan, which Kyiv submitted in January 2008. Bush and the White House supported the request, but oddly the U.S. Government did not lobby allies in support of the Ukrainian proposal in the run-up to the April NATO Summit in Bucharest.

The Russians, on the other hand, made clear their opposition, with President Putin even threatening to target missiles on Ukraine. The combination of Russian opposition and questions about the stability of the troubled Yushchenko–Tymoshenko relationship led a number of European allies to oppose a Membership Action Plan.

On the eve of the NATO summit, Bush made a brief stop in Kyiv, the first visit by a U.S. president to the Ukrainian capital in nearly eight years. He told Yushchenko that he would make the case for a Membership Action Plan. In Bucharest, Bush failed to achieve consensus, though the NATO summit communiqué stated “NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO” (NATO 2008).

Yushchenko found himself facing greater problems with Russia. Moscow was unhappy with his NATO ambitions, and the Russians criticised his plan to broaden the use of the Ukrainian language and to categorise the Holodomor incident as genocide, the artificial famine in

the 1930s that resulted in the death of millions of Ukrainians. Russia ignored Yushchenko's proposal to begin talks to prepare the withdrawal of the Russian Black Sea Fleet from Crimea when the lease of facilities expired in 2017. Yushchenko's support for Georgia during the August 2008 Georgia–Russia conflict further angered the Kremlin.

Vice President Dick Cheney visited Kyiv and Yushchenko returned to Washington in September as the U.S. sought to signal support for Ukraine. At the end of the year, just weeks before the Bush Administration left office, Rice signed with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Volodymyr Ohryzko the *United States–Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership* (U.S. Department of State 2008). The document outlined the principles for bilateral cooperation, although it would have been far more appropriate earlier in the Bush Administration.

Barack Obama took office in January 2009, and his administration reaffirmed the newly-signed charter. However, the Obama Administration also found Yushchenko and Tymoshenko at odds with one another. That continued to make it difficult to engage in a productive manner.

Following up on the “reset” policy with Russia, Obama visited Moscow in July. In part to balance that, Vice President Joe Biden made the first of what would turn out to be a number of visits to Kyiv. He urged the Ukrainian leadership to get on with serious reforms and reassured his interlocutors that the reset did not mean U.S. acceptance of a Russian sphere of influence (UPI 2009).

7. Another Downturn

Yanukovych's win in the 2010 presidential election was not welcomed by U.S. officials, but his win in a free and fair process gave him a degree of democratic legitimacy. They were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Yanukovych made clear that his first foreign policy focus would be to rebuild relations with Moscow, and he quickly signed an agreement extending for thirty years the Russian lease of naval and other military facilities in Crimea. At the same time, Yanukovych's advisors described a policy of balance between Russia and the West. His government pressed to conclude an association agreement with the EU and began doing the necessary homework.

As for the U.S., Ukrainian officials said Kyiv wanted to develop relations on the basis of the 2008 strategic charter. American officials were not opposed but wanted to see the actual policies that Yanukovych would pursue. They regarded an association agreement with the EU as offering Kyiv a path to integrate with Europe.

Yanukovych travelled to Washington in April 2010 for the first Nuclear Security Summit. He met Obama on the margins, though U.S. officials scheduled the meeting for the summit venue rather than the Oval Office, reflecting a degree of wariness about the Ukrainian President.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton travelled to Kyiv in July. She conveyed U.S. interest in improving the bilateral relationship and encouraged Ukraine to deepen its relationship with the EU. She cautioned her Ukrainian interlocutors against any reversal of democratic reforms. U.S. officials privately termed their policy toward Yanukovych as one of “engagement without endorsement”. They held open the possibility of an Obama visit in 2011.

Yanukovych’s authoritarian tendencies quashed that possibility. The October 2010 local elections represented a big step backwards in terms of process, and Yanukovych changed the line-up on the Constitutional Court to secure a dubious decision that substantially enhanced the power of the presidency. By early 2011, Ukraine’s ranking in the Freedom House survey had fallen from “free” to “partly free” (Freedom House 2011). Reports of corruption jumped markedly.

Clinton met with Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko in February 2011, and Clinton again raised concerns about democratic backsliding. Things worsened in the summer, when the authorities arrested Tymoshenko.

Ukraine slipped lower on the U.S. agenda as other foreign policy problems came to the fore and Washington focused on the 2012 presidential election. Neither Obama nor Biden had any interest in meeting Yanukovych, except for an occasional pull-aside on the margins of a multilateral event.

Ukraine’s one success with the West was the completion of the association agreement, including a deep and comprehensive free trade arrangement with the EU. In early 2013 – Yanukovych and EU leaders set the November 2013 EU Eastern Partnership Summit as the target for signature.

During the spring and summer, however, Moscow became vocal with its objections to the agreement. Russian officials threatened dire consequences and imposed trade sanctions to sway Kyiv. Although Yanukovich had seemed committed, the Ukrainians announced a week before the Eastern Partnership Summit that they were suspending preparations to sign (The Guardian 2013).

8. The Maidan Revolution and the Conflict with Russia

The suspension led to almost immediate protests in Kyiv and Lviv. The demonstrations centred on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in downtown Kyiv, as had the Orange Revolution nine years earlier. Ukrainians remained in the streets through December and January. The protest transformed into a broader critique of Yanukovich's growing authoritarianism and corruption.

The Maidan Revolution moved Ukraine much higher on the U.S. foreign policy agenda. American officials and senators visited the Maidan, both to express support for the demonstrators and in the belief that high-level foreign attention might afford them a measure of protection against a violent crackdown. Biden spoke with Yanukovich on the phone several times to press him to a compromise (Agence Presse-France 2014).

Things turned violent on 18 February 2014, culminating in the death of more than 100 protesters. The foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland travelled to Kyiv on 20 February to mediate a settlement between the Ukrainian President and the opposition. The mediation produced an agreement the following morning, which likely would not have been accepted by the protesters. But the point quickly became moot: Yanukovich signed the agreement, travelled to his estate to pack up some last items, and fled.

The following day, the Rada named Oleksandr Turchynov acting president and Arseniy Yatsenyuk acting prime minister. The two indicated that their top foreign policy priority was to sign the association agreement and deepen Ukraine's links to Europe.

Putin that night authorised the Russian military to seize Crimea. A short time later, following a sham referendum on joining Russia, the Russian Parliament approved Crimea's annexation.

Russia's seizure of Crimea put the Russia–Ukraine crisis at the top of the U.S. agenda. Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Kyiv on 4 March, with a message of support backed by a \$1 billion loan guarantee (GORDON 2014). The U.S. rejected Russia's annexation of Crimea and, in coordination with the EU, began applying visa and financial sanctions. Broader sectoral sanctions followed, particularly after Russia sparked an armed separatist movement in the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine.

Kyiv invoked the Budapest Memorandum's consultation clause, but Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov refused to attend. A separate mid-April meeting of the U.S., Ukrainian and Russian foreign ministers and the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy in Geneva agreed on measures to deescalate the situation in the Donbas, but the "separatist leaders" indicated they would not implement the steps, and Moscow did nothing to press them to do so. Indeed, it soon became clear that the Russians were providing leadership, funding, arms, ammunition and other support to the "separatist" forces.

Biden travelled to Kyiv in early June to attend the inauguration of Petro Poroshenko as Ukraine's new president (Poroshenko had handily won the ballot on the first round in an election that scored high marks from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitors). U.S. Treasury officials worked closely with the IMF on a new program that ultimately offered Kyiv \$17 billion if Ukraine met its reform conditionalities. The Pentagon offered military assistance, though limited to non-lethal items. Later in June, Poroshenko visited Brussels, where he signed the EU–Ukraine association agreement.

Nevertheless, the fighting in the Donbas continued and escalated, and the U.S. and the EU levied additional sanctions on Russia, particularly following the July shoot down of a Malaysia Air airliner by a Russian-provided surface-to-air missile. Washington broke off a number of contacts with Moscow, stating that Russian aggression against Ukraine made business as usual impossible (SCHRECK 2014).

In August, Ukrainian military and security forces appeared on the verge of regaining control over all of the Donbas, when regular units of the Russian army went into action, driving back the Ukrainian forces. A hastily organised meeting in Minsk in early September agreed to a ceasefire, though fighting continued, at a reduced level, along the line of contact that separated Ukrainian units from Russian and Russian proxy forces.

Poroshenko visited Washington in mid-September, a visit designed to underscore U.S. support. Biden paid another visit to Kyiv toward the end of the year.

As the ceasefire frayed – actually, it never took full hold – German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande held a meeting in Minsk with Poroshenko and Putin in February 2015. That produced an agreement, often referred to as Minsk II, which called for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons away from the line of contact, as well as laying out the elements of a political settlement and restoration of full Ukrainian control over the border separating the Donbas from Russia (Unian News 2015).

Obama threw his support behind Merkel's efforts and the Minsk II agreement. The U.S. did not have a seat at the table, to the disappointment of some in Kyiv, but U.S. and EU officials developed a close pattern of consultation and coordination. Biden stayed directly engaged, making regular phone calls to Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk.

By the end of the year, Biden was using those calls to urge greater cooperation between Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk, whose relationship had begun to sour. Biden visited Kyiv yet again in December, where he delivered a blunt message, both in public and in private, on the need for Ukraine to keep moving on reform and to make a serious effort to combat corruption.

The political crisis between Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk continued into spring 2016, prompting U.S. diplomats to wonder how Kyiv could afford the domestic squabble when it faced a simmering conflict in the Donbas, still had many reforms to do, and had fallen off track with the IMF's conditionalities, leading to a suspension of IMF disbursements.

While Washington remained supportive of the Minsk process and Merkel's role, it opened a direct channel to the Kremlin to try to facilitate a resolution of the Donbas conflict. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland began meeting with Putin aide Vladislav Surkov, but that dialogue produced no breakthroughs.

The election of Donald Trump as the next U.S. president in November 2016 caused concerns in Ukraine. During the campaign, Trump had expressed a desire for better relations with Russia without suggesting that the Kremlin first would have to correct some of its misbehaviour and had raised the possibility of recognising Crimea's illegal annexation.

In fact, the Trump Administration's policy toward Ukraine showed relatively little change and significant continuity with the Obama Administration's approach. In 2017, the U.S. continued to support Ukraine, both rhetorically and with new sanctions against Russia, though the frequency of high-level contact with Kyiv fell off. By the end of the year, Trump had approved the provision of lethal military assistance, Javelin man-portable anti-armour weapons, something that Obama had refused to do (CNBC 2017).

9. Helping Ukraine Meet Its Two Big Challenges

Looking forward, U.S. engagement with Kyiv will centre on helping Ukraine meet the two big challenges before it. First, Kyiv must find a way to deal with Russian aggression, with a priority on bringing an end to the simmering conflict in the Donbas and restoring Ukrainian sovereignty there. The U.S. can and should continue to offer Ukraine political support, including through high-level contacts. It should continue to provide military support. To the extent that the Ukrainian military can deter and take away viable military options from Russia – or make executing those options extremely costly – it can increase the odds that Moscow will look for a genuine political settlement.

Washington should continue to support Ukraine's position regarding Crimea and reiterate that it does not accept Russia's illegal annexation. It is difficult to see how Kyiv can muster the political, diplomatic, military and economic leverage to regain Crimea in the near term, but the U.S. and the West should continue to maintain Crimea-related sanctions. It is important to signal the Kremlin that the use of military force to take territory from neighbouring states is unacceptable.

The second challenge facing Ukraine is to deepen the reforms and combat corruption in a serious manner that will make the Ukrainian economy and society more compatible with European norms and draw in significant investments. The Ukrainian public broadly supports integration into Europe. If the government wants to achieve that, it needs to build on the past four years and press forward on difficult changes, including the full reform of the energy sector, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, and the creation of an agricultural land market by allowing the sale of land. Just as important, steps are needed to reform the judicial

sector, fight endemic corruption, and reduce the outsized political voice of the oligarchs.

The slowing pace of reform over the past two years has caused disillusionment within Ukraine, as witnessed by the low opinion poll rankings of President Poroshenko (Unian News 2018). It also puts at risk Western support, particularly in Europe, where questions arise about the president's commitment to real change at a time when some voices call for a return to business as usual with Russia. That combination will undermine the Western support that Ukraine needs.

U.S. policy should aim at sustaining and strengthening Western support for Ukraine. That means continued close coordination with Western partners, most particularly in the EU. It also requires that Washington press Kyiv more directly and vigorously to make the domestic reforms that Ukraine needs, recognising that it will be asking senior Ukrainian officials to take steps that many may be reluctant to do. That will be hard, but the U.S. and the West should not give Kyiv a pass on difficult reforms. A successful Ukraine requires not just dealing with Russian aggression but building the kind of state that will be fully compatible with and welcome in Europe.

Bibliography

- Agence Presse-France (2014): Ukrainian President Yanukovich calls Biden on dramatic day in Ukraine. *Agence Presse-France*, 28 January 2014. Source: www.rawstory.com/2014/01/ukrainian-president-yanukovich-calls-biden-on-dramatic-day-in-ukraine/ (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- Budapest Memorandum (1994): Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. *Budapest*, 5 December 1994. Source: www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/12/13943175580.pdf (Accessed: 12.05.2018.)
- CNBC (2017): U.S. officials say lethal weapons headed to Ukraine. *CNBC*, 23 December 2017. Source: www.cnn.com/2017/12/23/us-officials-say-lethal-weapons-headed-to-ukraine.html (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- Freedom House (2011): *Freedom in the World, 2011 – Ukraine*. Source: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/ukraine> (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)

- GORDON, Michael R. (2014): Kerry Takes Offer of Aid to Ukraine and Pushes Back at Russian Claims. *The New York Times*, 4 March 2014. Source: www.nytimes.com/2014/03/05/world/europe/secretary-of-state-john-kerry-arriving-in-kiev-offers-1-billion-in-loan-guarantees-to-ukraine.html (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- NATO (1997): *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine*. Source: www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_25457.htm (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- NATO (2008): *Bucharest Summit Declaration: Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008*. Source: www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/official_texts_8443.htm (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- OSCE (2004): *International Election Observation Mission, Presidential Election (Second Round), Ukraine – 21 November 2004, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*. Source: www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/election-observation/election-observation-statements/ukraine/statements-25/1487-2004-presidential-first-round/file (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- PIFER, Steven (2017): *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S.–Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*. Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution.
- SCHRECK, Carl (2014): Freeze Settles on U.S.–Russia Commission Amid Ukraine Standoff. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 28 March 2014. Source: www.rferl.org/a/us-russia-commission/25312837.html (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- The Guardian (2013): Ukraine suspends talks on EU trade pact as Putin wins tug of war. *The Guardian*, 21 November 2013. Source: www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/21/ukraine-suspends-preparations-eu-trade-pact (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- The White House (1996): Fact Sheet: Removal of Nuclear Warheads from Ukraine. *Office of the Press Secretary*, 1 June 1996. Source: www.ibiblio.org/pub/archives/whitehouse-papers/1996/Jun/1996-06-01-Fact-Sheet-on-Ukraine-Nuclear-Warheads-Removal (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- Unian News (2015): Minsk Agreement: Full Text in English. *Unian News*, 12 February 2015. Source: www.unian.info/politics/1043394-minsk-agreement-full-text-in-english.html (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- Unian News (2018): Poroshenko not among top 3 presidential candidates in Ukraine – poll. *Unian News*, 7 May 2018. Source: www.unian.info/society/10107881-poroshenko-not-among-top-3-presidential-candidates-in-ukraine-poll.html (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)

- UPI (2009): Biden: No Russian “sphere of influence”. *UPI*, 22 July 2009. Source: www.upi.com/Biden-No-Russian-sphere-of-influence/89871248270203/ (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1996): *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements: START Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms 1991*. Source: www.state.gov/t/avc/trty/146007.htm (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (1994): *Dispatch Supplement*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1994. Source: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d02928568e&view=lup&seq=2> (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)
- U.S. Department of State (2008): United States–Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership. *Department of State – Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*, 19 December 2008. Source: www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/142231.htm (Accessed: 18.08.2018.)

This page intentionally left blank.

Comparing Trends in the Relations of Central European Countries with the United States

*Anna Péczeli*¹

This summary chapter highlights the main similarities and differences in the bilateral relations of the U.S. with ten selected CEE countries. As noted before, the CEE region is not homogenous, and it is easier to identify the main trends in a sub-regional structure. Therefore, this analysis organises the countries into four main groups: the Visegrád countries (plus Romania), the Balkans, Ukraine, and Austria. The main lessons of these country studies are gathered under four issue areas: political relations (during the transition period of the early 1990s and in the past two decades), military cooperation, economic issues and cultural ties. The comparison and the presented results are based on the chapters of this edited volume, and they reflect the conclusions of the contributing authors. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to reveal the main trends in the relationship of the U.S. and the CEE region, and to outline the potential future of these ties.

1. The Transition Period and the Early 1990s

Among the Visegrád countries, all states have had strong ties with the U.S. much before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After the end of the Cold War, Washington was the greatest supporter of the political, economic and military transformation of the region. The U.S., however, expected quick and radical reforms in exchange for its financial assistance. In the first democratic elections, mostly pro-American political elites got into power in all three countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland).

¹ Anna Péczeli, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic and Defense Studies, National University of Public Service (Hungary). Email: peczeli.anna@uni-nke.hu

In addition to the financial assistance, the personal relations of the leaders were also contributing to the creation of strong ties. All three leaders of the region were very popular in the White House, and they developed a strong partnership with the George H. W. Bush Administration. President Bush came to Hungary and Poland in 1989, and he travelled to Czechoslovakia in early 1990 – he was warmly welcomed and celebrated in all these countries.

Promoting democracy globally was a long-standing U.S. tradition, and the early cooperation of the U.S. and the CEE states was based on the shared values of human rights and democratic institutions, as well as the core interest of both sides to support the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. During this period, the Visegrád countries enjoyed a much larger influence in Washington than their actual size would suggest. The U.S. wanted to see quick and visible results, and it expected from the states of the region to put aside their historical differences, and settle their disputes over national minorities and borders in a peaceful manner.

Just like Central Europe, the Balkans is also an important link between different geographical regions. In the early 1990s, Washington focused its attention on the Central European transition process, and the special Cold War status of Yugoslavia was devaluated. The primary U.S. goals in the Balkans were preventing other great powers from hegemony and preserving stability. The disintegration of the SFRY was initially seen as a mere distraction from the post-Cold War transition processes.

Although Washington strongly supported the reform efforts within the SFRY, it wanted to preserve the political unity of the country to avoid the outbreak of a violent civil war. For a long time, the Bush Administration was observing the events from the sidelines, and let the Western European states handle what they considered a “European problem”. Croatia’s and Slovenia’s unilateral separation from the SFRY in June 1991 was heavily criticised from the White House. The turning point in the American behaviour was the escalation of violence on the ground. The U.S. finally recognised the separation of these states in early 1992. This step opened a new chapter in the relations with Zagreb and Ljubljana. At the same time, it took Belgrade on a different path, and U.S.–Serb relations started to deteriorate quickly.

While Central Europe was preoccupied with its political and economic transition, and the largest state on the Balkans was falling apart, Ukraine caused the biggest headache to the White House. With the

dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kyiv was left with the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, which created a significant security challenge for both Washington and Moscow. U.S. and Russian interests were identical as both wanted to eliminate the nuclear weapons from Ukrainian territory. The U.S. was working with Ukraine and Russia as a facilitator of the nuclear deal. Finally, they managed to broker a deal which gave Kyiv the security assurances it wanted (this came to be known as the 1994 Budapest Memorandum), Russia agreed to a compensation for the HEU stockpiles, and the U.S. CTR program provided the necessary support to eliminate the ICBMs, their silos, and the Soviet bombers on Ukrainian soil. In exchange, Ukraine agreed to join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. The last load of nuclear weapons left Ukraine in 1996.

On the margins of the nuclear problem, the U.S. expected that it can also support a democratic transition in Ukraine. Similarly to the Central European example, the White House hoped that with American assistance, Ukraine will be able to turn into a modern democratic state with a market economy, and much stronger ties to Europe than to Russia. By the mid-1990s, the White House developed good working relations with the Ukrainian leadership but despite the success of the nuclear issue, the question of transition was stalling. The government proved to be ineffective (and unwilling) in its fight against corruption, and the requested reforms were not implemented. This created a lot of tension between the White House and the Ukrainian leaders during the second half of the 1990s and the 2000s.

2. Political Relations between the U.S. and the CEE States

During the Clinton Administration, the two main issues which determined U.S. relations with the Visegrád countries was their accession to NATO and the wars in the Balkans. Romania and all four Central European states joined the PfP program in 1994. This initiative was created to facilitate their accession to NATO, and to establish interoperability with NATO forces and structures. In March 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became the first countries to join, and Slovakia and Romania followed in 2004.

The other problematic issue was the war in Bosnia (1992–1995) and later in Kosovo (1999). Many Central European states had good relations

with Serbia (especially Romania and Slovakia), and there were strong domestic voices against giving support to the U.S.-led NATO interventions in the Balkans. However, the political leaders decided that in order to advance their integration process, they needed to cooperate. This support was seen positively in Washington, and the Clinton Administration gave the green light to the enlargement after it negotiated the terms with Russia.

During the Bush Administration, relations between the U.S. and Central Europe were blooming. The 9/11 terrorist attacks created a big opportunity for the new allies to show their support and commitment. All of them condemned the attacks, and joined the NATO mission in Afghanistan. The war in Iraq, however, was a more challenging test of their solidarity. In lack of an appropriate UN Security Council Resolution, leading Western European states denied their support to a military campaign against Iraq. Although their EU membership was still pending, Central Europeans decided to side with Washington. They signed the so called 'Letter of Eight', and joined the war against Iraq. While Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld praised this decision, these steps were heavily criticised from home, and from Germany and France, as well. This period was characterised by regular high level visits between the leaders of the region and the White House, and many states of the region opted to purchase U.S. military equipment (like for example the Polish F-16 deal). The relations were further strengthened when the U.S. ended the visa asymmetry, and gave visa-free access to the citizens of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

Although the Central Europeans had strong ties with the Bush Administration (at least initially), the unilateral steps of the White House, the conduct of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the treatment of the prisoners in Guantanamo alienated a lot of allies, and left the reputation of the U.S. in dismay. The 2008 election of President Obama was welcomed globally as he promised to return to multilateralism, and rebuild U.S. ties with the rest of the world. In reality, however, the Obama period brought the downgrading of U.S.–Central European ties. After President Obama promised to reset U.S.–Russia relations, and to shift the focus of U.S. foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific, the leaders of the region sent a personal letter to the President to express their genuine worries about U.S. attention and commitment towards Central Europe. In response, the White House sent Vice President Joe Biden to the region to ease some of these fears. The White House asked its partners to become more like

partners than protégés. Although Biden tried to reassure the CEE region, the relations became more nuanced and pragmatic. The position of the U.S. ambassador, for example, was not filled for over a year in the Czech Republic and Hungary, and President Obama's first visit to Poland was only in 2013.

There were some case by case highlights in the relations, like for example Hungary's assistance in the evacuation of American journalists from Libya. But despite these success stories, the White House has publicly criticised the states of the region on many instances. The internal political, legal and economic reforms in Hungary and Poland received a lot of criticism from the Obama Administration. The White House also expressed its concerns about issues like the status of democracy in Hungary and Poland, the freedom of the press, the performance of checks and balances, minority rights at home, and supporting national minorities abroad.

Another point of criticism towards Central Europeans is their relationship with Moscow. The Hungarian Government, and parts of the leadership in Slovakia have advocated for stronger ties with Moscow, and they have been critical about the sanctions against Russia after the annexation of Crimea. In the meanwhile, the White House wants to see a unified European stance in these matters, and it publicly expressed its concerns about the strong ties of these governments with President Putin. The Russia issue is also relevant in the energy domain, where the U.S. has been urging energy independence from Russia, and it has supported initiatives aimed at reducing the dependence of Central Europe on Russian energy supplies.

Altogether, it is clear that U.S.–Central European relations are no longer in the honeymoon period. In recent years, the cooperation has been rather pragmatic – it has fluctuated between occasional success stories, and very harsh criticism about the status of democracy and Central European relations with Russia.

U.S. relations with Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia are primarily dependent on Washington's policy in the Western Balkans, and they are less sensitive to what the U.S. is doing outside of the region. During the Clinton Administration, Washington was heavily involved in the Balkans, mostly because the White House thought that the EU was unable to handle the situation and it was afraid of a spillover of the fights. The turning point in the first Yugoslav war was the Serbian bombing of the Markale marketplace in Sarajevo which gave impetus to a more active U.S.

assistance to the opposition forces of the Slobodan Milošević-led Serbs. The U.S. signed a strategic partnership with Croatia in 1994, and its military support contributed to the successful conclusion of the war between the Croats and the Serbs. While this step also brought the peace in the Bosnian war closer, it was heavily criticised by the Serbian side. When the Dayton Agreement was concluded in 1995 with the active involvement of the Clinton Administration, an opportunity opened to restore U.S.–Serb relations, as well.

From the region, U.S.–Slovenian relations were the most promising. However, the U.S. mostly showed interest in Slovenia's knowledge about the Balkans, and it kept the relations at the level of State Department bureaucracy. In the post-war period, Washington was following the recipe of the Central European transitions, and it offered assistance to facilitate the strengthening of democratic institutions and market economy in the newly independent republics. The White House regularly criticised the region on the accounts of human rights violations, not implementing the Dayton Agreement, not cooperating with the ICTY, and not realising the democratic reforms fast enough. In the case of Croatia, the Clinton Administration threatened to stop the funding of the MPRI if the funds are not spent in accordance with U.S. interests.

During the final years of the Clinton Administration, U.S.–Serb relations were antagonised by the next phase of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In the 1998–1999 Kosovo crisis, the U.S. tried to step up as the broker of peace again but its efforts to resolve the conflict with peaceful means failed. After Western media channels claimed that Serbian police massacred civilians in Rugovo and Račak, NATO launched an air campaign against Serbian forces. This step was heavily criticised by the Serbian Government. All NATO countries, and the NATO aspirant neighbouring countries contributed to the campaign, which ended the war in Kosovo, and led to the establishment of the KFOR peace mission.

During the second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s, both Slovenia and Croatia were preoccupied with their Euro-Atlantic integration, trying to secure U.S. sponsorship for their NATO accession. Just like in the case of the Central European disputes about borders and national minorities, Washington exercised heavy pressure on the Balkan states to peacefully resolve their problems. By the early 2000s, Zagreb and Ljubljana managed to secure the support of the Clinton Administration to join NATO. In the meanwhile, the U.S. also normalised its relations with Serbia after

Milošević left power in October 2000. Following Montenegro's secession in 2006, Belgrade opted to join the EU, and hoped to have the support of the U.S. in its quest for membership.

During the Bush years, the global war on terror drove the attention of the White House to the Middle East region, and the U.S. gradually withdrew its presence from the Balkans, transferring the responsibility of maintaining the peace to the EU. While the military campaign against Afghanistan was endorsed by most states in the region, the war in Iraq created a serious dilemma. Croatia and Slovenia were aiming to achieve NATO membership and they were in a difficult situation when the U.S. asked its partners to go to war without a UN Security Council resolution. While Croatia decided not to give its support to the war and condemned the whole mission, Slovenia signed up for the 'Letter of the Vilnius Group' which supported the military operations against Iraq. However, as the intervention turned into a prolonged occupation and state building effort, Slovenia withdrew its support and turned against the mission. This created some tension between Ljubljana and Washington.

Besides the disagreements around the war in Iraq, there were additional problem areas which poisoned the relationship of the U.S. and the Balkan states. Fearing from the prosecution of U.S. soldiers abroad, the Bush Administration decided not to ratify the Statute of the ICC. It also requested from its allies who signed up for the ICC to conclude bilateral exemption agreements about the immunity from extradition of U.S. soldiers – in the meanwhile, the White House expected from its partners to cooperate with the ICTY. Slovenia and Croatia stood up against these requests and did not sign the bilateral exemption agreements with the U.S. This led to a temporary deterioration of U.S.–Slovenia and U.S.–Croatia ties, increasing the significance of Serbia for a while.

During the Obama Administration, U.S.–Croatia ties have witnessed renewed activism, and the ICC issue was put aside. It was followed by mutual presidential visits, Washington prevented Slovenia from vetoing Croatia's accession to NATO, and the ban on military assistance was also cancelled. The Obama Administration considered Croatia as a model for other countries in the region, and it also counted on Zagreb to reduce Russian influence in the region.

In case of Serbia, the U.S. remained the strongest supporter of Belgrade's EU integration but the U.S. support of the independence and recognition of Kosovo further increased the Serbs' negative sentiments

against Washington. Besides, the White House put heavy pressure on Serbia to extradite wartime presidents, high-ranking generals and politicians to the ICTY. Although the political ties were burdened, there was active cooperation between Serbia and NATO. After the bombings during the two Yugoslav Wars, Belgrade decided not to pursue official NATO membership but it has started the transformation of its military structure according to NATO standards. The three most problematic issues between Serbia and the U.S. remain the White House's recognition and support of Kosovo, the public animosity towards Washington and NATO, and the good relations between Serbia and Russia. Russia relations also proved to be a problem between the U.S. and Slovenia. Despite Russia's aggressive behaviour, Slovenia did not suspend its traditionally good relations with Moscow.

Despite these differences of opinion, the U.S. appreciated Slovenia's EU presidency, and its decision to recognise Kosovo's independence. Ljubljana has also been praised for the establishment of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance for BiH. Besides, Slovenia gave in to the U.S. pressure to resolve its border issue with Croatia, which allowed Zagreb to join the EU, and it also agreed to accept a Guantanamo prisoner despite the strong domestic opposition.

Altogether, U.S. relations with the states of the Balkans are highly oscillating. Serb relations with the White House have been heavily burdened due to the role of the U.S. in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. At the same time, Croatia and Slovenia have been active supporters of the U.S. in the region, and they have stood by Washington's side on multiple occasions.

Similarly to the Balkans, Washington was looking for the same in Ukraine as well – it wanted a stable country between Europe and a potentially resurgent Russia. During the mid-1990s there were regular high-level visits between the leaders of the U.S. and Ukraine. 1996 was an important milestone, when the two countries signed a strategic partnership. The main issues of cooperation included supporting Ukraine's transition to democracy, establishing a market economy, promoting human rights, cooperating in space, and closing Chornobyl. In the meanwhile, the Clinton Administration also promoted bringing Kyiv closer to NATO and the EU. These ties provided a greater manoeuvring capability to Ukraine against Russia. However, the slow progress of the democratic reform started to raise concerns in Washington.

During the Bush Administration, relations took a temporary positive turn, when similarly to the rest of the CEE region, Ukraine also stood next to Washington after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and Kyiv gave overflight permission to the U.S. for its Afghanistan mission. The 2002 elections in Ukraine, however, did not meet the democratic standards that the U.S. expected, and it brought back the same criticism from Washington. Ukraine expressed its desire to join NATO, which was acceptable for the Bush Administration, but only under the condition of implementing the necessary reforms. Although further engagement with Ukraine was still in the interests of the U.S., Kyiv did not meet the requirements of its partner, and it only managed to maintain relatively stable relations with the White House because it offered to support the U.S. mission in Iraq.

The 2004 election of President Yushchenko brought Washington and Kyiv closer together. Under his tenure, strengthening NATO ties and WTO membership were the priorities. When Yanukovych came back to the scene as Prime Minister, Ukrainian support for a NATO MAP was suspended. Yushchenko and Yanukovych were unable to speak with a unified voice, which only changed when Yulia Tymoshenko replaced the latter. Kyiv was finally able to request a MAP, and the Bush Administration gave its support. Russia expressed its firm opposition against Ukraine's potential membership in NATO. Kyiv's relations with Russia were further aggravated when Ukraine sided with Georgia during the 2008 Georgia–Russia war. The U.S. and Ukraine signed a strategic partnership in late 2008, which was also reaffirmed by the Obama Administration.

President Obama's reset policy worried Kyiv but Washington explained that it was not a sign of accepting Russia's zone of influence. When Yanukovych was re-elected as President of Ukraine, he indicated that his priority was to rebuild relations with Russia, and signed the Crimea deal. Washington criticised the lack of reforms by Yanukovych, and corruption was growing in the country. The government pressed for an association agreement with the EU, but after the agreement was concluded Yanukovych backed out of it which triggered the so called Maidan Revolution.

Due to the unrest in the region, Ukraine jumped higher on the agenda of the U.S. The White House expressed its support to the demonstration efforts and warned the government against a violent crackdown. Russia capitalised on the unrest in Ukraine and it illegally annexed Crimea. In response to the events, the U.S. and the EU imposed visa and financial

sanctions on Moscow. Washington and Brussels have closely worked to sanction the Russian moves, and to deescalate the unfolding unrest in the Donbas. However, to Kyiv's greatest regret, the Obama Administration only supported the Minsk process from the background. The White House let the EU to take the leadership, and it only provided non-lethal aid to Ukraine.

Altogether, Ukraine's case was similar to Central Europe and the Balkans in the sense that Washington's priority was the establishment of a stable partner against a resurgent Russia. But until the U.S.-supported transition was successful in Central Europe and the Balkans, Ukraine failed to implement the political and economic reforms that Washington expected. Therefore, U.S.–Ukrainian relations have showed a bigger oscillation than the other cases. However, the crisis with Russia opened a new opportunity for cooperation between Kyiv and Washington.

In case of Austria, the country's neutrality started to anger the White House in the 1990s. Washington expected from its European partners to take a larger role in their own protection and in the establishment of peace on the continent. It became increasingly problematic to Vienna as it could not participate in military missions. In addition to the frustration that was caused by the neutral status of Austria, the election of the right-wing party also caused problems between the U.S. and Vienna. An important source of conflict was the issue of Jewish restitution.

Just like in the case of the rest of the region, 9/11 created a new opportunity. Austria supported the U.S. campaign against Afghanistan but the pre-emptive nature of the Iraqi war was against the principle of neutrality, therefore similarly to the states of the Balkans, Vienna did not support the war against Iraq. This affected the ties very negatively and Austria realised that it was no longer in the inner circle of Washington's European partners. The Bush Administration was not popular in Austria, therefore there was a kind of euphoria when President Obama was elected. This was short-lived as the U.S. turned its attention towards Asia, which left a growing feeling of abandonment in Europe.

After the release of the WikiLeaks files, it became clear that the U.S. was puzzled by the notion of neutrality and considered Austria a "free rider". Washington was also critical about Vienna's commercial ties with Iran and North Korea. The inward looking leadership in Austria was also accused of primarily focusing on advancing Austrian economic interests, instead of cooperating with its partners. Due to these problems, there were

no high level meetings during the Obama Administration, and the U.S. seems to have lost its overall attention towards Vienna. The feeling of abandonment was something that the Visegrád countries also complained about but their relations with the U.S. were still significantly stronger than Austria's ties.

3. Military Relations between the U.S. and the CEE States

Although the military domain is the area where the asymmetry between the U.S. and the CEE region is most noticeable, it is the strongest bond between the U.S. and the states of the region. The political relations have gone through ups and downs, but the military cooperation mostly showed resilience to the political turmoil. The U.S. played a crucial role in the structural transformation of the military forces of the CEE region, and it also contributed with hardware to the modernisation of the capabilities of these states.

In case of the Visegrád countries, the European ballistic missile defence system was a crucial issue. The Bush Administration proposed to build elements of its homeland GMD system in the Czech Republic and Poland. It required a lot of political effort from the governments to gain the necessary support from their national legislations, therefore they were puzzled when the Obama Administration cancelled the proposal. The White House later announced a new proposal, the EPAA, which scaled back the scope of the Bush plan, and designated Poland, Romania, Turkey and Germany as hosting states.

Besides the issue of ballistic missile defence, another strong bond is the participation of the Visegrád countries in U.S. military missions. The states of the region participated in every peacekeeping effort in the Balkans, and they also sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq. In case of Iraq, the countries of the region offered bigger contributions than their actual size would suggest, and they also suffered significant losses. Within the NATO framework, the Visegrád countries have been trying to focus on niche capabilities, and counterbalance their moderate defence spending with increased participation in military missions.

The Visegrád countries also participate in joint military exercises with the U.S., and there are many bilateral agreements between U.S. forces and the states of the region. Such agreements include the cooperation

between Hungary and the Ohio National Guard, or Slovakia and the Indiana National Guard. Bilateral agreements are also important in the procurement of military equipment – Poland, for example, bought F-16 and C-130 Hercules planes, Slovakia purchased Black Hawk helicopters (UH-60M) and started negotiating an F-16 deal, and Romania decided to buy F-16 fighter jets from Portugal, and acquire HIMARS artillery and the Patriot 3+ system.

As Visegrád countries are in the frontline of the Russia threat, they have been very active in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. The significant U.S. contributions through the European Reassurance Initiative create a very strong tie between the U.S. and the Visegrád states.

In the military domain, the only major disagreement is the poor performance of the Central Europeans in defence spending. With the exception of Poland, every Visegrád state is below the 2% defence spending requirement of the Alliance, which has been a constant source of criticism from the part of Washington.

Similarly to the Visegrád countries, the U.S. presence has been crucial in the transformation of the Croatian and Slovenian armed forces, as well. In Croatia, the MPRI private military contractor was a key player in this process. Through this cooperation, Washington assisted the restructuring of the Defence Ministry, and it has also provided education and training for staff officers. In preparation for its NATO membership, Croatia also entered the International Military Education and Training program, which institutionalised a direct military cooperation between Washington and Zagreb.

Croatia also participated in U.S.-led military missions. It supported the NATO mission in Kosovo, and it has also contributed to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, which was the greatest military mission of Croatia. U.S. assistance to Zagreb was visible in the military field – Washington provided strategic airlift to deploy Croatian forces to the ISAF mission.

Although Croatia and the Balkans are not directly threatened by the renewed Russian aggression, the geopolitical competition of the two powers is noticeable even for Zagreb. With regards to the future, the U.S. is not likely to get actively involved in the Balkans again, unless there is a crisis that threatens the stability of the broader region.

The case of Slovenia is similar to Croatia and the Central Europeans: the U.S. played a crucial role in the transformation of the armed forces from military to civilian control. The Slovenian armed forces also contributed to the U.S.-led missions in the Balkans. In the meanwhile, the NATO

integration of Croatia and Slovenia was also progressing, showing major developments in the interoperability of their forces with NATO capabilities. Slovenia's first active involvement in peacekeeping missions was the SFOR mission in 1997. After the SFOR mission, Slovenia's armed forces participated in several military operations and missions. Just like Croatia, Slovenia also sent troops to Afghanistan, and Ljubljana also contributed to the training of the security forces in Iraq. The largest military operation of Slovenia was the ISAF mission. After ISAF, Slovenia also participated in the anti-ISIS operation in Iraq. Military exercises are also an important aspect of Slovenia's contribution to NATO.

Just like in case of the Visegrád countries, the only major disagreement in the military domain is the issue of defence spending. Both Croatia and Slovenia pledged to meet the 2% defence spending requirement, but they are still lagging behind, which has been a serious source of criticism from the White House.

The case of Serbia is significantly different from the rest of the Balkans region. As a non-NATO state, it does not have the same institutional bonds as the others. Besides, Belgrade was also facing NATO air campaigns on two occasions, which created strong public and political sentiments against the Alliance. Despite the burdened history, Washington's and Belgrade's relationship is still the strongest in the military field.

The U.S. supported the transformation of Serbia's armed forces. In 2006, NATO and Serbia created a joint Defence Reform Group to facilitate this process. Due to the increased military cooperation between the two states, Serbia participated in many NATO exercises. After Belgrade adopted the Individual Partnership Action Plan, its cooperation with NATO reached a historic height. However, as a result of the two air campaigns, Serbia does not pursue official NATO membership.

Just like the Central European states, Serbia also has special bilateral agreements with the U.S. in the military domain: it has a partnership agreement with the Ohio National Guard since 2006. Another important institutional framework is the Global Peace Operations Partnership, in the framework of which Serbia received military equipment, training and assistance from the U.S. to modernise the Serbian armed forces. Thus, Serbia might not enjoy the same institutional ties with Washington that NATO member states benefit from but despite the adversarial relations during the 1990s, the two countries still built a solid partnership in the military domain.

In the CEE region, the case of Ukraine provides probably the biggest security challenge for Washington. At the beginning of the 1990s, the peaceful disarmament and repatriation of the world's third largest nuclear arsenal was a priority for the White House. Since the successful resolution of the nuclear question and Ukraine's accession to the NPT, Washington and Kyiv continued its cooperation in the nuclear domain.

Regarding Ukraine's ties with NATO, the process of cooperation was progressing very slowly during the Yanukovich era. When he got back to power in 2006, Ukraine withdraw its support for an official MAP with NATO to favour the Russian demands. It was only under the Tymoshenko tenure when Kyiv was finally able to request a MAP from the Alliance. This step, however, was not favoured by all NATO member states, partly because Ukraine's reform program was not moving fast enough, and partly because Russia raised very harsh opposition against the enlargement. The U.S. support was also conditional on the successful implementation of the political, economic and military reforms within Ukraine. Despite the fact that Ukraine's accession to NATO was a distant future, Moscow was very vocal about its dissatisfaction with the prospects of enlargement in the Russian zone of influence.

In addition to the increasing cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, the U.S. established several bilateral channels of cooperation with Ukraine. During the war in Iraq, for example, Ukraine provided 1,800 troops for ISAF, and in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, it also sent a nuclear, chemical and biological weapons defence battalion to Kuwait. For a while, the Ukrainian contingent was the fourth largest in Iraq which was highly valued by the Bush Administration. As a result, the U.S. and Ukraine concluded a strategic partnership agreement in 2008, in the framework of which Kyiv participated in several joint military exercises with the U.S.

As the crisis in Ukraine unfolded, the Obama Administration's main goal was to de-escalate the crisis without getting into a direct military confrontation with Moscow. Therefore, the U.S. only provided limited military assistance to Ukraine. Under the Obama Administration, this assistance included non-lethal weapons. The Trump Administration, however, revisited this strategy and approved lethal military assistance (Javelin man-portable anti-armour weapons). This type of military assistance is likely to continue in the future as well but given the events in

Crimea and the Donbas, Ukraine's integration with NATO is not going to happen anytime soon.

In the military domain, the case of Austria is also unique as similarly to Ukraine and Serbia, Austria is not a NATO member either. So far it has not signalled its willingness to accede to the Alliance. Vienna has joined the PfP program in 1995 but it has not made further moves towards a MAP. Austria's long-standing tradition of neutrality works against building strong ties with Washington in the military domain. The Central Europeans were able to deepen their cooperation in the military domain by their strong support to the Bush Administration's military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, and they are also providing important contributions to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. Austria, on the other hand, can only contribute moderate capabilities to peacekeeping missions and post-war reconstruction. As Vienna joined the EU in 1995, it has integrated with the EU's CFSP which ties down most of Austria's expeditionary capabilities. Therefore, there are only sporadic occasions when Vienna was able to cooperate with Washington in the military domain. The best examples of this include Austria's assistance to the Afghanistan mission, where Vienna fulfilled non-military tasks like reconstruction efforts and the training of Afghan forces. Austria has also been active in the wider Balkans region, and it has contributed to the KFOR mission. Although these efforts are valued in the White House, it is not likely that the two countries can deepen their military cooperation until Austria maintains its policy of neutrality.

4. Economic Relations between the U.S. and the CEE States

Among the different sectors of cooperation, the economic domain is the weakest link between the U.S. and the CEE states. There are many logical reasons why this is not such a strong bond as the other fields. First, the states of the CEE region are small markets which have a limited capability to purchase American products. Due to the asymmetry in the size of the markets, CEE states are only competitive in niche products, or in products which require highly skilled labour which is cheaper in the region than in the U.S. The second reason is the EU integration of these states. With the

establishment of the single market in Europe, there is a free flow of goods and services within the EU borders. As a result of this, most CEE states trade primarily with their European partners – Germany, Italy, France and the United Kingdom. From the perspective of the CEE states, the dual integration into the EU and NATO basically created a division of labour: the EU comes first in economy, and the U.S. comes first in military (and sometimes even in policy) matters.

During the transition period, U.S. financial support was crucial for all states of the region. Most of them were short of capital and relied on foreign direct investments. The U.S. was among the leading investors in the CEE region which was essential to support the transformation of their socialist structures into a market economy. Besides investing in economic growth, U.S. assistance was also used to develop the infrastructure and the NGO sectors in the region. Many of these funds were transferred through USAID. Washington's role was also visible in the modernisation of the financial and bank sectors.

The economic transformation also paved the way towards the integration of these states into the Western political, military and economic organisations. Washington supported the accession of the CEE states into the IMF and the World Bank, and created bilateral Enterprise Funds with many states in the region. Due to the creation of these institutional ties, the trade between the U.S. and the CEE region rapidly increased in the 1990s, and somewhat slowed down in the 2000s.

American companies like General Electric, Guardian Industries, Coca-Cola, Ball Corporation, Merrill Lynch, Ford, IBM, PepsiCo, U.S. Steel and Ameritech Corporation appeared in the CEE region during the 1990s. Several multinational companies (such as Exxon Mobil, Morgan Stanley, Avis, Microsoft, Citibank, Alcoa and EDS) located shared service support centres in Central and Eastern Europe. The 2007–2008 financial crisis was a big setback in the economic relations – for many years, it halted the inflow of FDI and the creation of new service centres. After the crisis, trade relations gradually started to grow again, and economic cooperation extended to new sectors, especially in the innovation and IT domains.

Today, in Slovakia only there are 120 U.S. companies, employing thousands of people. The U.S. has benefited a lot from the availability of highly skilled workers in a region where salaries are significantly below the standard of U.S. salaries. Interestingly, the governments of the

region have had different approaches towards these companies. In Serbia, for example, the government has been very favourable towards foreign companies, while in case of Hungary, the third Orbán Government implemented several discriminatory regulations against foreign multinational companies.

With regards to the presence of businesses from the CEE region in the U.S., cooperation has improved in the domain of IT start-up development, innovation and entrepreneurship, and the diplomatic missions of the CEE states are paying increased attention on creating opportunities for their small and medium businesses in the American market. While Poland has been the leading trade partner of the U.S. in the CEE region, Ukraine's case is among the least successful ones. The low level of trade is partly explained by the concerns of U.S. companies about overregulation, the lack of rule of law, and the high level of corruption.

The energy sector is among the most important sectors that the U.S. is closely monitoring in the CEE region. In this regard, it is a primary U.S. interest to reduce the reliance of the region on Russian energy supplies. Therefore, the U.S. has supported every initiative which tried to bring in natural gas pipelines from areas other than Russia, and it has also supported the creation of interconnectors between the pipelines in the CEE region to reduce Russia's blackmail potential over the region.

The civilian use of nuclear power is a very lucrative business, and the U.S. has been trying to get access to the CEE region where the Cold War created a strong Russian dominance. That is why both the Czech (the cancellation of the Temelín tender) and Hungarian governments (the conclusion of the Paks deal with Russia) received criticism. In Ukraine, the U.S. managed to develop strong ties in the nuclear domain, and the two countries have cooperated in the trade of nuclear fuel rods.

Altogether, due to the priority of the EU in the trade relations of the CEE states, and also owing to the high level of asymmetry between the states of the region and the U.S., trade and investment ties will probably stay secondary to the military and political cooperation.

5. Cultural Relations between the U.S. and the CEE States

With regards to the cultural ties with the U.S., the strongest bond is the large number of immigrants who came from the CEE region. In case of

Poland, for example, there are about 10 million Polish Americans in the U.S. today. Cities like Chicago and Cleveland are the centres of these immigrant groups. They showed a strong willingness to keep their ties with their countries of origin, and they have regularly lobbied in favour of their home countries. The Polish lobby, for example, has been very strong during Warsaw's membership negotiations with NATO. These ties are regularly institutionalised, like in the Hungarian case with the American Hungarian Federation (AHF) or the Hungarian Initiatives Foundation (HIF). The primary mission of these organisations is to nurture cultural exchange and scientific cooperation between the countries of the region and the U.S. (but sometimes they have also taken a more political role). Many CEE states have their own radio or TV stations, and they have also supported university education programs and language courses to maintain the cultural heritage of the immigrant groups.

U.S. soft power has also been active in the CEE region. The flagship program of cooperation is the Fulbright exchange program, in the framework of which hundreds of Central and Eastern Europeans study and work in the U.S. every year. Washington has also supported the establishment of the so called American corners in larger university towns, which serve as cultural centres for the U.S. Besides, civil society organisations and think tanks funded by the U.S. have also regularly taken an important role in the strengthening of cultural ties.

With regards to the public opinion on the U.S., there is a strong fluctuation. Especially in case of the Visegrád countries, the political elites have been more pro-American than the public (this was specifically true from the early 1990s to the mid-2000s). While the political elites have been pushing for stronger ties with Washington, and they were very supportive of American initiatives to increase their chances of integration with NATO, the public has showed signs of anti-Americanism on numerous occasions. The reputation of the U.S. was favourable in the 1990s when the American culture could reach the region for the first time without filters or limitations. But polarisation has started during the Yugoslav Wars. The U.S.-led intervention against Serbia during the Kosovo crisis has turned many people against Washington. This was not only true for Serbs, but public opinion polls in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Austria have also showed a decline.

Anti-Americanism, in general, is a result of a combination of factors: anti-globalisation, misunderstandings and misinformation have all played

a role in the decline of American popularity. A large group of people turned against the U.S. because of the foreign policy conduct of the White House. Militarism and unilateral action, which peaked under the Bush Administration, triggered strong anti-American sentiments. The first signs of this were observable during the Kosovo crisis, and then unfolded during the war against Iraq. This is why President George W. Bush was among the least popular U.S. presidents in the post-Cold War era. His visits to the region were followed by public demonstrations in many countries, which was a striking difference in comparison to his father's visits during the early 1990s. President Obama was generally welcomed with a very positive attitude, and his approval ratings were high all around Europe (at least initially).

Besides foreign and security policy matters, another source of anti-Americanism is defined against the American way of life, consumerism and pop culture. Those who oppose to these ideas criticise American people for being shallow and ignorant about everything that is happening outside of their borders. The last source of anti-Americanism has been identified as an ideological disagreement among people who simply do not believe in the American values, the rule of law, democratic institutions, market economy and liberal ideas. Part of these sentiments come from a nostalgia towards the communist times, and also from the misinformation campaigns that certain political parties have been conducting to advance their own national policies. In this situation, the U.S. embassies and personally the U.S. ambassadors could play an important role in the multiplication of U.S. soft power.

6. The Trump Administration and the Future of U.S.–CEE Relations

In recent years, it has been a general trend in the West that right-wing parties are becoming more popular, and many states of the region elected conservative governments. In theory, this could create a good basis for a strong cooperation with the Trump Administration.

During the 2016 election campaign, the states of the CEE region were divided in their preference. The Serb population was cheering for the election of President Trump, and Czech President Zeman and Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán have also openly endorsed Donald Trump against

Hillary Clinton. Their views aligned over many issues, including the immigrant crisis in Europe. In the meanwhile, others have been rather worried about a Trump victory because they feared that it would reduce U.S. attention on the region and undermine solidarity within NATO.

U.S. commitment towards NATO has been one of the most important concerns of the states of the CEE region. During the election campaign, President Trump said that NATO is an “obsolete” organisation, and the U.S. will only protect those allies which pay for their defence and spend at least 2% of their GDP on defence. In light of the renewed tensions with Russia, this created a lot of fears in the frontline states. From the ten selected countries in this volume, only Poland meets the 2% threshold. However, despite the initial fears, it seems that the White House has no intention to abandon its allies, and the Trump Administration continues to fulfil its commitments by strengthening U.S. contributions to NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence, and it also maintained U.S. sanctions against Russia.

Another problem area is related to President Trump’s trade policy. The Obama Administration started to negotiate the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) free trade agreement between the EU and the U.S. Most of the CEE states were in favour of a well-negotiated TTIP agreement that could help European firms get access to the American market. However, the Trump Administration’s overall opposition to free trade agreements put the TTIP negotiations on hold, and initiated a trade conflict between the EU and the U.S. This was viewed negatively by most states in the CEE region.

Another example of disagreement is the case of Iran – after the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Tehran, European states expressed their support to the agreement. When President Trump withdrew from the deal and threatened to punish the states which continue to do business with Iran, many European states raised strong criticism against the American decision.

In the Middle East, President Trump’s decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel also triggered harsh criticism in Europe. While some countries like Hungary expressed their desire to follow the U.S. lead and move their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the overwhelming majority of the CEE states condemned the U.S. decision and said that the fate of the capital should be decided in the framework of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Altogether, the Trump Administration's "America First" policy constitutes a number of challenges for CEE states in all three domains of political, military and economic cooperation. However, despite President Trump's alarming campaign rhetoric, there has been no direct confrontation between the states of the region and Washington. President Trump has already travelled to the region, and Poland was one of his first international visits in July 2017. This proves that the region continues to have the attention of the White House, and there is a lot of continuity, especially in the military domain. Probably the biggest change that the CEE region will need to adapt to is the general U.S. shift from a value-based foreign policy towards a cooperation which has a focus on business. Most CEE states have been trying to secure a high level bilateral meeting with President Trump but these efforts have mostly failed so far.

The future of U.S.–CEE relations will probably follow the oscillation of the last ten years. In the political domain, there will be disagreements and occasional setbacks. But the institutionalised cooperation in the military domain is not likely to be challenged by either side. While trade relations have never really reached the strategic significance that some states might have hoped, defence collaboration will continue to provide a solid basis of cooperation. CEE states will continue to rely on U.S. guarantees and assurance measures against the security threats that they are facing, while the U.S. will continue to ask from the states of the region to take a larger share of the burden.

Ludovika University Press Non-Profit Ltd.
H-1089 Budapest, Orczy út 1.
Contact: info@ludovika.hu

Responsible for publishing: Gergely Koltányi, Managing Director
Managing Editor: Kata Inzsöl
Copy Editor: Zsuzsanna Gergely
Typeset and design: Angéla Fehér
Printed and bound by Pátria Printing House

ISBN 978-963-531-086-9 (print)
ISBN 978-963-531-087-6 (pdf)
ISBN 978-963-531-088-3 (epub)

This edited volume examines the post-Cold War relationship of ten selected Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries with the United States. It concludes with a summary chapter that highlights the main similarities and differences of the ten case studies. The relationship of the United States and CEE states has oscillated a lot since the end of the Cold War. The disagreements and problems were most evident in the political domain. Due to the institutionalised nature of the military domain, the defence cooperation has been mostly resilient to the fluctuations of the political relations. In the meanwhile, trade relations have never really reached the strategic significance that some states might have hoped in the 1990s. The examination of the past 30 years suggests that the defence collaboration will continue to provide a solid basis of cooperation, despite the fact that the asymmetries with the U.S. are most visible in this area. Due to their limited resources and weak military capabilities, CEE states will continue to rely on U.S. assurances against the security threats that they are facing, while the U.S. will continue to urge the CEE states to take a larger share of the burden.

The work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project PACSDOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled "Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance".

SZÉCHENYI  2020



HUNGARIAN
GOVERNMENT

European Union
European Social
Fund



INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE