

# Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

<https://www.e-ir.info/2011/03/09/between-europe-and-america-polish-choices-for-the-21st-century/>

JEREMY WYSAKOWSKI-WALTERS, MAR 9 2011

This paper aims at understanding Polish foreign policy over the last decade with a view to predicting future policy. Although many prominent International Relations (IR) theorists have dismissed the predictive nature of IR[1] I feel that IR as a post-event explanatory science is of little value to the wider community i.e. policy makers, and IR practitioners should strive to develop predictive theories. It is in view of this need to predict that I wish to analyse past events in order to provide a model for assessing future behaviours.

The motivation behind this work came from looking at Poland's foreign policy decisions of the last few years and the apparent dichotomy that was present within them. From a policy perspective Poland has tried to place itself at the heart of both the EU and NATO. During 2009 Poland nominated three individuals to senior NATO/European positions: Radosław Sikorski for NATO Secretary General, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz for Council of Europe Secretary General and Jerzy Buzek for European Parliament President. Poland achieved a 1 out of 3 success rate with Jerzy Buzek being elected President in July 09. This drive to become a central player within these organisations has been matched by Polish foreign policy within central and eastern Europe. The high-profile involvement of President Kaczynski during Russian/Georgian hostilities in 2008 and the support of Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of Poland's engagement in regional affairs. Earlier in the decade Poland sent troops to both Afghanistan and Iraq; the latter finished in 2009; while the Polish force in Afghanistan successfully carried out its first offensive operation (Op Eagle's Feather) also that year. When analysing the above it can be seen that in terms of its dealings with the EU and NATO Poland has demonstrated elements of offensive-realism in a bid to maximise its relative power. This contrasts with other areas where neo-liberal institutionalism is more pertinent in explaining Poland's relationship with the EU.

Therefore I have chosen to analyse Polish foreign policy with regards to three rationalist paradigms: defensive realism, offensive realism[2], and neo-liberal institutionalism. Following Schimmelfennig's (2003) categorisation I will refer to them as the security, power and welfare approaches respectively[3]. Each of these paradigms offers a different explanation for state behaviour, but all are based on the same central premises: states exist in a condition of anarchy and states are the central players in the international system. The theories are all the products of a rationalist epistemology and therefore are empirically based. This in turn means that they are positivist in nature. As these have been the dominant theories of IR since the 1970s it is safe to assume that they have had at least some influence on policy makers, especially in Europe and North America.

The paper is divided into three principle sections followed by a conclusion. In each section I will look at a specific case study and analyse it using the three models above. In doing this I wish to ascertain whether there are any patterns of behaviour and therefore case examples upon which predictions can be based. The case studies have been chosen as they provide examples of specific policy decisions made by the Polish government. Their selection of course involves selection bias on my part; this unfortunately is unavoidable within the scope of this paper. I will justify my choices in each case, however any truly unbiased analysis would involve analysing a much greater number of cases.

The case studies cover the period of 1999-2009 as this represents a maturing of Poland's foreign policy. In the years

# Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

following the return to democracy in 1989 Poland was immersed in significant transformation[4]. The economy was changed from a primarily state controlled one into a free-market model. Poland's defence policy was separated from that of the USSR/Russia and refocused towards Western Europe and North America with division of power and military transformation being key issues. This process culminated in the 1999 accession to NATO. I take this date as a key point of demarcation, with the chosen case studies representing the decisions of a full member of the 'western community'.

The first case study is the 2003 involvement of Polish troops in the US led invasion of Iraq. This undoubtedly constitutes the most significant Polish military deployment since the Second World War. Although only contributing 200 plus special forces troops to the initial invasion, by August that year Poland had pledged 2000 troops to form the core of a Polish led multinational division in Iraq (one of four). The peak amount of Polish troops was 2,500 which had all been withdrawn by October 2008. Polish involvement in the initial invasion was crucial in President G W Bush presenting the operation as an international endeavour and not purely a US/UK venture. The war was very controversial both at home and abroad and endangered Polish relations with immediate neighbours in Europe just before Polish accession to the EU in 2004.

The second case study is the aforementioned EU accession. After many years of negotiations Poland joined the European Union in May 2004. This along with the 1999 membership of NATO, marked the two key foreign policy objectives of post-communist Poland. Poland's entry along with nine other countries was the biggest single enlargement in the organisation's history. The dominant economic nature of the EU represented a significant acceptance of Poland's economic transformation along with democratic reform. Membership of the EU represents an important internalisation of EU rules and regulations. The supranational nature of the EU has significant sovereignty issues which came to the fore during negotiations regarding the Lisbon Treaty.

The third case study is that of the US/Polish *Declaration on Strategic Cooperation*[5] signed in August 2008. Although the change in the US administration in 2009 brought several issues under question, especially the missile defence system, the declaration marks an important point in US/Polish bilateral relations. The explicit declaration of the deployment of US weapons and personnel to Poland has important implications for Polish strategic and geopolitical considerations.

The events of 2003, 2004 and 2008 mentioned above are each individually important. However, taken together they mark a colossal change from the situation of the late nineties. I will be dealing with them chronologically and thus hope to gain some sense of perspective with regards the overall nature of Polish foreign policy.

## **2003 Iraq War**

The 2003 Iraq War was in many respects a continuation of the 1991 Gulf War. This was not just in terms of its principle protagonists (the USA, UK and Iraq) but in a very legal sense the 1991 war set the stage for the 2003 conflict. The 1991 war formally ended with UN Security Council Resolution 687[6] with article 34 providing justification for further military action should Iraq fail to fulfil the terms of the ceasefire. The wording is ambiguous in nature stating: '(the council) decides ... to take such further steps as may be required for the implementation of the present resolution...' The subsequent resolution No. 688 had given the legal justification[7] (although disputed) for the no-fly zones instigated by the USA and UK. These were to become a permanent feature of the political and physical landscape during the 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 attacks on the USA and the ensuing 'war on terror' led, although not directly, to the increase in tension between the USA and UK on one side and Iraq on the other. This culminated in the 2003 Iraq War which was to all extent and purposes part of the war on terror[8]. The debate regarding the legality of the war and the issue regarding the UK and USA's true motivations must for the purposes of this paper be put aside. When assessing Poland's actions in the lead-up to the war I would like to suggest that the Polish authorities took UK/USA intelligence estimates at face value i.e. Iraq was developing ballistic missile capability along with continuing to

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

research nuclear technology. Further to this, let us assume that the al-Qa'eda/Iraq connection was a given certainty and that there was some form of cross-pollination of terrorist know-how.

In the light of these two assumptions I will later go on to analyse the decision to send Polish troops to Iraq in respect of the three models mentioned earlier. Firstly however I wish to outline the concrete facts that led to the deployment of Polish military personnel. The purpose of this is to provide a rigid framework upon which all three analyses may rest.

The deployment of Polish troops to Iraq was officially announced by the then Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski on March 17 2003. Although Polish troops had been in the region since 2002, it was only in March 2003 that it was certain Polish troops would take part in the invasion of Iraq which occurred just days later on the 20th March 2003. March 17<sup>th</sup> was also the day that President Bush gave a televised address[9] outlining the US case for war and issuing a 48hour ultimatum to Saddam Hussein and his close family. This initial deployment amounted to approximately 200 primarily special forces troops from the GROM and Formoza units along with anti-chemical and logistics troops.

Although, many reasons for the deployment exist, by July 2003 Polish Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz announced that Poland's primary aim was to secure access to Iraq's oil fields[10] which was in stark contrast to the language employed by British[11] or American leaders at the outset of war. At this time Poland was preparing to take control of a multinational division: MND Central South, as of 3 September 2003 [12]. Poland deployed approximately 2,300 troops to the MND and operated nine 'rotations' of troops with the last one handing over in October 2008.

The costs of the Iraq war for Poland are difficult to fully calculate, however in human terms the cost was 23 lives lost[13] accounting for 0.5 % of coalition fatalities. From a more mercantile perspective the lucrative return on the military investment that so many in Poland expected was by 2004 already showing signs of not materialising[14]. In terms of benefits perhaps one of the most understated benefits is the dramatic increase in operational experience that the war has given the Polish Armed Forces (PAF).

It is unfortunate, but perhaps to be expected, that after fifty years of little to no combat experience the Polish force found themselves lacking in essential skills for modern warfare. The public rebuke by Paul Bremer[15] concerning Polish troops and the subsequent diplomatic row[16] illustrate more the unpreparedness of Polish politicians than a lack of professionalism on the part of the military. The stabilisation mission that Poland had signed up to was at best optimistic from the start. Previous stabilization missions such as SFOR[17] in Bosnia Herzegovina had begun work after a protracted war and hence exhaustion on the part of combatants. Perhaps the fundamental difference of SFOR was its non-involvement in the conflict it was helping to bring to an end. KFOR was made up of combatant countries involved in the Kosovan War, yet they were not occupying land populated by their former adversaries i.e. Serbs.

### *Security Model*

The term security reflects the principle focus of the defensive realist approach (Schimmelfennig 2003:27) and as such best describes what the state actors are trying to achieve, that: 'in anarchy, security is the highest end' (Waltz 1979:126). Given this I will now look at Poland's decision to enter the Iraq War and assess whether it meets the demand of defensive realism and did indeed increase security.

A key part of the security approach is the concept of a balance of power. When one state feels threatened by another, it can either internally balance or externally balance the threat. Internal balancing is favoured as it is more predictable and allows independence of action(1979:168). When this is not possible, external balancing is carried out by seeking coalitions. In this case the weaker side is sought in order to avoid creating a hegemony (1979:128). Stephan Walt has developed this to distinguish a balance of threat as opposed to power (1987:32). Walt's classification takes into account the aggressive nature of an actor as well as their proximity. The phenomenon of bandwagoning occurs when states flock to the stronger state instead of balancing. This is seen if the bandwagoning

## **Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century**

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

state is particularly weak or there are no allies available (Walt 1987:31).

We therefore have two aspects to consider: that of bandwagoning and balancing. For both of these to be apparent there must be the prior instance of a threat. It is now the threat which I would like to deal with. As mentioned above, if we assume that Iraq had a WMD program and was involved in terrorism and had al-Qa'eda affiliations, the question remains as to what threat this constitutes to either Poland or the USA. I say USA, as the Article V obligation of Poland as a NATO member was previously important in the Afghan operation and so it must be assumed that if attacked by Iraq, the USA would call on its allies. Article V of the NATO Treaty[18] does not however specify the right to pre-emptive strikes and so could not be used as a justification for military action in this case.

Returning to Poland then, with the security approach a rational actor, such as Poland, attempts to first balance any threat caused by a third party. In the years and indeed months leading up to the 2003 war there is no evidence that Iraq constituted a threat to Poland; indeed, in a 2006 poll 76% of Poles believed the war increased the terrorist threat[19]. If a specific threat to Poland is debatable, then we are left with a threat to world security. As a UN member Poland does have an obligation to respond to such a threat under Article 43[20]. Under the security approach Poland would seek to balance such a threat, preferably by first internal methods and then external if these are insufficient. There is no evidence that Poland, prior to 2003, build up its military or weapons in an attempt to balance Iraq. Further to this, if internal methods failed, Poland should have sought relatively weak allies to provide external balance. The USA is the paramount military power and so obviously this does not hold.

If balancing in either form can be dismissed then we are left with bandwagoning. Here the state coalesces to the strongest actor out of either a lack of allies or through an overwhelming threat posed by the strong actor which outweighs the threat posed by the original aggressor. In this situation Poland would either have to be threatened by the USA in some way, or lack alternatives for coalition building and thus balancing. Poland was at no time threatened by the USA and as a member of NATO would be able to feel secure in its position. In terms of allies, if we assume that there was a threat on Poland from Iraq then Poland would be able to achieve balancing through a coalition with Germany or Italy, its regional powers. By choosing the USA it leaves itself open to hegemonic domination. The USA being vastly more powerful would have a disproportionately large affect on Poland.

In summary then, the security model does not answer the question of Poland's motivation for sending troops to fight in the 2003 Iraq War. The existence of a threat is extremely doubtful and even if taken as given, neither balancing nor bandwagoning provides an answer for Polish behaviour.

### *Power Model*

Offensive realists claim that states are power maximisers (Mearsheimer 1995: 11-12) in that they all seek to dominate the system and become the hegemon. Following this, states would balance and bandwagon if it increased their power. States calculate the costs of balancing and bandwagoning and carry out those acts which are cost efficient (Schimmelfennig 2003:31). This means that if Poland wanted to maximise its power, it would choose the most cost efficient method of doing it.

To start with, lets look at balancing. Whereas the security model said that a state is unlikely to balance with a strong state, the power model allows for this possibility. As defence is not the primary objective, but power, then Poland could choose to balance with the USA in order to maximise power. Balancing however still requires a credible threat; the lack of which would cause a problem to this theory. Bandwagoning on the other does not require a threat and so presents us with a much more plausible explanation.

Bandwagoning entails a weak state creating an alliance or coalition with a stronger one. The object of this coalition is to increase the relative power of the state in question. Rather than being interested in security per se, the state seeks

## **Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century**

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

to dominate others and therefore by extension increase its security. Therefore for bandwagoning to be effective it must have some discernible reciprocate effect.

Poland as a power maximiser would, following the power approach, attempt to bandwagon to a stronger actor and thus increase its relative power. The USA obviously provides an ideal and perhaps premier example of a potential ally. However, the choice of Iraq as a demonstration of power; or transaction costs inherent in the alliance, would seem an unlikely one. Firstly, according to club theory when a new member joins a group it may incur a fee (Sandler and Tschirhart 1997:338), then the use of the good will further incur transaction costs (Schimmelfennig 2003:26). If we take the US/Polish alliance as a form of club with power as its good then a war in Iraq would seem an extreme cost to pay. Returning to a form of demonstration; if Poland wished to demonstrate its new found power or prove its loyalty, this would once again be an exceptionally high cost. Given the relative safety of Europe, the need for Poland to send troops to Iraq in order to demonstrate its power has little validity as an answer.

In summary, the power model provides a clearer answer of Polish behaviour in terms of bandwagoning as it explains how Poland might act in the absence of a specific threat. However, this does not explain the choice of Iraq. Were Poland to want to maximise its power, then there exists possible ventures far closer to home.

### *Welfare Model*

Neo-liberal institutionalism is, as the name suggests, an institution dominant theory. By dominant I do not mean that institutions dominate states, but rather that institutions have a fundamental role within this theory. The term welfare refers to the fact that states are interested in maximising gains (Schimmelfennig 2003:33) rather than security or power. Institutions offer the clearest means of ensuring these gains and hence dominate the theory.

The Iraq War was theoretically under the justification of UN Security Council resolutions, however the actual activity happened outside of an official UN mandate. To weaken the institutional case the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, claimed in 2004 that the war was in fact illegal[21]. Many have argued that the war in fact weakened the UN's standing as it showed that 'might is right' and that powerful players can side step the organisation.

According to the welfare approach, Poland should act within the confines of regulated institutions to achieve its goal. If gains as opposed to power or security are the driving force, then institutions like the WTO would be better suited for dealing with Iraq. Further to this the welfare approach leaves little to explain Polish behaviour with regards to Iraq.

### *European Union Membership*

Entry in to the European Union was of great importance for Poland from the early 1990s, with Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki announcing the objective in his speech to the European Parliament in February 1990. A formal application for accession was placed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1994[22] and by 5<sup>th</sup> September 2001 the European Parliament was looking favourably on a 2004 entry[23]. After a long process, President Aleksander Kwasniewski announced after the 2003 successful Polish referendum on EU membership "We have returned to the European family"[24]. This sense of return was echoed by the European Commission: "A great, proud nation is turning the page of a tragic century and freely takes the seat that should have belonged to it right from the start of the process of European integration."

However, the 2004 EU accession was not an inevitable fact for Poland. Although the EU includes today 27 European countries, there are several, such as Norway and Switzerland which are not members. To complicate matters, the 'four freedoms' of the Single Market: the free movement of goods, services, capital and person, are available to European Economic Area countries such as Norway[25]. The point of this is that Poland did indeed have a choice prior to joining the EU and may well have opted for EEA membership or perhaps choose to remain separate. The fact that it entered the EU provides us with yet another conundrum. The EU by its nature is a supranational organisation,

## **Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century**

Written by Jeremy Wusakowski-Walters

be it with intergovernmental components. Therefore any state entering the union voluntarily relinquishes part of its sovereignty. For a state to do such a thing requires a strong motivating factor.

The security, power and welfare models offer three possible motivations of which welfare, taken in an economic sense, would seem to be the obvious choice. The EU did after all grow out of the European Economic Community and hence economic issues must form a large part of any cost benefit analysis done by a state prior to joining. However, to truly determine if indeed the welfare model is the appropriate one for explaining Polish accession to the EU first we need to look at the security and power approaches.

### *Security Model*

As mentioned while referring to the Iraq War, for the security approach to be plausible Poland would have had to have felt threatened and sought security in the form of an alliance of some description. This alliance would then occur in the form of balancing or bandwagoning. While the security model is primarily used to look at strategic security issues, we can use the same principles to look at the EU and economic issues.

Firstly let us look at threat; In the 1990s Poland was emerging after 45 years of state regulated communism. Although Poland achieved a degree of economic freedom during communism not seen in other socialist countries[26] the reality of the world it found itself in after the end of communism was that its markets and industry were ill prepared to deal with unregulated global free trade. Economically the country was weak and therefore in a position to potentially feel threatened by its neighbours.

Given this potential for a sense of threat, under the security approach Poland would have two primary options: balancing or bandwagoning. If we begin with balancing. To balance Poland could have either relied on internal abilities or sought allies. Such allies would be weaker, so as not to pose a secondary threat. Unlike military threats which are relatively discernible, economic threats are varied and thus difficult to determine accurately. Poland's biggest source of foreign direct investment (FDIs) was its direct neighbour Germany, however this was also a source of threat as German competition could have easily destroyed the fragile Polish market. On the other hand, industries such as the Gdansk shipyards or the Lodz textile factories were under competition from primarily Asian countries. If we accept that internal balancing was not an option for the foreseeable future then in order to balance Poland would need to seek its weakest threat as a source of collaboration.

Assuming all of the above, then the EU would seem a strange tactical choice as although close to Poland, its relative strength would have a potential hegemonic effect. According to the balance of power model, Poland should have chosen a weaker ally to balance against the EU.

If we remove the balance of power theory as a potential reason then we are left with the possibility of bandwagoning. Bandwagoning occurs when the potential threat is so great that any avoidance would worsen the situation and therefore it is better to submit to its hegemony. In the case of the EU other arrangements exist that negate the necessity for membership. If Poland felt threatened and decided to allow economic access by EU countries it could have joined the European Economic Area[27] and thus forgone the need to relinquish part of its sovereignty as mentioned above. We must assume that Poland as a rational actor would choose the course of least friction and therefore have opted for EEA membership over EU entry were an alliance needed.

The security model therefore fails to account for Poland's actions with regards the EU from both a balance of power perspective and a bandwagoning one.

### *Power Model*

Turning to offensive realism, Poland's primary aim is to maximise power; therefore Poland would seek the best coalition in order to increase its relative economic power. Beginning with balancing: Germany and the rest of the EU

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

would in the power model represent a viable ally to balance with against a weaker economic power. Were we to assume that China/Asian countries represented a threat to the Polish economy then Poland may choose to balance with the EU in order to counter this threat. However, in a similar way to the problems encountered with the security model, were this to be the case then the EEA arrangement offers a more viable alternative. Therefore balancing must be put aside as an unrealistic explanation.

Bandwagoning would have limited value under this economic variation of the power model. Whereas military power could conceivably have a wash off effect on a smaller country, thereby increasing its relative power, the economic power of the EU would do little to increase the relative power of Poland in relation to any third party. Therefore bandwagoning does not offer us a credible solution to the problem of voluntary loss of sovereignty.

In summary the loss of sovereignty is still the biggest factor which negates the possibility of the power model being used to explain Polish actions with regards to the EU.

### *Welfare Model*

As mentioned at the beginning of the section, the welfare approach offers the most suitable explanation for Poland wishing to become a member of the EU. Schimmelfennig (2003:52) claims that the welfare approach in fact accounts for all the central and east European countries (CEECs) that joined the EU in 2004. In order to explore that possibility lets first review the tenets of the model.

Under neo-liberal institutionalist assumptions a state enters into institutional arrangements in order to better safeguard its economic prosperity and provide for mutually derived gains (Woods 2001:288). As mentioned earlier, the 'four freedoms' of the Single Market are available to EEA members and so full membership of the EU would need to offer a decidedly greater gain, than EEA membership could, if the loss of sovereignty that EU membership entails would be offset.

Full membership of the EU has two principle economic advantages: the common agricultural policy (CAP)[28] and regional development funds[29]. These provide a relatively large amount of money to agricultural areas and underdeveloped regions respectively. However, surprisingly a 2002 poll[30] taken two years prior to accession found that although 47% of Poles were of the opinion that accession would be favourable for the economy, nearly half thought it would be unfavourable for Polish agriculture. This would seem to devalue the welfare approach some what, at least as regards CAP. Perhaps however the statistics are more representative of a split between the polled population of Poland and its political elites.

The institutional framework of the EU allows Poland to be involved in bloc bargaining with potential economic rivals such as China. Although much of Poland's communist era manufacturing industry collapsed with little need of outside competition, what remained required protection from countries such as China. This obviously represents a protectionist argument for accession, however, trade liberalisation involved with EU membership can also have great influences on the economy of the entrant.

Maurice Schiff and Yanling Wang of the World Bank[31] Argue that *total factor productivity (TFP) rises with the degree of a country's openness and with the trading partners' R&D stocks.* While they claim that it is of sound practice for Poland to integrate with its larger developed neighbours as this allows for greater competitive gains and credibility gain for policy reform, they hold that Poland (in 2002) *'obtain(ed) larger productivity gains from trading with CUSFTA than from trading with the EU.'* This rather startling finding brings into question the economic rationality of EU membership if Poland, without any special relationship, obtained more technological advantages from trading with the Canada and the USA free trade area (CUSFTA). This study only looked at the impact of trade with CUSFTA and with the EU with regards to trade-related technology diffusion and productivity gains, however this is an increasingly important factor in a state's economy and thus should not be overlooked.

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

Overall the welfare model explains well the rationale behind Poland's 2004 entry into the EU. Although there are significant areas where the model does not fully explain Poland's action, it must be stated that the welfare approach provides a more thorough explanation than either the security or power approach.

### ***US/Polish Declaration on Strategic Cooperation***

The *Declaration on Strategic Cooperation between the United States and Poland* signed on 20 August 2008 marked a watershed moment in primarily Poland's relations with the USA, but also Poland's relations with the rest of the world, in particular Russia. The declaration cemented in writing agreements and proposals which had been formulated in the proceeding years much to the abhorrence of Russia. While making various general references to collaboration in the fields of: political and military cooperation; information sharing; and defence industrial and research and technology cooperation; the main importance of the document lies in its explicit declaration on missile defence and joint air defence. To this end the document outlines[32] the:

1. (Consultation) on the use and development of the U.S. missile defense system,
2. cooperation involving the deployment of a U.S. Army Patriot air and missile defense battery in Poland.

The inclusion of these two points is then implicitly referred to in the document by the fact that *the United States is committed to the security of Poland and of any U.S.*

*facilities located on the territory of the Republic of Poland.*' The mentioning of US facilities decidedly increases the validity of this statement of commitment, as was surely the intended effect. The direct commitment of the US to defending both Poland and more specifically US facilities located on Polish territory raises the Polish/US defence alliance to a level beyond that of the one contained within Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty (referred to in the preamble of the declaration). While the NATO treaty states that any party to the treaty:

... will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, [33]

the use of 'commitment' in the declaration carries greater meaning. Although perhaps a question of semantics, the choice of words was undoubtedly intentional.

If the above understanding of the declaration is taken as given, then we are left with the fact that the 2008 declaration created a Polish/US bi-lateral security relationship hitherto unseen. That is: 1) Poland has opened up its territory to US military facilities and thus allowed itself to become a point of first strike[34]; 2) The US has pledged to deploy missile defence systems in a former communist country in violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty[35]; 3) The US has pledged to defend (outside of NATO) a former Warsaw Pact country.

The increased risk to Poland inherent in the delineations of the 2008 declaration presents yet another conundrum. At first inspection Poland appears to have worsened relations with its immediate neighbours on the behest of a distant ally. However, to fully analyse the situation we need to return to the security, power and welfare models.

### ***Security Model***

For the security model to be relevant Poland has to feel threatened and seek to balance the threat of its foe. As mentioned earlier this is usually in the form of either internal balancing or balancing externally with a weak nation in order to avoid hegemony. The third option is to balance with a strong power, known as bandwagoning. In the above situation we can accept that the USA is an example of a strong state (as mentioned the premier example) which leads us to the assumption that bandwagoning has taken place. However, to assess whether bandwagoning has taken place we need to assess the threat part of the model.

Poland exists on the eastern boarder of NATO, its primary security apparatus, and as such represents a possible frontier in any potential conflict. However, this would be assuming a conventional forces conflict, the likes of which



## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

NATO has only seen at its own behest in Kosovo in 1999; that conflict was limited to primarily air strikes on NATO's part and as such can not be said to be a full conventional war. For the main part of NATO's history its forces stood dormant opposite those of the Warsaw Pact. Today it is in an even more passive stance *vis à vis* its neighbours. Most of the former Warsaw Pact are either NATO members or Partnership for Peace countries. It is only Russia and its steadfast ally Belarussia who as outlined above are significant conventional threats to NATO's eastern flank and thus Poland.

That said, the declaration specifically deals with a missile threat and thus states further afield have to be considered. China[36] according to a 2010 missile threat assessment is the only other non-western state that has the ability to strike Europe with the CSS-4A having a 13000km range while Iran falls short with a range for the Shahab-3 of 1300-2500km. However, with only 3963.02 km between Warsaw and Tehran, perhaps Poland is being predictive in its threat assessment as a 2004 US report gave only a 1300km range for Iranian Shahab-3 missiles[37] and so a lot has been achieved by Iran in a relatively short time. Interestingly *China is the only country other than Russia whose land-based strategic missiles can strike the United States.*' [38] This may well explain the interest in the US in ballistic missile defence.

Missiles can then conceivably reach Poland, fired by either Iran or China. However, that does not mean they will launch them. Taking Stephan Walt's (1987:32) modification of balance of power theory into balance of threat we have to look at threat multidimensionally as opposed to only raw-power. The question occurs of whether just because China can hit Poland, it necessarily will. France and Britain share a border and both have nuclear weapons and powerful conventional forces, yet the idea of them engaging in hostility is far gone from modern politics. However, a rational actor under neo-realist theories will take a worst case scenario and assume that in the future they may wish to.

Therefore China, Iran and Russia and Belarussia conceivably threaten Poland; the first two albeit in a potential sense. By balancing with the USA Poland risks agitation: the effects of which can already be seen by the military exercises carried out on Poland's border in December 2009. In this situation balancing and bandwagoning would actually seem an irrational choice on Poland's side. China and Iran are at present interested in regional objectives, while Russia's overwhelming conventional forces would make missile defence redundant. In light of this the security approach does not provide an answer as to why Poland signed the 2008 declaration.

### *Power Model*

Power maximisation provides at first glance a more rational explanation for Poland's actions. By allying with the US and participating in a missile defence programme Poland conceivably gains the asset of a survivable second strike ability were it to develop an offensive missile capability. Further to this the security guarantees inherent in having US forces on its territory would allow Poland to act more offensively within a regional context.

However, the degree to which Washington would agree to act as a guarantor of a rampant Poland is questionable. Given that Poland's EU and NATO membership would mean that any power projection would be aimed eastward, serious possibilities would be created for US involvement in a potentially cataclysmic clash with Russia; one it has successfully avoided for over fifty years.

# Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

As a rational actor Poland must analyse the costs and benefits of any action and therefore military bandwagoning is an unlikely option for maximising power given the obvious risk involved with regards Russia. A far more likely route is one of economic and diplomatic empowerment. Therefore, the power approach, although initially looking optimistic, fails to provide a credible answer to the 2008 declaration.

## *Welfare Model*

The welfare model deals primarily with institution based relations and so I will begin with talking about the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty[39] (1990 ABM Treaty) as a form of regime/institution. In June 2000 President Bush signed a joint statement with the President of Russia[40]. The statement contained at paragraph 5:

(the Presidents) ... agree on the essential contribution of the ABM Treaty to reductions in offensive forces, and reaffirm their commitment to that Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability.

However, by 2002 the US had withdrawn from the treaty[41] after giving the 6 months notice specified in the document (given on December 13, 2001). This withdrawal opened the way for the missile defence initiative referred to in the 2008 US/Poland declaration. The original treaty had limited ballistic missile defence systems to two sets per signatory state. Each party to the agreement could have one system protecting their capital with a second one protecting their primary missile silos; this was later reduced to one per country in 1974.

Unlike the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) which was signed by 22 signatories (later rising to 30[42]), the ABM Treaty was only signed by the USSR and USA with only Russia inheriting the obligations from the USSR. This means that while Poland is a signatory party of the CFE Treaty, it had no obligations *vis à vis* the ABM Treaty. Therefore both the USA and Poland are not obliged by any treaty.

However, both are signatory members of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE was formed in August 1975 with the signing of the Final Act[43] of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In November 1990 the conference was given institutional status and became the OSCE. Although not a treaty with legal obligations the act outlines principles expected by all members. One of the principles delineated in Section 1 (b) announces that the states:

Declare (...) to take effective measures which by their scope and by their nature constitute steps towards the ultimate achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Neither Poland nor the USA has withdrawn from the OSCE and yet their actions appear to contradict the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

Aside from the implications with regards the OSCE, the development of a missile defence system does not have any direct relationship to an institution or security regime, hence it is not explainable by conventional neo-liberal institutionalism and the welfare approach. According to the welfare model were Poland or the USA to feel threatened by the possibility of a missile attack, they would seek recourse in the very institution they seem to be ignoring: that is the OSCE.

## **Summary**

This paper set out to find a common paradigm capable of predicting Polish foreign policy; in order to do this, three case studies were analysed: the 2003 Iraq War, the 2004 Polish accession to the EU and the 2008 Polish/US strategic declaration. The three paradigms used were: defensive realism, offensive realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. As has been demonstrated above, no one paradigm clearly explains all three cases, or for that matter one case study. I will now give an overview of the main findings.

# Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

The involvement of Poland in the 2003 Iraq War can be explained partially by the power model. Offensive realism gives a motivation for bandwagoning, yet fails to explain the specific choice of Iraq for power projection. The other two models analysed failed to explain Polish involvement in Iraq.

Polish entry into the European Union was able to be explained by the welfare model. However, this was not a complete explanation and left some unanswered questions. That said, neither the security nor the power model provided suitable explanations. Neo-liberal institutionalism therefore gave the best explanation.

The 2008 US/Polish strategic declaration could not be explained by any of the three paradigms. The power model provided at first a plausible explanation, however this was shown to be implausible due to the inherent risk involved.

The three case studies have not then been able to be explained adequately by the three dominant theories of international relations. In terms of prediction, a failure of any one theory to explain the three cases analysed may be excusable, however a failure of all three theories to satisfactorily explain the three examples leaves little predictive value in the paradigms. While the paradigms looked optimistic enough at the outset it can be confidently stated that rationalism as a field of IR fails to explain Polish foreign policy. Therefore an alternative must be utilised.

## Conclusion

Rationalism has been the dominant epistemological framework for IR since the field's development after the First World War. The various theories of Idealism, Realism, Structural Realism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism (to name the dominant ones) have set out to explain the world from a positivist perspective. Non or Post-positivist theories such as Gender studies or Critical Theory have been sidelined by the dominance of rationalism. Rationalism's very framework has belittled these forms as unscientific.

In recent years social constructivism[44] has gained ground in becoming a viable alternative or complementary method to rationalism's three schools. The resurgence of the English School[45] provides another alternative for analysis. Therefore while reflectivist methods were once a minority, today any analysis must draw on reflectivist principles.

To conclude this paper I would like therefore to outline another; one which will once again look at the main decisions of Polish foreign policy of the last decade, but this time analyse them using reflectivist methodology. The goal of developing a predictive model for Poland's foreign policy will remain the same.

## Bibliography

Buzan, B. 1999. *The English School as a Research Program: an overview, and a proposal for reconvening*. Paper for the Panel 'A Reconsideration of the English school: close or reconvene?' BISA Conference Manchester December 1999

Koehane, R and Nye, J. 1977. *Power and Interdependence. World Politics in Transition*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Mearsheimer, J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Sandler, T and Tschirhart, J. 1997. *Club theory: Thirty years later*. Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Schimmelfennig, F. 2003. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Walt, S. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Waltz, K. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: Random House

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

Wendt, A. 1992. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics" in *International Organization* (1992)

Wendt, A. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

[1] See Waltz (1979) or Wendt (1992)

[2] The division of neo-realism in two defensive and offensive reflects the significant divide within the school.

[3] For a detailed explanation see Waltz (1979), Mearsheimer (2001) and Koehane and Nye (1977) respectively.

[4] See <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/26/business/shock-therapy-for-poland-jolt-might-be-too-damaging.html?pagewanted=all>

[5] See the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland dated August 20<sup>th</sup> 2008.

[6] Available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/23/IMG/NR059623.pdf?OpenElement>

[7] See <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/0006/000616db.html>

[8] See [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/0303middleeast\\_byman.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/0303middleeast_byman.aspx)

[9] See [www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/17/sprj.irq.bush.transcript/](http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/17/sprj.irq.bush.transcript/)

[10] See [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3043330.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3043330.stm)

[11] See Blair's speech as [www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/mar/18/foreignpolicy.iraq1](http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/mar/18/foreignpolicy.iraq1)

[12] See <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/09/mil-030903-usia01.htm>

[13] See [www.icasualties.org/Iraq/Index.aspx](http://www.icasualties.org/Iraq/Index.aspx)

[14] See <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/feb/17/world/fg-iraqbiz17>

[15] See 'My year in Iraq' by Paul Bremer 1996

[16] See <http://www.mon.gov.pl/en/arttykul/1433>

[17] See <http://www.nato.int/SFOR/index.htm>

[18] See [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)

[19] See [http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international\\_security\\_bt/172.php](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international_security_bt/172.php)

[20] See <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>

[21] See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>

[22] See [http://www.ena.lu/poland\\_application\\_accession\\_european\\_union\\_april\\_1994-020401887.html](http://www.ena.lu/poland_application_accession_european_union_april_1994-020401887.html)

## Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

[23] See [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/omnsapir.so/pv2?PRG=CALDOC&FILE=010905&LANGUE=EN&TPV=PROV&SDOCTA=11&TXTLST=1&Type\\_Doc=FIRST&POS=1](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/omnsapir.so/pv2?PRG=CALDOC&FILE=010905&LANGUE=EN&TPV=PROV&SDOCTA=11&TXTLST=1&Type_Doc=FIRST&POS=1)

[24] See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2973738.stm>

[25] See [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/6\\_3\\_2\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/6_3_2_en.htm)

[26] For an example see footnote 23 point D : „whereas Polish farmers were the only ones in communist central Europe who managed to keep privately-owned agriculture”

[27] See [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eea/](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eea/)

[28] See [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/faq/facts/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/faq/facts/index_en.htm)

[29] See [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/funds/prord/prord\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/prord/prord_en.htm)

[30] See [http://www.ukie.gov.pl/HLP%5Cfiles.nsf/0/8893F4F73F398E82C125712D004F1509/\\$file/luty-marzec2002\\_ang.pdf?Open](http://www.ukie.gov.pl/HLP%5Cfiles.nsf/0/8893F4F73F398E82C125712D004F1509/$file/luty-marzec2002_ang.pdf?Open)

[31] See [http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/voddocs/219/418/technology\\_diffusion.pdf](http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/voddocs/219/418/technology_diffusion.pdf)

[32] See <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Declaration,on,strategic,cooperation,between,the,United,States,of,America,and,the,Republic,of,Poland,20785.html>

[33] See [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)

[34] See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/6480227/Russia-simulates-nuclear-attack-on-Poland.html>

[35] President Bush withdrew the US from the treaty in 2001.

[36] See [http://www.missilethreat.com/missiles\\_of\\_the\\_world/pageID.134/default.asp](http://www.missilethreat.com/missiles_of_the_world/pageID.134/default.asp)

[37] See <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/39332.pdf>

[38] See <http://www.nti.org/db/china/mslprog.htm>

[39] See <http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/abm/abm2.html>

[40] See <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/abmt/docs/000604-abmt-wh1.htm>

[41] See <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/abmtreaty>

[42] The break up of the USSR and Czechoslovakia accounted for the extra 8 states.

[43] See [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044_en.pdf)

[44] See Alexander Wendt *Social Theory of International Politics*. 1999

[45] See Barry Buzan *The English School as a Research Program: an overview, and a proposal for reconvening*. 1999.

# **Between Europe and America: Polish choices for the 21st Century**

Written by Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters

---

*Written by: Jeremy Wysakowski-Walters*

*Written by: Łódź University, Poland*

*Written for: Professor Obirek*

*Date written: June 2010*