



Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych
Center for International Relations

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**“The future of transatlantic relations.
Polish, German and US concepts.”**

The proceedings of the conference “The Future of Transatlantic Relations. Polish, German and US concepts” were created in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The conference, which was held on 29th June 2006, was organized by the Center for International Relations and the Euro-Atlantic Association in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Poland.

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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“The future of transatlantic relations. Polish, German and US concepts.”

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Warsaw, 29th June 2006

“The issue of transatlantic relations will remain with us for many years, as these relations, influenced by external events, undergo substantial changes” – with these words **Eugeniusz Smolar**, President of the Center for International Relations, began “The future of transatlantic relations. Polish, German and US concepts” conference (Warsaw, 29th June 2006). Eugeniusz Smolar, one of the conference hosts – alongside Bronisław Komorowski, chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Association and Stephan Raabe, director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Poland – added that a lot of energy is directed not only into understanding the character of transatlantic changes, but also into understanding where they lead us, taking into consideration the position of the United States, the US actions in the Iraqi crisis and within NATO, the reaction of the European allies and the changes within NATO.

Stephan Raabe emphasized the diversity of the factors influencing the future of transatlantic relations. In this context, he pinpointed the September 11th events as those which influenced the shape of the war on terror and the French-German anti-American coalition during the Iraqi War, which has burdened transatlantic relations. According to Stephan Raabe, the transatlantic partnership now stands before new strategic challenges, such as: NATO enlargement to include Ukraine and Georgia, the concept of a global partnership in the fight against terrorism. These shall be discussed during the NATO summit in Riga at the end of November 2006. The division of tasks and financial obligations of member states is also important, as currently they do not reflect an equal partnership.

The United States, with three times the population of Germany – said the speaker – invest twelve times as much in defence. Germans and other Europeans share the Western political success together with the Americans. This is best reflected by the victory in the Cold War. Partners on both sides of the Atlantic should have equal respect for one another, but this is lacking in mutual relations. Stephan Raabe ended his speech with the question as to which concepts could help change this situation. He also mentioned that one of the reasons for organizing the conference are the political circumstances, i.e. the government changes in Germany and Poland.

The next speaker, **Bronisław Komorowski**, chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Association and the Vice-Speaker of the Polish Sejm, stated that the USA and Europe are

not only linked through common values, such as their attachment to freedom, the conviction that human and civic rights must be respected and faith in the power of democracy. Vital political relations, especially within the security domain, are also an important link.

Poles carry a deep historical consciousness that the USA carried out very effective interventions in Europe during both WW I and WW II. At the time, Americans were guided by ideals stronger than simply their own national interests. The USA displayed a feeling of responsibility for world affairs. This was a positive issue for Poles, and until today the majority of Poles consider the role of the USA on the European continent as very important.

Simultaneously, the improvement of Polish-German relations is a great achievement of people from the “Solidarność” generation. The stronger Polish-German relations and the relations between the USA, Poland and Germany become, the greater the benefits for Europe.

After the end of the Cold War and the downfall of the USSR, some observers thought that transatlantic cooperation will become eroded due to the lack of a binding factor, which was supposedly only the common enemy. Poland never backed and still does not back this viewpoint, but rather claimed that the link lies in our common historical experience and ongoing interests. The North-Atlantic Alliance remains one of the pillars of Polish security policy. Poland would like NATO to be not only a military but also a political alliance based on common values, including solidarity – emphasized the speaker.

According to B. Komorowski, the alliance should be more than a forum for discussion between NATO and the EU. Discussions on global security should not lack the presence and views of NATO as a whole. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, i.e. collective defence and security guarantees for all members, should remain the principal premise underpinning its functioning. Simultaneously, the Alliance should be strengthened as a force for stabilizing the global situation. There is an ongoing dispute as to the scope of NATO activities, with two visions colliding: the American vision (NATO as a pillar for world security) and the French vision (NATO as a functional military tool, used mainly in Europe).

B. Komorowski continued by saying that within NATO and the EU there are two different perceptions of threats and a concurrent lack of agreement on ways of dealing with them. There is a lack of political agreement over work on a common vision of NATO aims. The tendency to replace action strategies with *ad hoc* decisions creates a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, a minimum consensus in operational issues is made possible, but on the other hand a long-term action strategy is not created. Instead of a new strategic conception, there exist only sub-strategies or partnership and transformation policies.

The change in the German cabinet and a partial return of Christian Democrats to power has lead Berlin to leave the so-called German way onto which former chancellor Gerhard Schroeder led the country, suggests B. Komorowski. The former chancellor chose an alliance with Paris and Moscow instead of one with Washington. Europe became divided in the light of these choices. This was an extremely painful and difficult issue for Poland, which had a negative impact on our relations with the entire Western world. B. Komorowski expressed his joy with the fact that Chancellor Angela Merkel is

closely attached to the transatlantic ideal. He hopes that Polish-German relations will now become intensified. Public opinion polls strongly suggest that Poles are interested in strengthening contacts with their Western neighbour. When asked with whom Poland is to cooperate most strongly, they mention Germany in first place in terms of economic issues, in second place when it comes to political issues, right behind the USA; and in third place regarding military issues, behind the USA and the United Kingdom. Recent years have brought a very substantial decrease of Polish fear vis-à-vis the Germans. The Polish-German cooperation programme should encompass common efforts to strengthen the importance of NATO and the creation of a common Eastern policy, simultaneously retaining differences with regard to the northern gas pipeline. German public opinion is divided on the issue. Poles are practically unanimous in regarding the issue as negative.

The weakening of Polish-German cooperation does not go in favour of our security, nor does it lead to an increase of our role and importance in Europe. On the contrary: the stronger Polish-German cooperation gets, the stronger Poland's role becomes in the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty.

Komorowski said that we are interested in a NATO partnership with Russia, but stressed that the processes in the country must be followed. Kiev's transatlantic path has always been a strategic chance for NATO and we must make the most of it. NATO should also closely observe the course of events in Belarus.

Prof. Stanisław Koziej, the Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of National Defence emphasized that in his opinion NATO stands before an objective need to greatly upgrade its strategic concepts with regard to the changing security landscape. After 2001, almost every international body redefined its strategic concept. The USA did so twice. Currently, the North Atlantic Alliance lacks the chance of political agreement on the matter. There exists a risk that a serious discussion on a new strategy could bring about an overly radical dispute over the various visions. Should NATO head towards the concept of a GLOBALNATO? Should it become a universal security system? Or should it remain a system of direct security for its members?

Leaving aside the strategic level, on the operational level the difficulty of obtaining a consensus for decision represents the greatest challenge. Both the example of Turkey in the Iraqi crisis and this year's crisis management exercise (CMX 2006) clearly depict this: when subjected to severe pressure and selective attacks by the global terrorist network, NATO was not able to obtain a decision on the reaction method during many days of consensus talks.

S. Koziej emphasized that for countries such as Poland, which lie on the borders of NATO's operational area, this is a problem of great strategic importance. If the Alliance were to be incapable of a quick and effective reaction to various threats, including threats of ambiguous character, greater attention should be paid to developing the capabilities of an independent, national reaction system.

What does this NATO weakness signify? It signifies the tendency to renationalize the security issue. This is not a positive observation.

Transformation-related challenges concern the military potential and the so-called transatlantic security gap (for it is not only a technological, budgetary or organizational gap). Obtaining a uniform concept may be difficult. The US advancement in research and development further widens this gap and threatens to turn it into an enormous chasm.

This imbalance is present in key domains such as IT potential (including the computerization of armed activities), strategic mobility, the effectiveness of precision arms, etc.

Prof. Koziej noticed that in the security and defence domain, the European Union, in opposition to other areas, such as finances or economy, does not offer new, more effective qualities than NATO. In the most optimistic version, it can offer the defence effectiveness and efficiency at most at the level of a “NATO plus” without the United States.

From the point of view of the strategic interests of European and transatlantic security, building two similar structures in Europe with comparable aims and capabilities seems questionable. We must seek to answer the question of how to make use of the chances created by defence cooperation within the EU and at the same time reduce the risk linked to ambiguous issues in NATO and EU cooperation. How do we avoid the potentially dangerous doubling of competences?

The so-called “Berlin - plus” formula is inadequate and ineffective. Prof. Koziej stated that one must consider a radical new solution, referred to by him as a “reverse Berlin – plus”. This would represent a division of security policy roles between EU and NATO with regard to European countries in analogy to the division which has classically been created between the two types of military command – the *provider* and the *user*. The first type represents the base commands, responsible for ongoing military maintenance, development and training, i.e. the provision of adequate capabilities for action in the case of a crisis or war. The second are the operational commands, responsible for using the armed forces, commanding them in various crisis and war situations and conditions.

According to Prof. Koziej, the EU could concentrate on the *provider* function, that is on developing the defence capacities of individual member states and optimizing the transformational defence potential that Europe needs. NATO, whereas, could concentrate on the role of the *user*, that is on conducting operations.

Is such a division of roles possible? In the future – possibly, perhaps a common structure like a NATO – EU Council should be created as a regional, Euroatlantic counterpart of the UN Security Council.

From the point of view of Polish national interest, relations with the world’s current largest power are of special importance. Poland and the United States conduct a developed strategic dialogue and operational cooperation in many international operations and crisis campaigns. One may expect automatism in mutual relations. For example, having the so-called Missile Defence Shield to cover Poland will depend on whether the agreement will benefit Polish security.

Also, Poland is not fully satisfied with the results of this cooperation in terms of modernizing our armed forces. We need better harmonization and a balance of operational cooperation with transformational processes. These two areas must mutually assist one another. We cannot have a situation where, for example, our contribution to the operations will consume funds needed for armed forces transformation, nor should the transformational delay make operational cooperation more difficult with an ally as important as the USA.

Dr Ulrich Schlie, director of Policy Planning at the German Federal Ministry, was of the opinion that America and Europe are not linked by closer ties today than during the Cold

War. These were at their lowest level at the turn of 2002-2003, during the debate on the war in Iraq. Problems in transatlantic relations arise mainly from the diverging perspectives of worldview and a different view of the countries regarding one another.

The most important answer concerns the question whether America needs Europe. The veritable challenge for current foreign policy is for the United States to perceive the need to consider the views and interests of the rest of the world.

Other challenges, according to dr Schlie, include weapons of mass destruction, the asymmetry of armed activities and fundamentalism. Europe's most important tasks include: taking over the responsibility for global issues, avoiding the North-South "trap", countering new defence issues and strengthening the rule of law.

Within the NATO framework, Europeans should take part in engagement operations rather than only stabilization missions. Germany, similarly as many other nations, cares about improving the quality of cooperation between NATO and the EU.

Large expectations are put before the NATO summit in Riga. The main discussion points are: strategic dialogue within the alliance, NATO enlargement, global partnership, guidelines for future NATO activity, transformation, NATO missions and training operations.

NATO should in principle be open to receive other European democracies, as the alliance represents a philosophy of transferring stability to various world regions. Germany supports the enlargement process, but candidate countries must make an effort to fulfil the membership criteria.

According to dr Schlie, it is also important to develop a network of ties with African states on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. A new security partnership with key countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan must also be considered.

The German government position on the issue is clear: it is mainly interested in a constructive development of a strategic EU/NATO partnership, strengthening international security through the European security strategy system, improving military and civil cooperation, taking over EU responsibilities in Kosovo.

NATO must notice conflicts in real time, where and when they happen. In order to act and effectively prevent conflicts, NATO needs, according to dr Schlie, effective and cohesive cooperation in the international framework and in the framework of a bilateral cooperation between member states. Since the Cold War, the alliance has undergone substantial changes and especially during the Prague summit it became aware of its decreasing ability to adapt to the new reality. In dr Schlie's opinion, there should be no room for taboo in discussions on improving the strategic dialogue within the alliance. All political, diplomatic, military and civil instruments at the disposal of NATO must be integrated and used in a coordinated manner.

NATO should also strengthen its readiness and ability for a closer, complementing cooperation with other international organizations. It is well known that NATO and the EU warrant security in the EU and its member states, thus they should not compete with each other but mutually complement themselves, as they possess different profiles and competences.

NATO possesses a host of one-of-a-kind political and military instruments, as depicted by the complex military operations aimed at controlling crisis situations, which demand special political and military structures for peacekeeping and stabilization

missions. In this aspect, the European Union will not be able to measure itself with the Transatlantic Alliance for a long time to come.

Germany will try to improve relations between both organizations in such a way so as to lead to a more intensive cooperation and better results, which would benefit both transatlantic and European security. Cooperation can be improved in the following dimensions: early political consultations in crisis management centres, international terrorism, civil defence, proliferation prevention, civil-military cooperation, broadening “Berlin – plus” formula instruments, defence planning, trainings, exercises and certification of military standards.

Dr Ulrich Schlie expressed the opinion that the dialogue between the European Union and NATO must be improved on every level. This is why special attention should be paid to a more effective cooperation between government bodies, which would possess appropriate decision-making competences allowing for the elimination of potential deadlocks.

A rotational participation of EU High Representatives or the NATO Secretary General at each meeting would have to be institutionalized. In short, work must be put into the further harmonized development of transatlantic relations.

Dr Michael Ruehle, Head of the NATO Department of Policy Planning and Speechwriting, listed a series of problems facing the world today: terrorism, proliferation, weapons of mass destruction. Currently it is very difficult to create a feeling of solidarity among NATO member states because NATO missions are less and less related to the daily life of citizens. Due to this, in the era of global threats, it is necessary to create a new security consensus. In dr Ruehle’s opinion, there exist the following domains in which a consensus can be achieved:

- Transatlantic security should be considered in the functional and not only in the geographical aspect;
- NATO military forces should shift the attention of activities from territorial defence to actions in crisis areas;
- The development of cooperation between individual institutions (NATO-EU, NATO-UNO, NGOs) is necessary;
- The Middle East should be included in the transatlantic dialogue;
- There is a need for an intensified dialogue within NATO and with the European Union and the USA in terms of energy policy.

According to dr Ruehle, certain issues are currently arising in which obtaining a consensus between member countries is especially difficult. Many countries do not accept the fight against international terrorism as a key foreign and security policy point. Prevention and deterrence issues are also extremely important for the development of transatlantic relations.

NATO efforts to strengthen relations with the UNO are heading in the right direction. An important signal of the intensified transatlantic dialogue is the rapprochement between the USA and the EU against the threat posed by the development of the Iranian nuclear programme. The USA and the EU reacted unanimously and very quickly to the issue of proliferation in Asia and they managed to get China and Russia involved in talks.

In the last part of his speech, dr Ruehle concentrated on NATO-Russia relations. From the American perspective, Russian development in recent years creates a feeling of threat, and has led to a more critical stance of the USA. The USA has abandoned certain hopes and illusions regarding Russia. Unfortunately, NATO countries have got used to the thought that the “semi-democratic” system will not decline for some time to come. It is not know which structures will remain active until Putin’s successor comes to power. The European Union must also redefine its attitude towards Russia.

Regarding Georgian and Ukrainian NATO accession, dr Ruehle stated that these issues cannot be directly transposed onto experiences arising from the accession of the Baltic States into the alliance.

Comments to the above speeches were presented by: Matthew Kamiński from the *Wall Street Journal* in Paris, *Thomas Gutschker* from the *Rheinischer Merkur* magazine in Bonn and Paweł Wroński from *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Many participants of the conference, attended by over sixty people, also took part in the discussion.

Center for International Relations

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The Center for International Relations (CIR) is an independent, non-governmental think-tank. The Center's primary objective is to monitor the current international situation, giving special attention to Poland's foreign policy and to countries of strategic importance to its execution. CIR is especially focused on issues dealing with European integration, transatlantic relations and the relations with our neighbors, notably Germany, Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus. CIR's activity is of an analytic and educational nature. Over the last decade we have managed to build up a forum which has allowed for serious debate concerning foreign policy. In this way we propagate in Poland a modern view of international relations. Towards this end CIR prepares reports and analyses, holds conferences and seminars, publishes books and articles, carries out research projects and organizes public debate. The Center cooperates with many leading research institutions dealing in foreign affairs, worldwide. The President of the CIR is Mr. Eugeniusz Smolar.

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