

Executive Summary Backgrounder

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The Polish–American Relationship: Deepening and Strengthening the Alliance

Sally McNamara

In 2005, President George W. Bush asserted that “Poland has been a fantastic ally.” Since its rapid democratization and accession to NATO, Poland has shared the burden of addressing the West’s most pressing international challenges. Poland has supported America’s global leadership role and has helped to expand security in unstable and unfriendly parts of the world. Wherever America is doing good in the world, Poland is not far behind.

As one of the four leading countries in the coalition of the willing, Poland has been present in Iraq from the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom and continues to participate in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Poland maintains 900 troops in Iraq and has committed an additional 900 soldiers to fight in Afghanistan. When fighting for freedom and liberty, America has a trusted ally in Poland; and as a medium-sized European power with ambitions to project power globally, Poland is a friend worth having.

Tensions in the Relationship. However, as with the rapid maturation of any relationship, tensions have emerged. It is essential that both sides recognize that significant sources of tension exist and have the potential to become longer-term conflicts if left unaddressed.

To project power internationally, Poland must have a modern military that is able to participate fully in global affairs. Its military modernization program has not, however, been without problems, especially in the context of Polish–American rela-

tions. A source of continued diplomatic angst on the part of the Poles is the U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program, which is heavily skewed in favor of less helpful partners in the war on terrorism. For its part, the Administration believes that Poland has already received considerable U.S. financing for military modernization through an enormous program of security assistance.

Under the current Visa Waiver Program (VWP), most visitors from 27 partner nations—primarily members of the European Union (EU)—are allowed to enter the United States for up to 90 days without a visa if they have valid passports from their countries. Poland is not in the VWP, and this has proved contentious for two countries that share such warm bilateral relations.

With the advent of easier travel within Europe, the Polish government faces a serious task in convincing Poles that the transatlantic alliance is at least as relevant as the EU to everyday life and its national interest. Yet Poland should be wary of Brussels’ gravitational pull because closer ties with Brussels will come at the expense of its relationship with the U.S. and, ultimately, its national interest.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
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Strengthening the Relationship. The Polish–American relationship will require hard-edged, decisive leadership on both sides of the Atlantic to take it forward in a positive manner. There are certainly areas for further cooperation.

One of the strongest ties that bind the Polish–American relationship is mutual support for freedom and liberty throughout the world. The absence of national caveats for Polish troops in combat, unlike the majority of European forces in Afghanistan, illustrates that Poland is not just an ally of America, but a fighting one. This security relationship has proved mutually beneficial on a multitude of levels—strategically, economically, and diplomatically.

Under the current direction of Polish foreign policy, the U.S. invariably benefits from Polish support in a number of areas pertaining to freedom and security, including the promotion of democracy in Europe's near East. To maintain a working relationship with the United States that can successfully pursue a freedom and security agenda, Poland must continue to resist pressure for deeper integration into EU structures such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy and must commit to the transatlantic security alliance, wholeheartedly approaching negotiations regarding the most cost-effective way to manage international missile defense.

What the Administration and Congress Should Do. Specifically, the Administration and Congress should:

- **Prioritize continued close political and military cooperation with Poland.** Through reorientation of the Foreign Military Financing program and extension of the International Military Education and Training Program, the U.S. would ensure that Poland continues the comprehensive modernization of its military in line with the U.S.–Polish Defense Transformation Initiative, which would be propitious to U.S. interests.
- **Reemphasize NATO's primacy as the premier security alliance in Europe.** Washington must

resist any plans to divide, marginalize, or undermine the NATO alliance, especially EU plans for a European Army or any separate military identity independent of NATO decision making.

- **Work with Poland to broadly explore all options on ballistic missile defense.** The United States should continue to pursue national missile defense and undertake the most cost-effective options to maintain its security and that of its allies.
- **Increase people-to-people exchanges between the U.S. and Poland by revising the Visa Waiver Program.** People-to-people exchanges are an important element of public diplomacy, and an updated Visa Waiver Program must not exclude key allies like Poland.
- **Arrange for President Bush to make an official state visit to Warsaw sooner rather than later.** Top-level bilateral contacts are critical and especially important to the current Polish government in building trust and cooperation.

Conclusion. Poland is one of a handful of EU member states that understand the long-term challenges posed by the war on terrorism and has not shied away from the responsibilities facing modern nation-states and the international community. The Bush Administration should take active steps to tighten the strategic partnership with Poland, and Warsaw should seek to maximize its relationship with Washington. Poland is a relatively new player on the world stage and has some way to go before realizing its potential as a European power. The United States can help and should reciprocate at least some measure of the political capital invested by Poland in upholding transatlantic interests on the Continent.

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Background

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The Polish–American Relationship: Deepening and Strengthening the Alliance

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In 2005, President George W. Bush asserted that “Poland has been a fantastic ally.”¹ Looking at Warsaw’s overall contribution to America’s foreign policy priorities since 9/11, this assessment accurately reflects the profoundly shared values and common interests that continue to bind the Polish–American relationship. Since its rapid democratization and accession to NATO—due in no small part to British–American leadership—Poland has helped to assume the burden of addressing the West’s most pressing international challenges. Poland has supported America’s global leadership role and has helped to expand security in unstable and unfriendly parts of the world. Wherever America is doing good in the world, Poland is not far behind.

As one of the four leading countries in the coalition of the willing, alongside Britain and Australia, Poland has been present in Iraq from the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom’s major combat operations and continues to participate in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Poland maintains 900 troops in Iraq² and has committed an additional 900 troops to fight the insurgency in Afghanistan, laudably without national caveats.³ When fighting for freedom and liberty, America has a trusted ally in Poland; and as a medium-sized European power with ambitions to project power globally, Poland is a friend worth having.

However, as with the rapid maturation of any relationship, tensions have emerged. The relationship is no longer about membership, but about bold new foreign

Talking Points

- Washington and Warsaw must reemphasize NATO’s primacy as the premier security alliance in Europe and resist attempts to divide, marginalize, or undermine the NATO alliance, especially EU plans for a European Army.
- Poland should continue to stand up to pressure for deeper integration into EU structures, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and resist the temptation to compromise on key elements of national sovereignty during the revived negotiations over the European Constitution.
- Congress should include Poland in current plans to reform the Visa Waiver Program. Poland’s continued exclusion from the VWP would be a diplomatic affront to a faithful ally.
- Poland and the United States should continue to work together to explore all options on ballistic missile defense.

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policy challenges. The Polish–American relationship will require hard-edged, decisive leadership on both sides of the Atlantic to take it forward in a positive manner. There are certainly areas for further cooperation, both in advancing a freedom and security agenda on Poland’s eastern border and in advancing this agenda in the wider world. It is important that America takes active steps to embrace a new era in Polish–American relations to strengthen and deepen the relationship. It is likewise important that Poland responds accordingly.

Tensions in the Relationship

Maintaining the allied relationship is not only mutually beneficial, but also necessary for constructive relations on a number of fronts—diplomatically, militarily, economically, and politically. Although Poland and America share warm bilateral relations, it is essential that both sides recognize that significant sources of tension exist and have the potential to become longer-term conflicts if they are left unaddressed.

Security and Defense. As part of its NATO ambitions, and to participate fully in global affairs, the Polish government committed its military to root-and-branch modernization to create a more mobile, capable, and interoperable force. To project power internationally, Poland must have a modern military that is fit for this purpose. It is in both American and Polish interests that this happens as quickly and successfully as possible.

A good start has been made, culminating in the recent purchase of 48 F-16 combat jets from U.S. defense company Lockheed Martin. The economic and strategic benefits of this agreement are enormous for both sides. The \$3.5 billion deal repre-

sents Eastern Europe’s largest-ever defense order and a significant boost for the U.S. industrial defense base.⁴ Strategically, it ensures greater interoperability at a time when interoperability has become essential to executing global engagements. As a NATO member with bold aspirations, Poland is keenly committed to continuing its military’s aggressive transformation into a lean, effective fighting force.

This modernization program has not, however, been without problems, especially in the context of Polish–American relations. A source of continued diplomatic angst on the part of the Poles is the U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program.

The FMF is a “critical foreign policy tool for promoting U.S. interests around the world.” It aims to ensure that coalition partners are equipped and trained to share joint missions and that key allies have sufficient defense capabilities to work in interoperable missions. The FMF has proved critical in the steady and long-term modernization of Poland’s military. Among the program’s current objectives are “improv[ing] the military capabilities of key friendly countries to contribute to the international crisis response operations, including peacekeeping and humanitarian crises,” and “promot[ing] bilateral, regional and multilateral coalition efforts, notably in the global war on terrorism.” Yet more than 85 percent of this \$4.7 billion budget goes to the Near East. Estimates for fiscal year 2007 indicate that Poland will receive a trivial \$30 million of the FMF, just 1/43rd of the assistance that Egypt will receive (\$1.3 billion).⁵

Poland believes that it has proved itself to be a solid and reliable ally of the United States. Poland is

1. The White House, “President and Polish President Discuss International Policy,” February 9, 2005, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050209-4.html (February 16, 2007).
2. Michael E. O’Hanlon and Jason H. Campbell, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, “Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq,” The Brookings Institution, February 12, 2007, p. 19, at www.brookings.edu/jfp/saban/iraq/index.pdf (February 16, 2007).
3. Bonnie Malkin and agencies, “Poland to Send More Troops to Afghanistan,” *Guardian Unlimited*, September 14, 2006, at www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,,1872125,00.html (February 16, 2007).
4. “Poland Picks Lockheed F-16 in \$3.5B Deal,” *Aviation Industry News*, December 27, 2002, at www.f-16.net/news_article698.html (February 16, 2007).
5. U.S. Department of State, “Request by Appropriation Account: Military Assistance,” 2007, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/60649.pdf (February 16, 2007).

providing additional troops for the Afghanistan mission and maintaining its operation in Iraq. This has weighed heavily on treasury coffers and has significantly affected military modernization and transformation initiatives. Polish officials have indicated that Poland cannot reasonably be expected to finance modernization of its military and simultaneously maintain a significant presence in Iraq.

As former Polish Defense Minister Radek Sikorski stated in 2005, “It makes sense for U.S. military assistance to flow to countries that are actually being helpful in the war on terror.”⁶ Poland believes that some reorientation will be needed if the FMF is to achieve its stated 2007 goal of “increasing Poland’s capacity to participate in coalition efforts, and achieve a military modernization and reform plan”⁷

Another source of tension in the Polish–American security alliance is the question of risk and reward. Warsaw feels that it has invested a huge amount of political and financial capital in the Iraq mission without significant reciprocity for its loyalty and steadfastness. Sikorski explained that his government has “seen this mission all along as an investment in the Polish–U.S. security relationship.”⁸ For Poland, this reciprocity should be more forthcoming.⁹

For its part, the Administration believes that the allocation of a majority of FMF funds to the Near East will provide for greater regional stability by assisting friendly and moderate governments in a deeply unstable area. It also believes that through an enormous program of security assistance, Poland has already received considerable U.S. financing for military modernization, including an additional \$100

million Solidarity Initiative grant for military assistance in 2005.¹⁰ In 2003, Boguslaw Winid, then Deputy Chief of Mission at the Polish Embassy in Washington and now Deputy Defense Minister, outlined the extent of U.S. military assistance to Poland since 1995: \$4 billion in FMF grants and loans; \$171 million in Foreign Military Sales (additional to the \$3.5 billion F-16 fighter aircraft deal); \$94 million in Excess Defense Articles; \$48.5 million in Peacekeeping Operations Funding; and \$15 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding.¹¹ The United States believes its support has already been considerable and is appropriate for a NATO member with global aspirations.

Poland has also dropped below the NATO benchmark of spending 2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on defense¹² at a time when it wants greater power projection around the world. The United States expects Poland, both as a member of NATO and the European Union and as a medium-sized Continental power, to invest in its capabilities and forces of its own accord, independent of increased American financial support.

These issues have long been diplomatic pressure points and require serious attention if the allied relationship is to continue in this vital area.

Visa Waiver Scheme. Under the current Visa Waiver Program (VWP), most visitors from 27 partner nations—primarily EU members—are allowed to enter the United States for up to 90 days without a visa if they have valid passports from their countries. Poland is not in the VWP, and this has proved contentious for two countries that share such otherwise warm bilateral relations. The current list of 27 also includes countries such as Andorra and Brunei,

6. Radek Sikorski, “Defense Reform in Europe: The Case of Poland,” American Enterprise Institute *European Outlook*, August 10, 2005, at www.aei.org/publications/pubID.22985.filter.all/pub_detail.asp (February 16, 2007).

7. U.S. Department of State, “Request by Appropriation Account.”

8. Judy Dempsey, “Poland Will Set Own Course, Defense Chief Vows,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 25, 2006, at www.ihf.com/articles/2006/01/24/news/poland.php (February 16, 2007).

9. Bradley Graham, “Poland Links Bid for U.S. Aid to Presence in Iraq,” *The Washington Post*, December 10, 2005, p. A13, at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/09/AR2005120901816.html (February 16, 2007).

10. The White House, “President and Polish President Discuss International Policy.”

11. Boguslaw Winid, “The International Perspective,” Embassy of Poland, October 29, 2003.

12. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO–Russia Compendium of Financial and Economic Data Relating to Defence,” June 9, 2005, p. 7, at www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p050609.pdf (February 16, 2007).

which have less obvious relationships with the United States.

The Visa Waiver Program began in 1988, and many of its elements reflect a program of the Cold War era, not of the post-9/11 era. The primary reason for Poland's exclusion from the VWP is that Poland's nonimmigrant U.S. visa refusal rate exceeds the statutory 3 percent threshold by a large margin. The Polish government sees the VWP as outdated, self-perpetuating, and ineffective and as a slight to an allied power. In fact, the measures necessary to ensure a safer post-9/11 travel environment go beyond the current VWP, which requires reforms to make it more relevant and more effective, as pointed out by a 2006 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.¹³

The GAO report also substantiates the VWP's considerable value in encouraging legitimate travel and commerce. At a time of growing anti-Americanism in Poland,¹⁴ people-to-people exchange is something that the U.S. should be encouraging with strong allied powers, not limiting.

With Poland's accession to the European Union, visa-free leisure and business travel to other EU member states such as the United Kingdom (U.K.) and Ireland is an option that significant numbers of Poles have already taken up.¹⁵ James Jay Carafano, Senior Research Fellow in National Security at The Heritage Foundation, argues that the benefits accruing from person-to-person exchange among foreign

travelers and students in the U.S. is irreproducible by legislators.¹⁶ As Radek Sikorski observed in congressional testimony in 2003, "Today, thousands of Europeans go on EU-sponsored scientific exchanges and only dozens come to the U.S. Unless this trend is reversed, therefore, the next generations of East European will become more Euro-centric."¹⁷

While this may not be the making of a foreign policy crisis, the VWP is a significant irritant that continues to plague progress in the relationship. The time, bureaucracy, and costs involved in applying for a U.S. tourist or business visa are extensive and seriously discourage legitimate Polish visitors to the United States. As *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby says, "The whole ordeal strikes Poles as overbearing, insulting and unfair."¹⁸

The Gravitational Pull of Brussels

Sikorski's 2003 congressional testimony foretells a story that is unfolding more rapidly than first imagined. EU accession has opened a wealth of travel and work opportunities to Poles, who are taking advantage of these opportunities by the thousands. More than a quarter of a million Poles have emigrated to the U.K. alone since EU accession.¹⁹ The crucial EU pillar of people's freedom of movement as workers has encouraged Poland's young people and working classes to explore other horizons—and they are not American.

It is worth noting that the accession treaties provided the EU-15 member states with the option of

13. Jess T. Ford, Director, International Affairs and Trade, U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Stronger Action Needed to Access and Mitigate Risks in the Visa Waiver Program," testimony before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Homeland Security, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, September 7, 2006, at www.gao.gov/new.items/d061090t.pdf (February 16, 2007).

14. Nicole Speulda, "Documenting the Phenomenon of Anti-Americanism," Princeton Project on National Security, 2005, at www.wps.princeton.edu/ppns/papers/speulda.pdf (February 16, 2007).

15. BBC News, "'Nearly 600,000' New EU Migrants," August 22, 2006, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/5273356.stm (February 16, 2007).

16. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Laura Keith, "President's Proposed Visa Waiver Program Reforms Strengthen Fight Against Terror," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1268, November 30, 2006, at www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/upload/wm_1268.pdf.

17. Radek Sikorski, "The Future of Transatlantic Relations," testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, June 17, 2003, at www.aei.org/publications/filter.all.pubID.17741/pub_detail.asp (February 16, 2007).

18. Jeff Jacoby, op-ed, "How to Offend 'a Fantastic Ally,'" *Townhall.com*, July 22, 2005, at www.townhall.com/columnists/JeffJacoby/2005/07/22/how_to_offend_a_fantastic_ally (February 16, 2007).

19. BBC News, "'Nearly 600,000' New EU Migrants."

applying interim controls on access to labor markets by accession state workers for up to seven years. In the end, just Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom granted unrestricted work rights to Polish workers and others from the EU-10 accession states upon their full membership in 2004.²⁰ As the other EU-15 member states gradually provide labor market access, competition for Polish emigrants will increase. By 2011, Polish workers will have the right to unrestricted labor markets in all 27 European member states.

The Polish government continues to face a serious task in convincing its citizens that the transatlantic alliance is at least as relevant as the EU to everyday life and its national interest. One of the most successful public diplomacy efforts in modern history is the blue EU flag that compulsorily adorns hundreds of new roads, bridges, buildings, and programs, denoting that they were possible only with assistance from the European Union. New smooth roads and small-business grants are highly visible and very real examples of the benefits of EU membership.

Poles are much less likely to see equal value in F-16 aircraft in their everyday lives. The German Marshall Fund's 2006 Transatlantic Trends survey revealed that support for NATO among Poles had fallen from 64 percent in 2002 to 48 percent in 2006,²¹ which directly correlates to both the Iraq War and accession to the EU—a dangerous combination of simultaneously declining support for the U.S. and increasing support for Brussels.

The EU's careful handling of the Russian beef row in December 2006, during which individual EU member states resisted Russian efforts to sign bilateral deals over meat exports and circumvent Russia's

year-old ban on Polish beef, demonstrated to Poland that the EU takes Poland's interests seriously.²² The agriculture lobby represents a powerful alliance in Poland, with almost a fifth of the workforce employed in agriculture.²³ Billion-euro subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy have proved highly lucrative for Poland's farmers: Subsidies are high, and prices are higher still. European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mariann Fischer Boel went to Warsaw in 2005 and reported that average farm incomes rose by 74 percent in Poland in 2004, stating: "This shows the huge benefits to Polish farmers of EU membership. I am confident that this improvement will continue as EU supports are phased in and more producers make use of Rural Development funding."²⁴ The EU is showing Poles the color of its money and making "state" visits to express Poland's important place in the European project.

Yet Poland should be wary of Brussels' gravitational pull, because closer ties with the EU will come at the expense of its relationship with the U.S. and, ultimately, its national interest. In the worldview of EU elites, international protocols and institutions will make the big public policy decisions for individual member states, and the United Nations will be the sole arbiter of the use of force.

This loss of sovereignty is not something that makes for a strong coalition ally. Instead, Poland must pursue a relationship with the European Union that is based on free trade and voluntary intergovernmental cooperation. The 31 chapters of the *acquis communautaire* have laid the groundwork for fundamental centralization and integration into the European project by accession states. Poland must now use its growing power and political clout to determine the relationship that it wants with

20. "Poland: No Threat to EU Labor Market," *The Warsaw Voice*, January 16, 2005.

21. Transatlantic Trends, "Transatlantic Trends Key Findings 2006," at www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2006_TT_Key%20Findings%20FINAL.pdf (February 16, 2007).

22. EurActive.com, "EU-25 Backs Poland in Beef Row with Russia," December 18, 2006, at www.euractiv.com/en/trade/eu-25-backs-poland-beef-row-russia/article-160521 (February 16, 2007).

23. BBC News, "Q&A: Common Agricultural Policy," December 2, 2005, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4407792.stm> (February 16, 2007).

24. Mariann Fischer Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, "Poland and the Common Agricultural Policy," press conference, Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, January 5, 2005, at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/1> (February 16, 2007).

Europe, for this will surely determine its relationship with Washington. If Poland fights for a relationship with the EU along the lines of Margaret Thatcher's seminal Bruges speech vision, Poland will invariably maintain a healthy bridge across the Atlantic too.²⁵ Indeed, throughout the 1990s, Poland invigorated Western economic and security structures with its enthusiasm, assertiveness, and strong defense of nationhood. Now is no time to "go wobbly."

If Poland sacrifices significant additional amounts of sovereignty to the European Union, this will inevitably damage the transatlantic relationship. The Gaullist vision of a European superstate is not only a strategic threat to the U.S., but also a direct contradiction to constructive foreign relations between America and its "half-sovereign" allies.

Making the Polish–American Alliance Stronger

Poland and the United States have every chance not only to maintain the U.S.–Polish alliance, but also to strengthen it in such a way as to contribute significantly to U.S. national security and the shared foreign policy priorities of both countries.

Winning the Global War on Terrorism. Polish and American foreign policy in Europe is heavily focused on security. In fact, one of the strongest ties that bind the Polish–American relationship is the mutual support for freedom and liberty throughout the world. The absence of national caveats for Polish troops in combat, which have excluded the majority of European forces from zones of violent conflict in Afghanistan, illustrates that Poland is not just an ally, but a fighting one.

In fact, Poland was no Johnny-come-lately to the war in Iraq. It had long allied itself with the U.S. position that Iraq must comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions or face the consequences. Its admirable position as the third largest European contributor of troops at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom was a significant achievement.

This security relationship has proved mutually beneficial on a multitude of levels. As a key European power and high-profile ally of the United States, Poland does not consider itself immune from the terror that Islamic extremists have wrought on Madrid, London, and the European mainland since 9/11.

Strategically, both Europe and America have significant vested interests in defeating terrorists at home and abroad.

Economically, Poland has enjoyed the fruits of its labors and intends to use its new-found international status and presence in the Middle East to build economic ties with the Arab world and pursue a more internationalist economic policy.

Diplomatically, Poland's steadfast support for U.S. global leadership indicates a positive direction for Polish foreign policy. Poles are attuned to the importance of the U.S. security guarantee. They know that the Franco–German vision for the future of Europe is inimical not only to their interests, but also to the interests of Continental Europe more broadly. A deeply integrated Europe with little or no power at the member-state level will be driven by anti-American forces that will turn Europe into America's rival, not its partner. For Poland, this is a bridge too far. Poland remembers that it was President Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that stared down the Soviet Union just 20 years ago.

Poland undertook its Iraq mission with resolute determination, even in the face of serious pressure from the European Union. During the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom, EU leaders did not just critique U.S. foreign policy, they obstructed it. EU candidate countries were threatened with delays in their accession for supporting the war,²⁶ but Poland continued to act with honor and courage. The Poles have commanded a 6,000-strong multinational division in south-central Iraq²⁷ and helped train the Eighth Division of the new Iraqi Army.²⁸ Although 19 Polish troops have been killed in Iraq,²⁹ Poland

25. Margaret Thatcher, "Speech to the College of Europe ('The Bruges Speech')," September 20, 1988, at www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=107332 (February 16, 2007).

26. Adam Daniel Rotfeld, "Primum Non Nocere," *The Polish Voice*, April 4, 2003, at www.warsawvoice.pl/view/1892 (February 16, 2007).

has remained determined to expand its participation in the stabilization mission by providing training and counseling. Polish–American cooperation in the war on terrorism means that they are also equally committed to making Afghanistan a success.

As with many new NATO allies, providing the “right incentives”³⁰ has yielded substantial rewards from Poland in assisting with America’s number one foreign policy priority, and that must continue to be the case. There is now cross-party consensus in Poland that Poland should spend 2 percent of GDP on defense to ensure modernization and should move toward a volunteer military by 2012, ending the current system of 12-month conscription for all males (with a few exceptions).³¹

Poland knows that freedom and liberty come at a price. It has sent peacekeeping troops to other unstable parts of the world, such as the Golan Heights and the Congo, and continues to support America’s overall geostrategic vision, performing tasks ranging from humanitarian assistance to stability operations. Poland is a true ally within the NATO alliance and broader international community.

Committing to the NATO alliance is important—not just financially, but also politically. As a tried and tested security bond, the NATO alliance is at the forefront of Poland’s foreign policy decisions and statecraft. For Poland, NATO is really the only security game in town. Despite the lofty dream of a European Defense Identity and European Army, the EU lacks the financial and infrastructure capacity to do the heavy lifting in the event of a serious military threat. As Eugeniusz Smolar, president of the Warsaw-based Centre for International Relations, put it, “For Poland, security comes from America and development comes from Europe.”³²

Any attempt by Brussels to marginalize the U.S. and NATO on the international stage will have serious repercussions. Poland is doing a fine job of avoiding this situation and needs to continue to do so.

The rewards of even minor reorientation of America’s FMF, possibly through extension of the IMET Program, should not be underestimated either. Coming at a point when “old Europe” and America have endured some dreadful diplomatic relations, it behooves the Administration to encourage unfaltering “new” EU allies to ensure that transatlantic interests are not forgotten on the Continent. IMET has been critical to the development of personal and professional relationships among key military personnel and to providing for English language training and interoperability. Therefore, prioritizing Poland in the IMET Program makes sense.

The Freedom and Security Agenda. During her official visit to Warsaw in 1988, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher noted: “Freedom once secured, incurs responsibility. Freedom is not an invitation to indulgence. It demands a serious response and requires a continuing effort to safeguard it.”³³ Poland has taken Lady Thatcher at her word.

Poland is virtually alone in explaining Eastern Europe and Eurasia to the European Union and almost single-handedly has pushed democracy promotion in Europe’s near East to the top of the EU agenda. Poland will be the key to any U.S. policy with regard to Georgia, Ukraine, and/or Belarus. The American–Polish relationship will continue to advance, thanks to common efforts to advance regional cooperation at these “frontiers of freedom.”³⁴

This is where Poland also has a golden opportunity to determine the relationship that it wants with Brussels—and is indeed doing so. As opposed to the cen-

27. Brian Knowlton, “Bush to Seek More Aid for Poland; Ally’s Pullout Plans Go Unmentioned,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 10, 2005.

28. Graham, “Poland Links Bid for U.S. Aid to Presence in Iraq.”

29. O’Hanlon and Campbell, “Iraq Index,” p. 8.

30. Sikorski, “Defense Reform in Europe.”

31. Dempsey, “Poland Will Set Own Course.”

32. Robert Anderson, Jan Cienski, Christopher Condon, and Stefan Wagstyl, “Central Europe Casts Doubts Aside to Welcome US Embrace,” *The Financial Times*, June 21, 2006, at <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?id=060621000820> (February 16, 2007).

33. Margaret Thatcher, “Press Conference in Warsaw,” November 4, 1988, at www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=107372 (February 16, 2007).

tralizing instincts favored by Brussels' elites, Poland tends to support a wider union of independently trading nation-states maintaining full freedom in national affairs. Polish President Lech Kaczynski continues to pursue EU policies in this vein.³⁵

Poland is working closely with the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Sweden in advocating full EU membership for Ukraine, as opposed to mere partnership status.³⁶ The Polish government has promised a referendum on adoption of the single European currency in 2010, in spite of a binding obligation to join the euro zone under its accession treaty—much to the chagrin of Brussels.³⁷ Poland has also been critical of large parts of the deeply integrationist European Constitution, especially plans to remove national sovereignty in making foreign policy.³⁸

To maintain a working relationship with the United States that enables it to pursue a freedom and security agenda successfully, Poland must remain a sovereign power. Poland needs to continue to resist pressure for deeper integration into EU structures such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and must not be tempted to compromise on key elements of sovereignty during revived negotiations over the European Constitution this year.

Poland may be tempted to negotiate away some degree of sovereignty in exchange for an EU energy security guarantee.³⁹ This would be a mistake. Poland is understandably unnerved by Russian–German plans for the North European Gas Pipeline, but Poland's energy security will not be guaranteed by tying itself closer to Germany within the Euro-

pean Union. As Ariel Cohen, Senior Research Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Affairs at The Heritage Foundation, argues, “Diversification of supply is essential for market stability, competitive practices and pricing, and breaking up the monopolistic hold that Russia currently has over oil and gas transportation infrastructure between Russia, Europe, and Central Asia.” Cohen recommends a number of measures including alternative pipeline proposals, alternate methods for the transit of natural gas, and the research and development of alternative market-based energy sources.⁴⁰ Deeper European integration is not the answer to Poland's energy worries.

Under the current direction of Polish foreign policy, the United States invariably benefits from Polish support in a number of areas pertaining to freedom and security. During his annual foreign policy address to the Sejm in 2006, Foreign Minister Stefan Meller announced that Poland will “actively contribute” to initiatives designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, support allies and partners in finding a solution to the Iranian nuclear problem, and press for U.N. reform.⁴¹ These are all areas where Poland and the United States can work together.

A major area for future U.S.–Polish collaboration will be a renewed trade agenda. An enhanced trading environment in Poland, with a reinvigorated trading relationship with the United States, will be integral to advancing the freedom agenda within Poland and beyond its borders. As Margaret Thatcher told Warsaw in 1988, “Political and economic freedom are interlinked, indivisible and mutually reinforcing.”⁴²

34. Daniel Fried, “European and Eurasian Affairs,” U.S. Department of State, at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0906/ijpe/europe.htm> (February 16, 2007).

35. Lech Kaczynski, “We Are Very Vigilant When It Comes to the Polish–German Relationship,” interview with Christian Neef and Jan Puhl, *Der Spiegel*, March 8, 2006, at www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,404675,00.html (February 16, 2007).

36. Natalia Leshchenko, “EU Open to Stronger Ties with Ukraine,” *Global Insight*, January 23, 2007.

37. Agence France-Presse, “Poland Could Adopt Euro by 2012–2013: Central Bank Chief,” February 5, 2007.

38. Kaczynski, “We Are Very Vigilant When It Comes to the Polish–German Relationship.”

39. “Polish Negotiators Start ‘Secret’ Consultations on EU Constitution in Berlin,” *BBC Monitoring Europe*, February 1, 2007.

40. Ariel Cohen, Ph.D., “The North European Gas Pipeline Threatens Europe's Energy Security,” *Heritage Foundation Background* No. 1980, October 26, 2006, pp. 8 and 9–10, at www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/upload/bg_1980.pdf.

41. Stefan Meller, “Minister's Annual Address 2006,” address to the Sejm, February 15, 2006, at www.mfa.gov.pl/Policy,2155.html (February 16, 2007).

Poland needs an improved trade relationship globally. Its annual growth rate lags behind that of its Baltic neighbors primarily because of its lack of foreign investment.⁴³ That will change only when serious economic reform takes place to make the regime more predictable, more open, less regulated, and less statist. Foreign ownership of companies must be embraced, property rights must be protected and guaranteed by law, privatization must continue, and corruption must be reined in.⁴⁴

Ballistic Missile Defense. Since 9/11, a new threat environment has emerged in which U.S. policymakers and their allies need “new momentum and direction”⁴⁵ to pursue a truly global missile defense capability. The United States is determining the balance of its multilayered approach to space, sea, and ground missile defense and has begun formal negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic to station interceptors and radars, respectively, at U.S. bases in their countries.

While negotiations are likely to be protracted and at times difficult, Poland is taking an open and positive approach. It must consider a range of security, defense, economic, financial, and political ramifications in this decision-making process.

Stationing ballistic missile defense in Poland will add to Europe’s deterrence power and put Poland once again at the forefront of strong nation-states prepared to take the measures necessary to play on the top-level security stage. The opportunities to participate in scientific and technological collaborations are multiple, giving Poland a prime opportunity to advance its research and development sector and high-tech industries. Financially, any deal will

likely be linked to the increased U.S. military assistance that Poland craves. Defensively, as part of a multilayered, global package of missile defense, a ground-based anti-ballistic missile defense system in Poland would be a security guarantee for both Europe and the United States against rogue regimes and terrorists.

Poland will clearly require strong political leadership on this matter. Two-thirds of the general public does not favor the project;⁴⁶ fears over Russia’s reaction and apprehension about becoming the target of anti-American terrorists make them nervous. However, this measure will be only as destabilizing as Moscow wants it to be. It is purely a defensive measure, not an aggressive one, designed to defend America and its allies against serious threats to their security. For Poland, the shield would not only provide protection from nuclear attack, but also eliminate Russia’s strategic advantage over non-nuclear Poland. It would add to, rather than detract from, the regional balance of power.

Diplomatically, it would be a potent and affirmative statement of friendship in the transatlantic alliance and afford Poland elevated special partner status with the United States. As Deputy Defense Minister Witold Waszczykowski stated, “We would become part of the United States’ defense. All problems experienced by Poland would have to be immediately considered in Washington.”⁴⁷

The U.S. and Poland must approach negotiations about the most cost-effective way to manage international missile defense wholeheartedly if they are to advance their mutual security agendas, and Poland should seek to make the argument

42. Thatcher, “Press Conference in Warsaw.”

43. “Can the Eagle Soar?” *The Economist*, September 29, 2005, at www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=4455628 (February 16, 2007).

44. Poland ranks 70th out of 158 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index for 2005. Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index 2005,” October 18, 2005, at http://www1.transparency.org/cpi/2005/cpi2005_infocus.html#cpi (February 16, 2007).

45. Independent Working Group on Missile Defense, the Space Relationship & the Twenty-First Century, *2007 Report*, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 2006, p. ix, at www.ifpa.org/pdf/IWGreport.pdf (February 16, 2007).

46. “Survey Shows 63 Per Cent of Poles Oppose Hosting US Missile Defense Base,” BBC Monitoring International Reports, August 10, 2006.

47. “Polish Deputy Foreign Minister: Missile Defense Base to Yield ‘Tighter’ US Ties,” BBC Monitoring International Reports, August 22, 2006.

about the relevancy of the transatlantic security alliance more broadly.

Maintaining and Winning Allies. People-to-people exchange is a powerful tool of public diplomacy and should be encouraged. Almost 16 million Visa Waiver Program travelers enter the United States each year, accounting for more than half of the travelers to the United States for business and pleasure. It sustains academic, cultural, and commercial exchanges, and the U.S. can build on this success. As research from The Heritage Foundation says, “visa policy...is public diplomacy.”⁴⁸

In that respect, while in Tallinn, Estonia, in November 2006, President Bush announced that he would seek modifications to the VWP to accelerate the entry of new countries into the program. The bipartisan Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Act of 2007 (S. 342 and H.R. 561) currently before Congress is a significant step in the right direction in taking up the President’s initiative. Key provisions of S. 342 were recently included in the Improving America’s Security by Implementing Unfinished Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (S. 4) with strong bipartisan support during a committee markup.

James Carafano points out that, with added security measures, including passenger information exchange, stringent procedures for reporting lost and stolen passports, and electronic travel authorizations, new countries allowed into the VWP would actually have stronger security requirements than current VWP members, advancing America’s national security and paving the way for the U.S. to negotiate similar security cooperation agreements with current visa waiver nations.⁴⁹ Therefore, the bill currently before Congress recommends that the United States be flexible on the 3 percent refusal rate, which currently keeps Poland out of the VWP.

This has the potential to be a major long-term coup for U.S. public diplomacy—if handled cor-

rectly. The current draft legislation proposes to allow just five of the 13 candidate countries to participate in the pilot program. It is difficult to see how Poland’s possible exclusion from the pilot program will cause anything other than a major diplomatic affront.

The Administration should persistently pursue a path of public diplomacy, especially with U.S. allies, starting with a revised visa waiver program. The European Union was not the only body that aided Poland’s rehabilitation into Western structures. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. enterprise funds, and American multinationals have also been instrumental to Poland’s transformation.⁵⁰ Both sides need to go on the offensive to establish a strategic communication strategy, address growing anti-Americanism in Poland, and once again embrace the deep values shared by Americans and Poles.

What the Administration and Congress Should Do

Washington has a number of tools at its disposal to advance the Polish–American relationship. Specifically, the Administration and Congress should:

- **Prioritize continued close political and military cooperation with Poland.** Through reorientation of Foreign Military Financing and extension of the International Military Education and Training Program, the U.S. would ensure that Poland continues the comprehensive modernization of its military in line with the U.S.–Polish Defense Transformation Initiative, which is propitious to U.S. interests.
- **Reemphasize NATO’s primacy as the premier security alliance in Europe.** Washington must resist any plans to divide, marginalize, or undermine the NATO alliance, especially EU plans for a European Army or any separate military identity independent of NATO decision-

48. The Heritage Foundation, “Realizing the Rice–Chertoff Vision: A National-Interest–Based Visa Policy for the United States,” January 31, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Features/NationalSecurity/upload/visapolicy.pdf.

49. Carafano and Keith, “President’s Proposed Visa Waiver Program Reforms Strengthen Fight Against Terror.”

50. “Transformed,” *The Economist*, June 25, 2005, and Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D., “Make U.S. Investment Pay Off in E. Europe,” Heritage Foundation *Commentary*, November 30, 2006, at www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed113006b.cfm.

making. Without this political and military transatlantic alliance, the United States would have little foreign policy reach with its allies to build ad hoc coalitions. Separate defense identities rooted in the European Union would pool the sovereignty of America's allies to such a degree that they would destabilize the current alliance-building opportunities available to the United States.

- **Work with Poland to explore all options on ballistic missile defense.** The United States should continue to pursue national missile defense and undertake the most cost-effective options to maintain its security and that of its allies. The U.S. also needs to retain the option of stationing further ground missile defenses in Europe.
- **Increase people-to-people exchanges between the U.S. and Poland by revising the Visa Waiver Program.** People-to-people exchanges are an important element of public diplomacy, and an updated program must not exclude key allies like Poland.
- **Arrange for President Bush to make an official state visit to Warsaw sooner rather than later.** Top-level bilateral contacts are critical and especially important to the current Polish government in building trust and cooperation. A second presidential state visit, following the successful visit to Warsaw in 2001, also befits a major ally and friend.

Conclusion

Deprived of its nationhood for much of the 20th century, Poland is now climbing the European power ladder and making the most of its opportunities.⁵¹ Poland is reasserting itself in the world and, for the most part, has resisted the gravitational pull of Brussels.

As a proud independent nation-state, and at times with very careful statecraft, Poland has risen as a power in a transformed Europe, has main-

tained a healthy transatlantic focus, and has conducted an aggressive and responsible foreign policy in the best interests of Polish security and the security of Poland's neighbors. Poland is one of a handful of EU member states that understands the long-term challenges posed by the war on terrorism and has not shied away from the responsibilities facing modern nation-states and the international community.

The Bush Administration should tighten the strategic partnership with Poland, and Warsaw should seek to maximize its relationship with Washington. Poland is a relatively new player on the world stage and has some way to go before realizing its potential as a European power. The United States can help and should reciprocate at least some measure of the political capital invested by Poland in upholding transatlantic interests on the Continent. If left unchecked, anti-Americanism has the very real potential to gain traction in Poland and in many other Central and Eastern European countries. Both sides need to make addressing this issue a priority if the relationship is to be strengthened.

The Polish-American relationship has flourished during the worst of times and during the best of times for Poland. Many Poles looked to President Reagan as a leader with a will of iron who stood up to the Soviet Union. During the nearly two decades since the Poles regained their freedom, Poland and America have shared the fruits of that solidarity in deep political, diplomatic, military, and economic ties. Both sides should be careful not to squander the goodwill and historical ties that bind the relationship and should work to construct a foreign policy that continues to reflect Reagan's American-Polish legacy.

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51. Meller, "Minister's Annual Address 2006."