

David A. Jones and Joanna Waluk

## Polish and American Diplomatic Relations since 1939 as Reflected in Bilateral Ambassadorial Policies

Across the ninety years of diplomatic relations between the different republics of Poland and the United States, America has posted 25 ambassadors to Poland, and Poland has posted 25 envoys to Washington (one of them twice), with some of them holding the rank of charge d'affaires only. Both countries have downgraded then upgraded their respective embassies, predicated upon the fleeting politics of the moment, and there have been relatively brief periods when each country was not represented in the other. There have been longer periods when Poland was America's only link to parts of the communist world, such as the People's Republic of China. In fact, what has become known as the "opening" of China by President Richard M. Nixon and his secretary of state, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, in 1971 and 1972, was largely arranged in Poland. What could easily have been an earlier and less acrimonious withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam also was arranged in Poland through the Chinese ambassador at the time, but sadly this effort fell through.

With the invasion of the Republic of Poland by Nazi Germany in 1939, the immediate Soviet attack, and Germany's eventual reinvasion of the Polish territory under Russian control in 1941, the government of the Second Polish Republic fled to Paris and then to London, where it remained for the duration of the war. The American Ambassador Anthony J. Drexel Biddle continued his diplomacy by following the government of Poland in exile from 5 September 1939, first to Paris until June, 1940, and thence to London, where he served from 14 March 1941 until 01 December 1944.

President Roosevelt replaced Ambassador Biddle in 1944 with Arthur Bliss Lane, who served as the United States ambassador to the Polish government in exile at London from September 1944, and then in postwar Warsaw from the day the American Embassy was reopened there on 5 July 1945 until his resignation on 24 February 1947 in disgust that Britain and the United States failed to keep their promise to give the Polish people free elections after World War II. Both Biddle and Lane had careers in the Foreign Service, although Biddle's foreign service career began politically and Lane was a career foreign service officer. Later, author Richard C. Lukas confirmed Ambassador Lane's

reasons for anger and resignation in his 1982 book, *Bitter Legacy: Polish and American Relations in the Wake of World War II*, in which he wrote that the fraudulent communist elections of 1948 were “the consequence of Washington’s having habituated the Kremlin to deal with political issues in eastern Europe without the United States during the war years” (2–3).

Ambassador Lane was deployed to Poland under Roosevelt’s longtime secretary of state, Cordell Hull, and continued under Roosevelt’s last secretary of state, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., and President Harry S. Truman’s first secretary of state, James F. Byrnes. Truman lost Ambassador Lane much as he lost Secretary of State Gen. George C. Marshall, because Truman departed too abruptly and too drastically from the vision of his predecessor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This proceeded almost to the point where the Democratic Party, through Truman, capitulated as much to Soviet Marshal Joseph V. Stalin as it had feared would happen had Roosevelt not replaced his second vice president, Henry A. Wallace, with Truman. Wallace was assumed to be functionally in the pocket of Stalin.

From 15 December 1940, the Polish government in exile in London was represented in Washington by Michał Kwapiszewski as the chargé d’affaires, then upgraded the position to the rank of ambassador with Jan Ciechanowski on 21 February 1941, who arrived in Washington on 6 March 1941 to serve for the duration of the war. Ambassador Ciechanowski announced on 07 July 1945 that he felt “compelled” to resign because of America’s betrayal of Poland by American withdrawal of recognition of Poland’s constitutionally elected government headed by President Władysław Raczkiewicz (“Biografie”), reflecting feelings parallel to those of Ambassador Lane (“Defeat in Victory”).

That the American voting public tended to agree with America’s betrayal—particularly as evidenced by the voting pattern of Polish Americans (“Polonia”) in the 1946 Congressional elections, especially Chicago’s Democratic primary—has been evidenced in an abundance of literature (Ubriaco). What is less clear is whose fault this was, that of the Franklin Roosevelt administration (1933–945) especially during Roosevelt’s third term (1941–1945) with his Stalin-favored vice president Henry C. Wallace, or of Roosevelt’s three Republican predecessors: Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert C. Hoover (Ubriaco 241). It is argued that America’s ineptitude in foreign policy from World War I through World War II paved the way for the cold war (Gaddis 143). Part of this ineptitude has been linked to what some historians believe was the absence of any coherent policy toward Eastern Europe generally and Poland especially during the *interbellum* period (Lundestad 22).

Once Germany surrendered to the Alliance in 1945 and the American Embassy was reopened in Warsaw, Ambassador Lane played a leading role in the investigation of So-

viet crimes in wartime Poland. As Ambassador, Lane published an article in *Life Magazine*, titled “How Russia Ruled Poland,” soon followed by the book *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, in which he criticized the “naïve idealism” of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. Ambassador Lane contended that the information supporting his article and his book was based on participant observation. In a letter to *The New York Times*, Lane solemnly claimed that many Western journalists knew the information that he had disclosed in *Life Magazine* and that he had not obtained it from any intelligence sources:

My article... was based on actual happenings which were known to many American press correspondents in Poland. There was no need to employ spies, even had I had the unwise desire to do so.... I [instructed] members of my staff that they should avoid contact with the underground, for I did not wish to endanger the safety of persons not in sympathy with the Polish Government[.]” (“Poland: Static”)

Poland’s communist government disagreed, however, and accused 16 Polish nationals, including several members of Stanisław Mikołajczyk’s Polish Peasant Party, of having collaborated with Lane to supply “classified” information used in the *Life Magazine* article.<sup>1</sup> After his stewardship in Poland, Ambassador Lane served as chair of the commission that investigated the murder of 20,000 Polish army officers at Katyń, at first ascribed to Nazi Germany but later confirmed to have been the work of the Soviet Union, based on ballistic tests of the ordnance used for the executions. Ambassador Lane wrote the preface to Józef Mackiewicz’s book *The Katyn Wood Murders* (1951).

The embassy list in Washington discontinued the name of any representative from Poland until 11 September 1945, when Janusz Żółtowski was certified as the chargé d’affaires. Poland upgraded this position to ambassador on 13 December 1945, when it appointed Oskar Lange, who arrived on 21 December 1945. Ambassador Lange was succeeded by Józef Winiewicz, who was appointed ambassador with a change of government on 22 January 1947. He arrived in Washington on 4 February 1947 and served until the People’s Republic of Poland was established as a state by the 1952 constitution.

President Harry S. Truman replaced Ambassador Lane with financier Stanton Griffis, a New York investment banker who had been chairman of Paramount Pictures. Ambassador Griffis served for a year from 1947 to 1948, during the time when Bernard Baruch and Barry Bingham, Sr. directed the Marshall Plan from Paris. Griffis was succeeded by Waldemar Gallman, who is more famous for the book he subsequently wrote about Iraq

<sup>1</sup> Of those whom Poland accused of espionage, nine were sentenced to death and six to long prison terms (“Poland: Static”).

while he was serving as U.S. ambassador there: *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollection of Nuri Al-Said, 1954–1958* (1964). Ambassador Gallman was posted to Poland from 1948 until 1950, and was the second and final diplomat Gen. George C. Marshall deployed to Poland as Truman's secretary of state. President Truman's final ambassador to Poland was Joseph Flack, a career foreign service officer who continued for two years into the first administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Ambassador Flack had served as first secretary at the American Embassy in Warsaw, the post responsible for coordinating intelligence. He was selected by Truman's third and final secretary of state, Dean G. Acheson, who was far more hawkish and anti-communist than General Marshall had been. Ambassador Flack left Poland on 22 April 1955, and died at sea aboard the cruise ship, "United States," en route home (Flack Genealogy).

President Eisenhower appointed Joseph E. Jacobs to replace Ambassador Flack on 1 April 1955. Ambassador Jacobs had already served as ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1948, and from 1949 until 1955 had been the special assistant to the Mutual Defense Assistance Program in Rome, which prepared him for the political unrest in Poland in the aftermath of the Poznań Riots of 1956. This was a time of uprisings against communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, most of which were unsuccessful and brutally repressed. Ambassador Jacobs was the type of senior level diplomat who was deemed essential by Eisenhower's first secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, and Dulles's brother Alan, director of central intelligence.

The leadership of Poland changed as had the leadership of the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin in 1953. With Nikita S. Khrushchev as Soviet premier, some enemies of Stalin were rehabilitated, and among them was Władysław Gomułka, whom Khrushchev installed as first secretary of Poland's communist party in 1956 upon the death of the party's longtime Stalinist secretary Bolesław Bierut. Gomułka would serve for fourteen years. Moscow allowed him independence in setting Poland's domestic policy, provided he towed the Moscow line in foreign policy, as he did. Gomułka deemed himself a representative of the working class and earlier in his political career had crushed the Polish Peasants' Party. In some respects, Gomułka in Poland was the opposite of what Mao Zedong was in China during the same period: Mao had crushed the leader of China's workers, Liu Shaoqi, in favor of Mao's peasant constituency (Glover 289). Gomułka lasted a long time as first secretary due to the perception by Polish communists that he could stand up to Russia ("POLAND: Rebellious Compromiser").

Bierut had dispatched F. Romuald Spasowski to Washington for his first of two postings there as ambassador on 11 April 1955. Ambassador Spasowski arrived in Washington on 5 May 1955. He was succeeded by Edward Drożniak, appointed by Gomułka, on 18 June 1961. He presented his credentials to President Kennedy in Washington the next

day. Drożniak passed away while in office in Washington, and received a military honors funeral that was unusual because it took place at night (Mossman 183).

President Eisenhower's last ambassador to Poland, for the entirety of his second term in office, was Joseph D. Beam, also a career foreign service officer with significant intelligence experience. Deployed by John Foster Dulles, Ambassador Beam continued in office under Eisenhower's second and last secretary of state, Massachusetts governor Christian A. Herter. Subsequently, Beam was posted as ambassador to Czechoslovakia under President Lyndon B. Johnson and Moscow under President Richard M. Nixon, and he also served as director of Radio Free Europe under President Gerald R. Ford. All this prepared Beam well for the publication of his book, *Multiple Exposure: An American Ambassador's Unique Perspective on East-West Issues* (1978). He was the first American ambassador to Poland to have been born in the twentieth century. During his stewardship in Warsaw, the American Embassy was the only viable channel of communication between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China in a crucial period of time.

Between 1955 and 1970, there were some 135 meetings in Warsaw under Eisenhower's Ambassador Beam and his three successors—John Cabot, John Gronouski, and Walter Stoessel ("Diplomacy")—before President Nixon decided to move the talks to Pakistan (U.S. Dept. Of State, 1976), apparently to avoid or minimize the likelihood that the Soviet Union would gain advance awareness of Nixon's decision to visit Beijing. Of those 135 meetings, the last one in 1970 with Ambassador Stroessel was the shortest, lasting only 75 minutes ("Diplomacy"). These meetings, begun just as Marshal Chen Yi became China's Foreign Minister in 1956, worked also to aid China in "back-channeling" information to the Soviet Union that China wanted the Soviets to know about their own strategies, because these talks were conducted at the Myśliwiecki Palace, where the communist government of Poland secretly eavesdropped and passed the conversations on to the Soviet Union ("Diplomacy").

In this way, the Myśliwiecki Palace in Warsaw appeared to function as China's opportunity to indirectly confront the Soviet Union when China's chargé d'affaires Lei Yang spoke to the Americans as if the Chinese were addressing the Soviets directly. Thus these meetings became the major channel for communication between China and the Soviet Union as well as between China and the United States. Once these meetings were unmasked as being compromised by communist Poland's eavesdropping, China and the United States commenced to feed the Soviet Union deliberately falsified information. Eventually, these meetings were moved to the respective embassies of China and the United States, also in Warsaw, where confidentiality could be maintained. It is very "interesting," as *Time* magazine noted, that this change of venue was at the behest of the Chinese delegation ("Diplomacy"). Even more interesting, perhaps, is the once secret but

now declassified memo that secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger wrote to Nixon: “We are building a solid record of keeping the Chinese informed on all significant subjects of concern to them, which gives them an additional stake in nurturing our new relationship,” including a “full rundown” of American discussions with Soviet leaders (U.S. Dept. of State, 1976, 6).

President John F. Kennedy appointed John M. Cabot as ambassador to Poland in 1962, where he served until 1965 under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and Dean Rusk, the loyal secretary of state appointed by Kennedy and retained by Johnson for his entire presidency. Cabot was a career foreign service officer and intelligence operative who also had served as deputy commandant of the National War College and written the book *Toward Our Common American Destiny* (1955), in which he analyzed the problems and solutions that the United States shared with its Latin American neighbors. His ambassadorship saw negotiations with the Chinese ambassador to Poland aimed at preventing escalation of the war then emerging in Vietnam. Unfortunately, these were unsuccessful, largely because President Johnson failed to listen to or heed the advice Cabot received from China. Ambassadors Jacobs, Beam and Cabot reflect the extent of intelligence the United States gave to and received from both the People’s Republic of China and the People’s Republic of Poland across the decade between 1955 and 1965 as the Soviet Union became increasingly fearful of a Chinese invasion. This paranoia was so rampant that the Soviets uprooted and relocated countless towns across Soviet Asia, apparently in an effort to confound Chinese marksmanship in the event of a missile attack (“Diplomacy”).

After Cabot, President Johnson sent to Poland John A. Gronouski, a Polish-American whom President Kennedy had appointed as postmaster general, the first ever Polish-American to hold a cabinet appointment and probably the first cabinet officer ever to hold a Ph.D. Gronouski was one of the few New Frontiersmen who stayed on with Johnson after Kennedy’s death, and afterwards became founding dean of the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas. Gronouski made tours across Eastern Europe from Warsaw in an effort to improve trade relations with Warsaw Pact nations. Earlier in his career, he had unsuccessfully challenged Wisconsin’s reactionary Republican senator, Joseph R. McCarthy, Jr., and later on, during the Carter Administration, he was chairman of International Broadcasting Corporation, the parent entity of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. It may be surprising that *The New York Times* obituary of Ambassador Gronouski captioned him as President Kennedy’s postmaster general, not as America’s ambassador to Poland or as founding dean of the Johnson School of Public Affairs. Referring to the talks that had taken place in Warsaw between China and the United States, Gronouski noted: “It was pretty clear that part of what the Chinese were saying was not said to us. It was being said to the Soviets” (“Diplomacy”).

President Nixon deployed two career foreign service officers to the People's Republic of Poland as ambassadors. The first, Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., was sent to Warsaw just as Poland was changing. Edward Gierek had been the leader of the "young technocrats" in Poland's communist party, and he became first secretary in November 1970. Under Gierek's leadership, Poland changed abruptly, mostly for the better, at least for educated students and skilled workers. Gierek commenced a program of borrowing heavily from the United States and West Germany, ostensibly to modernize Polish factories and put cash in the pockets of the Polish work force so they could purchase Western products (Rolicki). In fact, he "opened" the country to Western media, at least to young intellectuals who could read in English, French, German, or Spanish, by allowing foreign magazines and newspapers to be placed on public library and university shelves.<sup>2</sup> Immediately, this diluted the influence of the Russian news media that had exercised a monopoly in Poland at least since 1952, which had been the period of an entire generation. Directly, this inspired the rise of labor movements, including Solidarity (Polish *Solidarność*). Indirectly, this nurtured the rise of Poland's new middle class and intelligentsia, the prelude to the free Poland as we came to know it from 1989 until the present time. The administration of Edward Gierek in Poland preceded that of Mikhail S. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, but many of Gierek's policies resembled Glasnost, meaning openness, and perestroika, meaning reconstruction, both hallmarks of the Gorbachev period in the Soviet Union. It seems fair to say that, in part at least, Poland under Gierek contributed to the changes that led to the implosion of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, but this connection is lost to history in favor of the more direct link between Poland under Lech Wałęsa and the actual collapse of the Soviet Union by the end of the 1980s.

Stoessel was deployed by Secretary of State Dr. Henry A. Kissinger for a second purpose beyond that of supervising the Nixon Administration's new flirtation with the legacy of President William Howard Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy." Stoessel's second objective was to open a dialogue with the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Warsaw as a prelude first to the Kissinger visit to China in 1971 and then to the Nixon visit to China in 1972. Stoessel had been the American ambassador to the Soviet Union and was deployed to Poland from 1969 to 1972. It is likely that Stoessel had a role in the installation of Gierek as first secretary, probably by sharing with Poland's foreign ministry some insights about what the Soviet Union really thought about Poland. Stoessel's second role centered around

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Professor Ryszard Żelichowski, head of political science and sociology, Polish Academy of Science at Warsaw, with David A. Jones, on 03 December 2010. Professor Żelichowski, who was a graduate student in Poland when Edward Gierek became first secretary in November 1970, shared his perceptions concerning the conditions before and after the changes Gierek implemented.

discussing how the United States could help to alleviate China's growing apprehension of the Soviet Union. This led to the formation of the Beijing committee that came to be known as the "study group," which Chinese premier Zhou Enlai arranged among four marshals of China, and to the courageous recommendation by China's longtime foreign minister, Marshal Chen Yi, that Chairman Mao do what Mao dreaded doing more than almost anything else: "play the American card."

Ambassador Stoessel was succeeded by his boss, Richard T. Davies, who had been assistant secretary of state for European affairs from 1970 until 1972. Davies served as the United States ambassador to Poland from 1973 until 1978, across the middle of the Gierek administration. Ambassador Davies improved American trade relations with Poland, but also tied American trade to America's concern over communist Poland's increased denial of human rights, forced upon Gierek by Moscow as the Soviet reaction to Gierek's growing Polish nationalism. Both human rights and Polish nationalism were causes Ambassador Davies championed in part because of his long marriage to a Polish woman whom he had met and courted during an earlier posting to Poland in the late 1940s. Ambassador Davies served across the administration of President Gerald R. Ford, Nixon's appointed successor, and the first half of the administration of President James E. ("Jimmy") Carter, Jr., a Democrat, thus reflecting the bipartisan support Davies enjoyed in Washington and the bipartisan commitment the United States presidents maintained with Poland.

The People's Republic of Poland under first secretary Władysław Gomułka had appointed Jerzy Michałowski as ambassador to the United States on 31 August 1967. Ambassador Michałowski presented his credentials to President Johnson on 12 September 1967. Ambassador Michałowski was succeeded by Ryszard Frąckiewicz as the chargé d'affaires on 13 July 1971, and then Edward Gierek appointed Witold Trąpczyński as ambassador on 23 December 1971, who arrived in Washington on 07 February 1971. Ambassador Trąpczyński was succeeded by Stanisław Pawliszewski as the chargé d'affaires on 13 January 1978, and then Gierek sent Ambassador Francis Romuald Spasowski back to Washington for a second posting on 09 March 1978, and he arrived on 07 April 1978. Edward Gierek faced declining health and labor uprisings at the end of the 1970s, and was replaced as first secretary briefly by Stanisław Kania, who in turn was replaced soon thereafter by Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who imprisoned Gierek in 1981. Ambassador Spasowski asked for and received political asylum in (defected to) the United States on 19 December 1981 in the wake of the uprisings in Poland led by Solidarity, for which he was sentenced to death in absentia by Poland's communist government (Spasowski, *Liberation of One*). The military government of Poland then downgraded its embassy in Washington, which was now headed by Zdzisław Ludwiczak as



chargé d'affaires. On 18 December 1987, Poland sent Jan Kinast to Washington as ambassador, and he arrived on 22 March 1988.

President Carter appointed William E. Schaefe as his ambassador to Poland from 1978 to 1980. Ambassador Schaefe had served as inspector general of the Foreign Service in 1975 and as deputy permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations Security Council. Later, he would serve as assistant secretary of state for African affairs and president of the Foreign Policy Association. Schaefe was a high caliber ambassador who put Poland in perspective within the Warsaw Pact group of nations. For his service as ambassador to Poland, Schaefe received the Wilbur Carr Award. He was author of the 1981 book *The Polish Paradox: Communism and National Renewal*, that was functionally a chronicle of Edward Gierek's administration, which blended communism with Polish nationalism. Late in his administration, President Carter appointed Francis J. Meehan as ambassador to Poland. Ambassador Meehan served two years into the administration of President Ronald W. Reagan. Meehan was succeeded for six months by Herbert E. Wilgiss, Jr. as interim ambassador.

Ambassador Meehan had been the American ambassador to Czechoslovakia from 1979 to 1981, and he went on to become the American ambassador to East Germany from 1985 to 1988. Meehan was a career foreign service officer who had been President Nixon's deputy chief of mission at the American Embassy in Budapest, Hungary from 1973 to 1975. During Ambassador Meehan's watch, Poland's military government "manhandled" and expelled two American diplomats, accusing them of espionage and prompting the Reagan Administration to expel two Polish diplomats in retaliation ("U.S. Expels Two Envoys").

President Reagan appointed another career foreign service officer, John R. Davis, Jr., who served as chargé d'affaires in Warsaw from 1983 to 1987 after he scaled down the rank of his new envoy to Poland as a protest to "Marshall Times." On 23 September 1987, America and Poland decided to restore ambassadors, Poland dispatched deputy foreign minister Jan Kinast to Washington, and Davis was promoted to ambassador (Sciolino). Ambassador Davis remained in his office for two years until 1990. During that time, Ambassador Davis held "Round Table" discussions at the Ambassador's Residence in Warsaw, aimed at bringing about a transition from communism to democracy, and that achieved *de facto* recognition of Solidarity by the communist government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski (U.S. State Department, "Roundtable Talks").

The Roundtable Talks so impressed President George H.W. Bush that he promised money for Poland in the summer of 1989, and then invited Lech Wałęsa to visit Washington, where in November 1989 he addressed a joint session of the United States Congress. In this event, the new fate of Poland premiered to the United States and to the

world, and the fast response from America was money in the amount of 1 billion dollars from both the American public and private sectors, earmarked to seed the start of democratic and free market institutions in Poland and across Eastern Europe. From the public sector, the United States Congress passed the Eastern European Democracy Act (SEED) and from the private sector the Polish-American Enterprise Fund (PAEF) promised matching loans to Polish entrepreneurs. Another nongovernmental organization, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, offered loans and guaranties of loans together with business insurance to stimulate foreign direct investment in Poland by American businesses. In 1990, the Polish Stabilisation Fund was introduced by the United States with international participation to make the Polish zloty exchangeable with the dollar and other Western currencies. Each of these indispensable programs was the direct outgrowth of the success of the “Roundtable Talks” at Warsaw in the United States Ambassador’s residence. Diplomacy worked! What had begun in Poland spread across Central and Eastern Europe. A bloodless collapse of the Soviet Union provided far greater security for the United States and its Allies.

Thomas W. Simmons, Jr. was appointed by President George H.W. Bush as ambassador to Poland from 1990 until 1993. He is an expert on Russia, and was Chair of the George F. Kennan Institute for Advanced Studies of Russia. Ambassador Simmons has been one of the most prolific authors on the transition from communism to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. His books include: *The End of the Cold War?* (1990), *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World* (1993), *Islam in a Globalizing World* (2003) and *Eurasia’s New Frontiers: Young States, Old Societies, Open Futures* (2008). Simmons has been an outspoken skeptic on the issue of whether the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe will be sustainable. On 23 July 1990, Poland appointed Kazimierz Dziewanowski to be its ambassador to the United States, and he arrived in Washington on 07 August 1990, to serve there until the middle of 1994.

President William J. (“Bill”) Clinton sent two ambassadors to Poland. The first was Nicholas A. Rey, who was born in Poland but whose family fled with him to America in 1939. Ambassador Rey was a director of the Polish American Freedom Fund and chair of the Polish American Enterprise Fund from 1990 to 1993, when he began a four-year ambassadorship in Warsaw. His 25-year background as an investment banker with Merrill Lynch and Bear Stearns served him well as he attempted to get Poland on its feet financially in preparation for its bid to join the European Union a decade later. The second Clinton-era ambassador to Poland, from 1997 until 2001, was Daniel Fried, a career foreign service officer who came to Poland after spending four years on President Clinton’s National Security Council staff, where he supervised the formulation of American policy on North Atlantic Treaty Organization enlargement and drafting the future

relationship of NATO with the Russian Federation. President Clinton deployed experts in finance and security to serve as ambassadors to Poland. Effective on 23 June 1994, Poland sent Jerzy Koźmiński to be its ambassador to the United States.

President George W. Bush sent two very different ambassadors to Poland, one for each of his two terms in office. The first, Christopher R. Hill, is a foreign service officer who also had significant National Security Council experience focusing on southeastern Europe, together with a diplomatic background in Kosovo and Macedonia. After his deployment to Poland, Ambassador Hill served as chief negotiator on talks with North Korea, and after that as ambassador to Iraq. In Poland, Ambassador Hill was a key figure in the opening of the East Asian Institute at the prestigious Warsaw School of Economics. The George W. Bush administration encouraged investment in Poland from America's private sector (Michalski). This became particularly impressive during Bush's second term in office.

President Bush's second ambassador to Poland was Victor H. Ashe, his Yale College roommate, who had been mayor of Knoxville, Tennessee for longer than anyone else and president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which awarded him its distinguished service award. Ambassador Ashe visited all 16 Polish provinces three times, and over 183 Polish cities. He led a dozen trade tours of Polish business leaders to the United States, designed to stimulate imports and exports between the two nations. Ambassador Ashe negotiated the Missile Defense treaty between America and Poland.

During this time period, Poland sent two ambassadors to Washington. The first was Przemysław Grudziński, appointed on 11 July 2000, who arrived in Washington on 05 September 2000. His successor was Janusz Reiter, who was appointed on 26 September 2004 and presented his credentials in Washington on 05 October 2004. The current ambassador from Poland to the United States is Robert Kupiecki, who presented his credentials there on 06 June 2008.

President Barack H. Obama appointed Lee Feinstein to be his ambassador to Poland. Ambassador Feinstein is a former principal deputy director of the U.S. Department of State's Policy Planning staff and senior advisor to former Secretary of State Madeline Albright. He is experienced in non-proliferation, strategic arms control, and interdiction of firearms trafficking. Also, he has been the deputy director for security policy and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He worked as national security director for Senator [now Secretary of State] Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign. Ambassador Feinstein is the 25th United States ambassador posted to Poland. Very recently, Ambassador Feinstein addressed an audience of University of Warsaw students and faculty and advised that the Obama Administration is concerned that American intervention anywhere in the world,

including Poland, should be limited to the situations where the protection of American interests coincides with the preservation of American values (Feinstein).

Poland's ambassadors to the United States have tended to be rising (or fading) stars in their political parties. Some of the better-caliber candidates for posting to Washington were not confirmed because of the communist legacy that still haunts Poland. The United States has sent very high-caliber ambassadors to Poland. At least half have been career foreign service officers, frequently well-trained intelligence operatives. Among the non-career appointees, several have been personal friends of the president or secretary of state who posted them to Poland, such as Ambassadors Gronouski, Hill, Ashe, and Feinstein. What this signals is the importance America places upon Poland as a diplomatic post, for two reasons: because of Poland's location at the utmost east of the European Union, and because the Polish American electorate is influential to both of America's two political parties.

In conclusion, the exchange of diplomats between the Republic of Poland and the United States of America since 1939 has witnessed the tragic but catalyzed the magic in a plethora of different ways. America stood by the Polish government in exile between 1939 and 1945, but dropped the ball on Poland in the first seven years after the victory of 1945 and let the postwar communist factions form coalition governments that were in the interests of the Soviet Union far more than of the United States. America and Poland still exchanged envoys, sometimes downgrading their ranks during times of tension, then raising rank and status as tensions subsided. Even during challenging times, such as the 1970s and 1980s, the United States gave to Poland (large financial investments, for example, to the government of Edward Gierek) and Poland gave to America in return (the setting for the "Roundtable Discussions" with China in Warsaw, for example, during which bogus information was fed to the Soviet Union). But even more than all that came out of these diplomatic exchanges. For a generation of budding young Polish students who would eventually rise to become Poland's post-communist middle class of business leaders, clerics, intelligentsia, and political leaders gained their fascination for Western values during the decade of the 1970s as Edward Gierek opened Poland's long-closed window to the sunshine of American and other Western media. The result during the decade of the 1980s became the movement that would secure freedom not only for Poland itself but for the entire Warsaw Pact of communist nations.

In supporting the people of Poland during the Stalinist period, post-Stalinist (Bierut) period, the enlightenment of Edward Gierek, regression during the marshal times of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Solidarity and later the post-Solidarity time, the United States earned the lasting respect of all political parties within Poland. In many respects, Poland's respect for the United States was earned as the product of individual hard efforts

by the envoys these countries exchanged. If there is a common thread amongst the diplomats that Poland sent to the United States since 1945, it was that they harbored views of Polish nationalism and independence, even during (particularly during) the common period. After all, the Soviet Union never did more than to threaten to invade and occupy Poland. If there is commonality among the diplomats the United States sent to Poland, it would be that they provided personal and independent assessments of Poland as their host country, sometimes even taking their views directly to the American public. Most of the American envoys deployed to Poland were security operatives one way or another, and sometimes in a scholarly way, but this demonstrates how important Poland was in the eyes of postwar American presidents. If the diplomatic exchanges between Warsaw and Washington evoked “the tragic” between 1919 and 1939, the diplomatic exchanges between the two capitals since 1939 have witnessed a steady rise that may be depicted accurately as a form of “the magic.” Very few other nations have embraced the United States and the American people as unreservedly and as strongly as Poland has done. Former United States vice president Albert E. Gore, Jr. viewed Poland as a model for the transformation of Eastern Europe (Richter).

There is somewhat of a “roadmap” to be learned from America’s diplomatic relations with Poland that may be applied to the current crisis in the Middle East and North Africa. It is that the United States can provide emotional and financial support effectively, but ought to try at least to resist military support unless absolutely necessary. This worked in Poland, more or less, because a new generation of educated Polish citizens emerged from the Gierek period in late 1970 and eventually took back their country themselves. A new generation of educated citizenry appears to be emerging across North Africa and the Middle East, from Tunisia across Libya to Egypt and beyond. Their objectives parallel Poland’s of 40 years ago, and can be achieved in the same way if careful diplomacy is favored over military intervention. The lessons of Poland are there to be appreciated and understood, if only they will be heeded.

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