

# Reopening the Wounds of History? The Foreign Policy of the 'Fourth' Polish Republic

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## **Abstract**

The 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland led to *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice) coming to power. Foreign policy did not figure prominently in the campaign, but the leadership of PiS were known for their nationalist inclinations. In the handling of its relations with the EU, Germany, Russia and the US, the government broadly continued the same policies as its predecessors. There was, however, a marked change in style, and the nationalistic overtones of the rhetoric emanating from Warsaw became increasingly pronounced. Relations between Poland and its two larger neighbours and the EU became increasingly strained. The government also continued to align Poland closely with the US, though this approach became increasingly controversial.

## **Introduction**

Poland's parliamentary and presidential elections, held almost simultaneously in the autumn of 2005, were fiercely contested between two parties of the centre-right, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice) and *Platforma Obywatelska* (Civic Platform). The close proximity of the two sets of elections to one another resulted in the presidential contest overshadowing the parliamentary campaigns, despite the fact that the powers of the Polish president are relatively limited. By the summer of 2005, PiS and PO's respective candidates, Lech Kaczyński and Donald Tusk, were dominating the presidential campaign; the support for other parties' candidates having either collapsed or having failed to generate much enthusiasm in the first place.<sup>1</sup> PiS campaigned with a radical manifesto that called for nothing less than the establishment of a 'Fourth' Polish Republic.<sup>2</sup> One authority has described this vision in these terms: 'The Fourth Republic would experience moral cleansing through deep lustration, anti-corruption measures, and reaffirmation of Catholic values; its new Constitution would repair the state; it would heal society with a social contract, including fundamental changes in social and economic policy. This new beginning would rid Poland of the enduring legacy of the Round Table negotiated in 1989 between the regime and Solidarity.'<sup>3</sup>

PiS's aggressive campaign strategy ultimately proved effective: in the September parliamentary elections, the party won a narrow victory, securing 26.9 per cent of the vote and 155 (out of 460) seats,

slightly more than the 24.14 per cent and 133 seats that PO won.<sup>4</sup> The most salient feature of the new governing party – and the one that garnered the most international attention – was the fact that it had been founded and was now being led by two identical twin brothers, Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński. Jarosław, despite being leader of PiS, stated not to assume the office of prime minister, not to undermine his brother's chances of winning the presidency the following month. Instead, the so far relatively unknown Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz became premier. Lech duly won the presidential election, and was sworn in as president in December 2005. In July 2006 Marcinkiewicz resigned as prime minister, and Jarosław Kaczyński replaced him. Poland found itself in the unique position of having the two most senior posts in the county occupied by identical twin brothers.<sup>5</sup>

Foreign policy did not figure prominently in the 2005 campaign programme of PiS. The two brothers, however, possessed reputations that suggested that the new government might well take an antagonistic approach towards Poland's European partners. The international media variously portrayed the brothers as being self-centred and egotistical, prone to take offence at what they perceived as personal slights, obsessed with Poland's communist past and exhibiting paranoia about the influence that former communists still wielded within Polish society. One article, which was broadly representative of much of the international coverage, characterized the twins as being 'homophobic, anti-abortion, fractious, stridently nationalistic Euro-sceptics and, in some

minds, conspiratorial'.<sup>6</sup> Above all else, the twins were thought to have a close-minded view of the world, having travelled little beyond Poland's borders, and that they harboured a deep-seated hostility towards Germany and Russia. Statements that the brothers had made before the election did little to quell such fears. Lech Kaczyński, for example, declared that almost his entire experience of Germany was confined to the lavatories at Frankfurt airport.<sup>7</sup>

This article analyzes the foreign policy of the PiS government from when it came to power, until the government's defeat in the parliamentary elections in October 2007. The principal argument that will be advanced is that, in relation to some of the most pressing issues that Poland faced, the foreign policy of the PiS government broadly continued the same policies that previous administrations since 1989 had pursued. There was, however, a marked change in the style of the diplomacy that the government adopted. The language of previous governments towards the EU and Poland's neighbours had always been decidedly positive. To be sure, clashes of interest and even, from time to time, diplomatic disputes occurred. Nevertheless, Polish foreign policy had made a concerted effort to improve its relations with its neighbours. The incoming government, however, was altogether less concerned about trying to smooth over potential sources of dispute with other European states, particularly when it came to its bilateral relations with Germany and Russia. The article will begin with a brief discussion about Poland's 'security culture', and the how this informed the PiS government's approach to foreign policy. It will then single out four important dimensions to the government's approach to foreign relations. First, the government's attitude towards the European Union, with particular emphasis on the approach it adopted towards the negotiations over the 'Reform Treaty' in 2007. The remaining three parts will deal respectively with three of Poland's most important bilateral relationships: Germany, Russia and finally the United States. In each of these parts the article will assess the degree to which the PiS government departed from the approach previous Polish governments had taken.

### ***Polish Foreign Policy Traditions and the PiS Worldview***

Any analysis of contemporary Polish foreign policy must refer, however briefly, to the overbearing influence that history exerts upon it.<sup>8</sup> Poland's history since the late eighteenth century has been particularly traumatic, and has served to condition

the contemporary 'security culture' that informs Polish foreign and security decision-making to this day. In 1795, after the third partition at the hands of the Prussian, Russian and Hapsburg Empires, Poland – as a political entity – was erased from the European map. Thereafter, Poland's history was dominated, first, by the determined efforts of various revolutionaries and political activists to regain the historic nation's independence, and after 1918, to defend Poland's existence as an independent political entity from the intrusions of hostile powers. Few, if any, other European states suffered as greatly as Poland in the twentieth century. From 1939-45 it had to endure all manner of atrocities committed by the Nazis and the Soviets; in the process, Poland lost about one fifth of its total population, including most of its three million Jews in the holocaust. It then had to face the tragedy of being 'liberated' – the word hardly captures the historical reality – by the Red Army. The Stalinisation of Poland ensured that many more would die at the hands of the NKVD, or be imprisoned in the prisons and Gulags in the Soviet Union. For over forty years the country was reduced to being a communist satellite.<sup>9</sup> Given these experiences, it is hardly surprising that after 1989 strengthening Poland's security was a priority for successive post-communist governments.

Longhurst and Zaborowski have suggested that the experience of the Second World War resulted in Poland becoming 'intensely insecure about its ability to defend itself and very sceptical about whether Western Europe had any interest in coming to its assistance or the ability to do so'.<sup>10</sup> By the early 1990s a consensus had formed within Poland's political elite that only the United States had the capacity and the will to defend Poland from external attack. From 1992 onwards, an overarching goal of Polish foreign policy was to secure membership of NATO, which it finally achieved in 1999. A second important feature of Poland's security culture was a strong desire 'to return to Europe'. Poland – partly because of its Catholicism – has always regarded itself as being culturally part of Western Europe. It was therefore unsurprising that the goal of successive Polish governments throughout the 1990s was to attain membership of the European Union, which Poland finally achieved in 2004.<sup>11</sup>

The depth of Poland's strategic culture is indicated by the fact that since 1989 all of Poland's governments have broadly adhered to these principles.<sup>12</sup> In 2005 it remained to be seen whether PiS – the party that was promising to build a 'fourth' Polish republic within Poland – would radically

reorient Poland's foreign policy. The Kaczyński brothers were steeped in Poland's history. Indeed, their father had fought in the failed Warsaw uprising in 1944, and their mother had been a nurse who had tended to the wounded. The twins, moreover, had travelled little beyond Poland's frontiers. Critics were concerned that their limited knowledge of international affairs, when combined with their conservative and nationalistic tendencies, might result in a relatively provincial foreign policy. Lech Kaczyński, for example, when asked in September 2005 what he perceived as being the greatest threats to Poland, reportedly replied: 'Threats? Those are our neighbours – Russia and Germany'.<sup>13</sup>

The PiS government, however, after it assumed office, appeared to exhibit a distinct lack of interest when it came to Poland's foreign relations, and cared 'little about the opinion of the Western media'.<sup>14</sup> A senior Polish government official reportedly admitted: 'These people are mostly not very interested in foreign affairs. They don't speak languages, they don't travel abroad. They just don't care.'<sup>15</sup> But while the Kaczyński brothers may not have been overly interested in foreign policy, they nevertheless had some pronounced views about how it should be conducted.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, they ensured that their ideas were fully reflected in the manner in which Polish diplomacy was implemented. In April 2006 their first foreign minister, Stefan Meller, resigned in protest over the party's decision to form a coalition with two fringe populist parties. His replacement was Anna Fotyga, a close friend of Lech Kaczyński who could be relied upon to implement faithfully the PiS leadership's foreign policy agenda.<sup>17</sup> Fotyga's appointment was controversial within Poland, with many opposition politicians and the Polish press pointing to her lack of foreign policy experience. Donald Tusk – then leader of the main opposition Party, PO – alluding to her close friendship with Lech Kaczyński, suggested that her appointment represented a shift, when it came to directing foreign policy, away from the government and towards the presidency. He added that Fotyga, unlike her predecessor, 'did not create the confidence that nothing bad in Poland's foreign policy was going to happen'.<sup>18</sup> Certainly Fotyga at times adopted a unique diplomatic style. In August 2007, for example, she described Poland as being imprisoned 'between our historic enemies, Moscow and Berlin'.<sup>19</sup> This rather crude worldview would lay heavily upon the PiS government's handling of foreign policy, most notably in its relations with the EU.

### ***PiS and the EU: Disdain and Defiance***

The first Polish non-communist government, almost as soon as it had assumed power, made it very clear that its most important foreign policy priority was to secure membership of the EU. Throughout the 1990s and until Poland finally became a member of the Union in 2004, every government consistently worked for Poland's accession. There were several reasons why Poland was so anxious to join this particular club. First, obviously, were the material benefits of membership. Poles only had to look at how countries like Ireland, Spain and Portugal had fared since they joined the EC to see that membership was clearly in their country's long-term economic interests. Membership of the EU was seen as an important step in the process of Poland's transformation into a modern liberal democratic state basing on a capitalist economy. Secondly, there was a 'civilizational' dimension to the Polish desire for membership. Poland, unlike its Slavic neighbours, is a Catholic country and, as part of its identity, has always felt itself to be closer to Western Europe than to the East. Therefore a 'return to Europe', in the form of Poland's accession to the EU, was seen to be of vital importance from Warsaw's standpoint. Thirdly membership of the European Union, like NATO, would also demonstrate that Poland's post-communist transition was complete, and that it was now fit to join one of the world's most prestigious international clubs.<sup>20</sup>

Poland's obvious enthusiasm for the EU, however, has always been tempered by several other factors. Chief among them is a concern over the prospect of a dilution of national sovereignty. Having spent decades wrestling themselves away from Moscow's grip, Poles were hardly comfortable with the idea of transferring large amounts of their hard-won sovereignty to Brussels. The fact that within the 'new' European Union a united Germany was going to have the loudest voice was an additional factor that curbed Polish fervour. Indeed, for Poland, membership of international organisations like the EU and NATO served to emphasize that Poland was a sovereign state, a power that now had to be taken into account. Membership was therefore viewed as an affirmation of sovereignty rather than the negation of it. The Polish view of Europe therefore had a certain similarity with British and Danish attitudes towards the Union. Since Poland secured membership, it has fought an effective rear-guard action when it comes to defending its interests in Europe.<sup>21</sup>

In this sense, the accession to office of the PiS government was merely a continuation of this underlying Euro-scepticism. Like previous Polish governments, PiS proved to be doughty defenders of the national interest within Europe. There was, however, a marked change in tone when it came to the rhetoric that the new government used when talking about Europe. In a sense, before PiS came to office, Polish governments had talked 'European' but had defended vigorously Polish interests. The leadership of PiS, though, could hardly be bothered to disguise their disdain for the European Union. From the beginning, they made very clear that Brussels was not going to be allowed to interfere in Poland's internal affairs. The government's approach to the EU did little to enhance Poland's reputation within Brussels. One distinguished professor of international relations wrote that 'within the governing bodies of the EU, Poland has now acquired the position once occupied by Greece: being the most obstructive member'.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to this, the ideological complexion of the PiS government was not something that was likely to appeal to the Brussels 'Eurocracy'. As President of Warsaw, Lech Kaczyński had controversially banned the city's annual gay parade.<sup>23</sup> This action won him the plaudits of Poland's Catholic Church, but also raised concern in other parts of Europe. The Polish party's support for the death penalty also created unease in Brussels even before it assumed power. The Commission's president, José Manuel Barroso, warned the PiS leadership that the reintroduction of the death penalty in Poland would be contrary to European law. In the event, Jarosław Kaczyński announced that PiS would not take any decision that would threaten Poland's position within the EU.<sup>24</sup> The party's decision in April 2006 to establish a governing coalition with two right-wing populist parties, *Samobrona* (Self-Defence) and the *Liga Polskich Rodzin* (League of Polish Families) also led to raised eyebrows in other parts of Europe. Roman Giertych – leader of the LPR, who became deputy prime minister and minister of education in the government – made headlines in the European press for his campaign against the promotion of homosexuality in Polish schools. As one newspaper tartly commented: 'To secular liberals in the rest of Europe, all this makes Poland seem a bastion of medieval barbarism'.<sup>25</sup>

The PiS government's biggest conflict with the EU occurred during the negotiations to draw-up a 'reform treaty' that was to replace the defunct European constitution, which had been rejected in two referendums held in France and the

Netherlands. When a revised treaty was first put forward by the German chancellor, Angela Merkel (Germany held the presidency of the European Council at that time) the PiS government made it very clear that it was in complete opposition to any move designed to alter the relative voting weights of the individual EU states on the Council of Ministers.<sup>26</sup> Before the Brussels summit of June 2007 – which was to be convened in order to finalize the details of the new treaty – Jarosław Kaczyński publicly announced his opposition to the new proposed voting system within the European Council. He argued that it transferred too much influence to the larger European countries – especially to Germany. The Polish government came under intense diplomatic pressure to compromise on its position in the run-up to the Brussels summit. The newly elected French president, for example, Nicolas Sarkozy, visited Warsaw in an effort to persuade the Polish premier to be more flexible.<sup>27</sup>

Before the summit was convened, Jarosław Kaczyński, in an interview on Polish radio, defended his government's approach to the EU voting issue by saying Poland would have had a larger population had Germany not killed so many Poles during the Second World War. This line of reasoning, to put it mildly, provoked little sympathy for the Polish position from other EU governments. As one newspaper observed: 'This nationalistic sally broke all the rules of European Union behaviour, which dictate that the war may be cited only to highlight the miracle of post-war reconciliation'.<sup>28</sup> Lech Kaczyński represented Poland at the Summit itself. Despite coming under intense pressure from his fellow European heads of government, he refused to accept the proposed 'double majority' voting arrangement. In the face of Polish obduracy, Germany – and the rest of the EU – capitulated. Angela Merkel reluctantly agreed to suspend the new voting system for another seven years.<sup>29</sup>

The Brussels summit was a political triumph for the PiS government: against the odds, they had succeeded in attaining their principal political objective without compromising. Indeed, the whole Polish performance had echoes of Margaret Thatcher's conduct at two European summits in the early 1980s, in which she famously wrung from her reluctant continental partners a rebate when it came to Britain's contribution to the Community's budget. The late Hugo Young – in one of the best books on Britain's postwar relationship with 'Europe' – stated that the Thatcher 'era of European diplomacy' was 'characterized, on her part, by hideously plain

speaking, and a triumphant lack of sensitivity to other people's problems'.<sup>30</sup> This description captures almost perfectly the Kaczyński twins' mode of operation when it came to the European negotiations in Brussels. Poland's European partners were forced in the face of the Poles' intransigence to agree to their terms on the European Reform Treaty; whether they would be so sensitive to Polish interests in future negotiations was less than certain. One newspaper suggested that Poland ran 'the risk of being deemed unserious'. It added: 'countries that repeatedly flout the rules, issue empty threats or take Europe for granted end up losing influence'.<sup>31</sup>

To reiterate, however, the PiS government's Euro-scepticism should not be overdrawn. Poland's changed status since becoming a member of the EU and NATO has inevitably influenced its approach towards Europe, regardless of what government happens to be in power. 'With Poland now accepted as a member of the Western community, its borders secured and its alliance with the United States sealed, Warsaw's motivation to prove itself an outward-looking European has somewhat weakened'.<sup>32</sup> Had another political party been in office at the time of the 2007 negotiations, like PO or the reformed-communist SLD (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, the Alliance of the Democratic Left), they, too, would almost certainly have adopted a similarly tough stance in the negotiations. Indeed, it had been Jan Rokita – a senior figure within PO – who had in fact invented the rallying-cry of 'Nice or death', which the PiS government seized upon with eagerness.<sup>33</sup> It was the tone of the Polish negotiations, and Premier Kaczyński's gratuitous references to the Second World War, that Poland's European partners found most objectionable.

Furthermore, while Poland has indeed exhibited a large dose of scepticism when it comes to some aspects of the European project, it has shown a more positive attitude towards other areas. Since 2003, for example, Poland has been relatively enthusiastic about European defence and security co-operation. This has been partly a reaction to the war in Iraq, where Poland's whole hearted support for the US failed to produce substantial material benefits for Poland and left Europe badly divided.<sup>34</sup> It is also a consequence of mounting concern about Russia re-emerging once more as a powerful actor in Central and Eastern Europe. As one senior Polish politician has observed, if you live near 'a forest full of bandits', it is best to have two locks on the door.<sup>35</sup>

Yet the PiS government's openly antagonistic approach towards the EU served to alienate not just powerful figures within the Brussels 'eurocracy' but also other European governments, notably Germany, which held the EU presidency at the time these negotiations took place. Whether this really served to enhance Poland's long-term interests was open to question.

### **Germany: the War's Long Shadow**

From the perspective of the Polish Foreign Ministry, Germany is Poland's most important European partner. Germany's size, economic wealth and geographic location ensure that relations with Berlin are of critical importance for any Polish government. In the 1990s Berlin made a concerted effort to improve its relationship with its Eastern neighbour: 'Since the end of the Cold War, Germany has sought to cultivate a strategic partnership with Warsaw, presenting this as the logical continuation of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, and the Eastern complement to the Franco-German process of post-war reconciliation'.<sup>36</sup> Most significantly, Germany, partly in response to the rise of nationalism in Russia, became one of Europe's most prominent advocates of first NATO and then EU enlargement. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, for example, pronounced: 'There is no Europe that ends on Germany's Eastern border'.<sup>37</sup> Germany's overt support for Poland's inclusion in the enlargement of these two organisations ensured that the diplomatic relationship between Warsaw and Berlin became increasingly close.<sup>38</sup>

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, relations between Warsaw and Berlin became more complicated. Once EU enlargement had been agreed in principle, the exact conditions upon which Poland – and the other applicants – would be admitted became a divisive issue between the two countries. Fears that Western Europe would be swamped with 'Polish plumbers' led to most EU countries (Britain, Ireland and Sweden were the exceptions) excluding the new members from complete access to their labour markets until, at the latest, the year 2011. For Germany, which was suffering from a relatively high rate of unemployment, fears of a new Great Migration (*Völkerwanderung*) from Eastern Europe were especially acute. For Poland, however, its exclusion from its neighbour's huge labour market served to sour relations.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, because Germany's forceful advocacy of NATO and EU eastern expansion had been instrumental in bringing Warsaw and Berlin closer together, once Poland

had joined these organisations a major factor which had underpinned the improved relationship was suddenly removed. As one commentator has noted, after NATO and the EU's enlargement, Poland's relationship with Germany was bound to be more uncertain: 'Now there is the question of what happens next, what are the common challenges and projects.'<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, since 2003, Poland's prominent support for the US intervention in Iraq also resulted in a deterioration of relations between the two countries. Poland was a conspicuous European member of the 'coalition of the willing'; Germany, along with France and Russia, opposed the US intervention in Iraq. The fact that Warsaw and Berlin were at loggerheads over this issue also did little to improve relations between the two governments.<sup>41</sup>

Even before the PiS government's arrival in office, then, relations between Germany and Poland were not at their best. The coming to office of the Kaczyński twins – whose anti-German views had been well ventilated in the past – suggested that relations between the two countries were likely to deteriorate still further. The brothers' almost obsessive need to raise the history of the Second World War, and their acute sensitivity to any perceived slight ensured that diplomatic relations between Warsaw and Berlin were indeed badly strained throughout their tenure in office. One rather unseemly diplomatic incident that occurred in July 2006 reflected the general malaise in Polish-German relations. This arose after a German newspaper, *Die Tageszeitung*, published a particularly critical article on the Polish government, and produced a montage that portrayed President Lech Kaczyński with a potato head. In response, Warsaw demanded an immediate apology from the German government. This in itself displayed an unsettling ignorance of the relationship between government and the media in a functioning democracy. The following week President Kaczyński chose not to participate in a tripartite summit meeting with the French president, Jacques Chirac, and German chancellor, Angela Merkel, ostensibly because he was suffering from a bad cold. The Polish president's failure to attend the Weimar Triangle meeting sparked a great deal of criticism within Poland, including a public letter of protest signed by eight former Polish foreign ministers. Even Poland's ambassador to Berlin, Andrzej Byrt, weighed in, criticising his own government's response to the offending article as being 'exaggerated' and condemning the president's decision not to attend the summit.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most sensitive issues, in the eyes of Poland at least, was Germany's increasingly close relationship with Russia. Poland's concerns became especially acute after Moscow and Berlin in 2005 concluded a deal to construct an oil pipeline. The North Stream pipeline will link Germany and Russia directly, and will run underneath the Baltic Sea – thereby bypassing Poland. This is particularly worrying from the Polish perspective because it will give Russia the capability to cut-off oil supplies to its Eastern European neighbours, whilst continuing to supply Western Europe. The Polish government felt that this would leave Poland highly vulnerable to Russian energy blackmail. Poland's geographical location ensures that any alignment between Germany and Russia is bound to be viewed with deep misgivings. The spectre of another Rapallo, or even worse – the comparison that the defence minister, Radek Sikorski, reached for – a Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact continued to haunt Polish policy-makers.<sup>43</sup> A well-known Eastern European proverb says that 'the grass gets trampled whether the elephants fight or make love'.<sup>44</sup> In other words, Poland – and the rest of Eastern Europe – is at the mercy of the German-Russian relationship. Lech Kaczyński, in an interview with a German magazine, alluded to this fear when he said: 'we are very vigilant when it comes to the German-Russian relationship'.<sup>45</sup>

The fear of another Rapallo (German Soviet cooperation agreement signed in 1922) became less in November 2005, when Gerhard Schröder was replaced as German chancellor by Angela Merkel. The new chancellor adopted a more critical attitude towards Russia, and made it clear that she was keen to improve relations with Poland. One of her first foreign policy initiatives after coming to office was to arrange a summit meeting with President Kaczyński. Merkel, by all accounts, adopted a conciliatory tone, and was at pains to emphasize that she understood the Polish government's concerns. In relation to the pipeline dispute, the chancellor even suggested that Poland could be connected to the pipeline, an idea that was peremptorily rejected by the PiS government.<sup>46</sup> While the new German government appeared to take relations with Poland more seriously than its predecessor, the underlying sources of conflict between the two countries remained. Several unresolved issues relating to the Second World War, in particular, continued to have a deleterious effect on relations between the two countries.

One issue that particularly antagonized Polish opinion was the fact that a small number of

Germans, who had been expelled from the Third Reich's eastern territories at the end of the war, had issued legal proceedings against the Polish government in an attempt to regain the land that they had lost. The Prussian Trust, a relatively obscure organisation within Germany, but which has received a significant amount of publicity within Poland, in 2006 entered a lawsuit against the Polish government in the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on behalf of twenty-two expellees. Legal opinion in both Germany and Poland believed the action stood little chance of success. However, as one online German magazine commented: 'Although the group's plans are considered hopeless from a legal standpoint, [the Trust's] activities touch upon deep-seated Polish fears of a return of the Germans.'<sup>47</sup> Lech Kaczyński condemned the Trust's activities as a 'campaign of lies'. His brother, Jarosław, gave a public assurance that the government would take steps in order to protect Polish property.<sup>48</sup>

The Polish government wanted a new clause to be attached to the 1991 'Treaty of Good Neighbourly Relations' signed between Germany and Poland, which would commit Berlin to taking responsibility for all claims made against Poland. The German government, though, considered the issue to have been settled long ago, and argued that individual expellees had no right to press claims against Poland, and that the lost territories represented war reparations. Germany therefore believed that there was little point in re-opening this particular issue. Nor was the government willing to accept responsibility for what potentially might be colossal sums of money.<sup>49</sup> Given the hypersensitivity of the PiS leadership – and especially the two Kaczyński brothers – to any issue with Germany that was related to the Second World War, this matter was bound to have a particularly corrosive effect on relations between the two countries.

Similarly, the way in which some Germans have chosen to commemorate, and some German historians to write about, the Second World War have also provoked a sharp reaction from Poland. The idea that Germans were also victims of the war has gained currency within Germany in recent years. The fact that thousands of Germans in the East were uprooted as a result of the Red Army's advance, or expelled and turned into refugees when the countries of Eastern Europe were liberated, has recently attracted greater attention from German historians. The notion of Germans as 'victims' of the Second World War is, understandably, deeply controversial in much of Europe, and nowhere more

so than in Poland. President Lech Kaczyński, for example, has expressed his concern over the emergence in Germany of a tendency, in his eyes at least, 'to qualify what happened between 1939-1945'.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the activities of the president of Germany's Federation of Expellees, Erika Steinbach – who also happens to be a Christian Democrat (the party of Angela Merkel) member of the Bundestag – have also attracted a great deal of attention in the Polish media. Steinbach has been the leading proponent within Germany for the establishment of a museum that commemorates the experience of the German people during the Second World War, including the expulsions from the East. Steinbach, who is almost unknown in Germany itself, has become public enemy number one in Poland, at least according to some sections of the Polish media. She was also a convenient foil for the PiS government's anti-German rhetoric. One Warsaw insider has commented: 'Unstable governments need an internal or external enemy in order to stay united.'<sup>51</sup> The fact that Steinbach is in the same political party as the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, hardly helped to improve relations between Warsaw and Berlin.

Whether it was wise or statesmanlike to allow the bilateral relationship between Poland and its most important neighbour and fellow member of the EU to weaken to the extent that it did was a question that many of the government's critics began to ask.<sup>52</sup> Lech Kaczyński's predecessor as president of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, even offered some public advice during an interview with the German edition of the magazine *Vanity Fair*, over how Germany should manage its relationship with Poland if PiS were to remain in power after the 2007 parliamentary election. Describing the government's approach to its neighbours as being an 'awfully bad idea' and labelling it as 'provocative', the former president suggested to the Berlin government that it should do its best to avoid conflict with Poland. He added, however, that were PiS to win the election, the German government might have to reconsider its approach towards Poland. That a former Polish president should be so critical of the current government in a foreign publication was unprecedented, and it ignited a great deal of controversy within Poland. But it was also another telling indication of the general unease felt within Poland over the way in which the government was conducting foreign policy and its approach towards Germany in particular.<sup>53</sup>

The PiS government's handling of diplomatic relations with Berlin was probably the most serious

of its foreign policy blunders. To be sure, there have been several sources of conflict between the two countries, and any Polish government would have found it difficult to smooth over these points of friction. The PiS government, however, was not interested in trying to resolve these problems; if anything, they seemed to take a degree of satisfaction over the fact that relations between Warsaw and Berlin were so strained. This was evidence, according to a peculiar line of reasoning, that Poland was pursuing a strong foreign policy.<sup>54</sup> The government's critics, however, argued forcefully that the PiS government's inept diplomacy towards Poland's most important neighbour was harming the national interest. In the 2007 election campaign, one of the principal charges the main opposition party, PO, made against the government was that it had badly mishandled Poland's relations with other European states, most notably Germany.<sup>55</sup> After PiS lost power, one of the first actions of the new government was to try and place relations with Germany on a new footing. The fact that the new Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, and Angela Merkel are friends makes this task easier than it might have been.<sup>56</sup>

#### ***PiS and Russia: Remaining Suspicious of the Bear***

The reconciliation between Germany and Poland is incomplete; issues from the past continue to cause friction between Warsaw and Berlin. In the case of Poland and Russia, however, the reconciliation has barely even begun; and the past continues to poison the relations between the two countries. Or as one journalist has put it: 'Germany knows and admits the terrible wrongs it has done to Poland. Russia, particularly under Vladimir Putin, is utterly allergic to apology.'<sup>57</sup> Germany has at least made a number of high profile gestures in an attempt to atone for its past crimes. Russia, in contrast, has for the most part refused to recognize any wrong doing in Poland, and has usually dismissed Polish complaints as simply raking over the past. Until Russia openly acknowledges its record in relation to Poland, there is little chance that relations between the two countries will dramatically improve.

As with Germany, Russia's role in the Second World War still heavily influences the political relationship between the two countries today. Under communist rule, unpleasant facts like the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact were censored. An even more explosive issue was the mass-murder of 13,000 Polish officers at the hands of the Soviet NKVD (the forerunner to the KGB).<sup>58</sup> The Soviet 'liberation' of Poland led to

further Soviet misdeeds, most notably the failure to assist the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944.<sup>59</sup> The Second World War and the subsequent Stalinisation of the country, which – even by the standards of the time – was particularly brutal, ensured that few Poles had any affection for Russia. Poland, though, proved to be something of a thorn in the side of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, particularly after the emergence in the early 1980s of a strong opposition movement to communist rule.<sup>60</sup> In the 1990s Poland's relations with first the Soviet Union, and then after 1991 the Russian Federation, alternated between periods of relative warmth and others of relative hostility. Even so, continuing suspicion and mistrust of Russia had a major influence on Polish foreign policy. Zarycki has even gone so far as to suggest that 'the image of the potential threat from Russia is the backbone of Polish foreign policy in the post-communist period, including its main priorities as accession to NATO and the EU'.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Poland's overt pro-Western (and indeed Atlanticist) foreign policy in the 1990s, naturally resulted in a corresponding deterioration in relations with (after 1991) the Russian Federation.<sup>62</sup>

When Vladimir Putin came to power at the beginning of the new millennium, a chill wind blew across Polish-Russian relations. Several rather bitter diplomatic disputes burdened relations between Warsaw and Moscow. One particularly ugly incident arose in 2005 when three teenagers, who happened to be children of Russian diplomats, were mugged in Warsaw. President Putin went on public television in Russia and condemned the muggings; and the Polish ambassador was summoned to the Russian foreign ministry, which demanded an official apology. Shortly afterwards, two Polish diplomats and a journalist were beaten-up in Moscow, seemingly in retaliation for what had happened in Warsaw.<sup>63</sup> The Polish government's decision to support the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and President Kwaśniewski's high-profile intervention, also created conflict between the two countries.<sup>64</sup> Russia's recent economic revival has also resulted in a more aggressive approach towards its 'near abroad'.<sup>65</sup> ('Near abroad' describes Russia's foreign policy doctrine towards former Soviet Republics) This obviously has serious implications for Poland's foreign policy towards the east. As Zarycki has noted: 'Poles are especially sensitive to any traces of Russian expansionism. A constant flow of news and commentaries on Russia in the Polish media points out actual and potential manifestations of revival of imperial tendencies in the east. These are usually perceived in all efforts and calls to strengthen the central power in Russia

and most of Russia's actions abroad, in particular in such sensitive areas from Poland's point of view as Belarus and Ukraine.<sup>66</sup>

Relations between Russia and Poland had therefore already badly deteriorated even before the PiS government came to power. The leadership of PiS – particularly Jarosław Kaczyński – nonetheless criticized their predecessors for not having done enough to defend Poland's interests in the face of Russian pressure. The party was an outgrowth of the old *Solidarity* movement, and its leadership had an uncompromising view of the malign influence that the Soviet Union had wielded in Poland's affairs during the communist era. The new government was not, therefore, favourably disposed towards Russia, and felt little inclination to make any gesture that would improve relations between the two countries. Indeed, the PiS government not only viewed Russia with ill-concealed hostility, but was also at pains to display its Atlanticist leanings.

Perhaps the biggest change in the relationship between the two countries was that Poland now belonged to both NATO and the EU. Poland was no longer starkly vulnerable to Russian pressure in the way that it had been in earlier periods of its history. Poland could now, in theory at least, rely on its EU and NATO partners for support in any dispute with Russia. This major change in the power relationship between the two countries was apparent when Russia imposed a ban on Polish meat imports in November 2005, stating that they failed to meet Russian hygiene standards. There was a widespread belief within Poland – and elsewhere – that the ban owed more to Russian diplomatic posturing than to any concern about the quality of Polish farm produce. The PiS government, however, were able to retaliate in kind, by blocking an EU treaty with Russia. The government insisted that the meat issue had to be resolved before they would be prepared to support the EU partnership agreement with Russia. Russia predictably greeted the Polish policy with anger, arguing that Poland was sabotaging an important EU treaty because of its own narrow interests. Some of Poland's EU partners also expressed publicly a degree of annoyance at the Polish position. This was probably a reflection of the general antipathy that many other European governments then felt towards the PiS government. In private, however, several EU countries acknowledged that Poland had the right to defend its interests in this manner.<sup>67</sup> The Polish government's willingness to block the proposed treaty until the Russia lifted its embargo was a clear indication that Poland, by virtue of its membership of

the EU, now had the capacity to do real harm to Russia's interests. The rhetoric emanating from Warsaw and Moscow was, however, decidedly bitter, and neither side appeared to display any willingness to compromise on this issue.

The dispute over Polish meat continued to go on throughout the PiS government's time in office. After PiS lost the 2007 election, however, the incoming government promised to improve Polish-Russian relations. The new government made several statements that indicated that it might be prepared to lift Poland's veto on an EU-Russian Treaty, and that it would not continue to block Russia's membership of the World Trade Organisation. In response, Moscow finally reached a settlement with Warsaw in December 2007, in which the embargo on Polish meat and dairy products was finally lifted.<sup>68</sup> The relatively swift resolution to this dispute after a new Polish government came to power is further evidence that the PiS government's hard-line approach to diplomatic relations actually undermined Poland's interests. One Polish commentator noted that the Kaczyński brothers seemed to believe that if they used tough rhetoric towards Russia, then Moscow would 'start to talk to [Poland] in a different tone'. However, Premier Marcinkiewicz's government quickly discovered that when Moscow imposed the embargo, 'Poland was helpless'.<sup>69</sup>

'Energy security' was already a major concern for Poland before PiS arrived in power in the autumn of 2005. The suspension of Russian supplies to respectively Belarus and Ukraine in 2006 and 2007 was a stark reminder of Poland's almost complete dependence on Russian oil and gas.<sup>70</sup> Shortly after PiS came to power, the Polish government suggested that a new 'energy NATO' be established, whereby in the event of supplies of gas and oil being interrupted, European states would agree to pool their reserves in order to assist one another. Unfortunately, little diplomatic preparation had been done before this initiative was unveiled, which meant that the proposal did not attract a great deal of interest from other European states – which was in itself another indication of the government's mismanagement of foreign policy.<sup>71</sup> The PiS government, however, continued to look for ways to reduce Poland's vulnerability to potential Russian energy blackmail. It suggested, for example, that a new set of pipelines be constructed from Southern Asia, through the Caspian Sea, which would run through the Balkans to Poland, thereby bypassing Russia (these are the BTC and Nabucco pipeline). At one time the government even seriously mooted

the possibility of doing a deal with the United States. Poland would agree to host the missile shield in return for American assistance in building the new southern pipeline.<sup>72</sup> Russia, however, appears to have successfully prevented any EU effort to circumvent its territory. It intends to build its own pipeline, South Stream, which would run under the Black Sea and traverse Southern Europe, and has the enthusiastic support of several EU governments within this region; this would render any other non-Russian southern pipeline uneconomic. Russia, moreover, has also done some diplomatic arm-twisting in the Caucasus to ensure that the governments within this region will not co-operate with any attempts to construct a non-Russian Southern pipeline.<sup>73</sup> To date, there is little evidence that the EU is willing to make a serious effort to diversify its energy sources and thus reduce its energy dependence on Russia.<sup>74</sup>

Poland's Atlanticist leanings were another source of friction between Moscow and Warsaw. This, of course, was nothing new. Since the time when Poland announced that it wanted to join NATO relations between the two governments have been distinctly cool. The PiS leadership's overt hostility towards Russia, coupled with its desire to work closely with the United States, however, ensured that these tensions became even more pronounced. The biggest issue of contention was the Polish government's willingness to allow the US to establish a base in Poland as part of its anti-missile shield. The reasons why Poland gave serious consideration to this venture will be discussed below. From the perspective of Moscow, Poland's willingness to collaborate with the US on this matter was another indication of the government's Russophobia. Poles, however, regarded Russia's attempt to veto the proposed shield in Eastern Europe as evidence that it still harboured imperialist designs in the region. Fotyga, after having discussed the issue of the shield with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, stressed that Poland had as much right to accept the installation as any other European country. She added that it was unthinkable that Russia would attempt to veto the installation of an American base in Western Europe, but that it treated East Central Europe differently. She asked rhetorically whether the former Eastern bloc territories were 'in a different category, continually under the influence of Russia? This isn't so!'<sup>75</sup>

For much of the PiS government's time in office, other European countries tended to regard Poland's overt hostility towards Russia with disquiet and, at

times, outright frustration. This was, no doubt, partly a consequence of the Polish government's ill-starred diplomacy towards other Western European countries, most notably Germany. There was a perception that just as the 'prickly' Poles were being deliberately antagonistic towards Germany, the PiS government's policy towards Moscow was conditioned by unvarnished Russophobia. Later on, however, in response to events both inside and outside Russia, European governments themselves began to adopt a more critical attitude towards Moscow, and therefore became more supportive of Poland. The assassination of the Russian journalist and Putin critic, Anna Politkovskaya, in October 2006, and the poisoning of the former Russian security officer turned dissident, Alexander Litvinenko, the following month in London served to harden Europe's views towards Russia. The Russian government's aggressive rhetoric towards the West also created unease. The president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, commenting on Poland's meat dispute with Russia, declared in May 2007: 'A Polish problem is a European problem'.<sup>76</sup> Fotyga herself alluded to the EU's more supportive attitude towards Poland's problematic relationship with Russia after one meeting of EU foreign ministers in September 2007. She declared that the other participants had shown 'huge solidarity' with Poland.<sup>77</sup>

Throughout the PiS government's tenure in office, diplomacy between Russia and Poland became almost frozen. There was no bilateral summit meeting between the Polish President, Lech Kaczyński, and President Putin. Nor did the two PiS prime ministers, Marcinkiewicz and Jarosław Kaczyński, meet the Russian leader. To a large degree, however, relations between Poland and Russia were always bound to be difficult. With so many unresolved questions concerning the history of Russia's involvement in Poland, coupled with the conspicuous Atlanticism of Polish foreign policy, diplomatic relations between Warsaw and Moscow were bound to be strained whatever government happened to be in power in Poland. Putin's aggressive posturing towards Eastern Europe has also created a great deal of unease, if not outright hostility, towards Russia right across the Polish political spectrum. However, as in the case of relations with Germany, the fact is that the PiS government did not make any real effort to try and smooth over these difficulties; if anything, the government appeared to have revelled in its diplomatic confrontation with Moscow. Again, one is forced to question whether this approach did actually serve Poland's broader national interests.

### ***Poland and the United States: The Trojan-Donkey?***

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has been Poland's most important ally. Poland's relationship with the US has certainly drawn the most interest and comment from outsiders – by no means all of which has been favourable. Poland's close alignment with the US is based upon a number of different factors. Poland's Atlanticism is almost certainly partly due to a 'bandwagoning' strategy. By aligning itself with the most powerful state in the international system, Poland has hoped to enhance its own security, and to strengthen its position in the face of a potentially hostile Russia. During the course of the 1990s, moreover, there was considerable gratitude towards the US for the role that it played in bringing the Cold War to an end. This admiration for the US has perhaps recently begun to weaken, but was nevertheless still very much present at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A survey that was taken in 2002, for instance, revealed that President George Bush, who was reviled in much of Western Europe, was the 'most liked' foreign statesman within Poland.<sup>78</sup>

Poland's unvarnished Atlanticism has, without doubt, created more than a little friction with other Western European countries, most notably France and Germany. Even before Poland joined the EU, questions were raised about whether Poland was behaving in a sufficiently European manner. This could be seen as a coded-criticism that it was too close to the US. A number of decisions were taken by the Polish government at the beginning of the twenty-first century that caused more than a few European eye-brows to be raised. One of the most notable was the Polish government's acceptance of a \$3.8 billion loan from the US Congress in order to purchase 48 F-16 fighters from Lockheed Martin. The fact that Poland opted for an American fighter over a European model was particularly significant: 'Poland's choice in defence procurement of US rather than European systems is a firm expression of Warsaw's Atlanticist credentials'.<sup>79</sup> This purchase was all the more controversial within Europe because it was announced shortly after Poland's application for EU membership had been accepted. Of even greater significance was Poland's unambiguous support for the US invasion of Iraq and its willingness to contribute its own military forces to the operation.<sup>80</sup> Some European commentators characterized Poland as being America's Trojan Horse inside the EU – or, as one German tabloid sarcastically put it, 'Trojan Donkey'.<sup>81</sup>

Among Poland's political and foreign policy elites, there has been widespread agreement on the need for Poland to maintain a close working relationship with the US. The leadership of PiS broadly accepted this consensus. That said, in the 2005 election campaign PiS made several statements which indicated that it would adopt a slightly more independent posture in its relationship with the US. The Kaczyński brothers, for example, criticized their predecessors for not having won more concessions from the United States. They argued that Poland had bent over backwards to prove its loyalty to the United States, but had received little in return. In an interview with an American newspaper, for example, President Lech Kaczyński said: 'Poland is, and knows how to be, a loyal ally ... But we also want a similar loyalty shown toward us. We hope we will have a strategic partnership with the United States in areas that are most important for Poland as well'.<sup>82</sup> The PiS leadership criticized the previous SLD government for failing to win more contracts for Polish firms in relation to the on-going reconstruction of Iraq. Another issue of contention was the requirement that Poles apply for a visa in order to visit the United States. The Polish government believed that as one of America's most loyal European allies, Polish citizens should be treated in the same way as people entering the United States from Western European countries. The new PiS government implied that it would take a more robust line with the United States in negotiations over these kinds of issues.<sup>83</sup>

Once installed in power, however, PiS proved to be every bit as pliant in the face of US demands as their predecessors. The new government, for instance, swiftly reversed its predecessor's decision to withdraw Polish troops from Iraq. President Lech Kaczyński assured the US that they would remain in Iraq until the end of 2006, and even implied that the deployment could be extended beyond that date if they were still needed.<sup>84</sup> The government did, however, reduce the number of forces serving in Iraq from 1500 to 900, although in 2006 additional Polish units were dispatched to Afghanistan. Despite the mounting difficulties in Iraq, Jarosław Kaczyński made it clear that the government would continue to support the US mission. The Polish prime minister argued that Iraq was 'not an issue you can solve by defecting' or walking away before the job was done. Kaczyński also made it clear that his comments applied to all those countries that had committed troops to Iraq, 'because defection is always a bad solution'.<sup>85</sup>

One of the most visible signs of Poland's Atlanticist leanings has been its willingness to allow the United States to use its territory for the installation of a missile shield. When the idea was first mooted in 2001, the Polish government was privately sceptical, but chose not to voice its concerns. Instead, it allowed the debate to proceed between the United States and its established NATO allies in Western Europe. Despite its previous reservations, the Polish government in 2001 stated that it was willing to offer its territory for the proposed shield, and even partially finance the necessary components. The decision was based upon a belief that 'the installation of parts of the system would not only serve to enhance Poland's security but also strengthen its political importance within NATO'.<sup>86</sup> While Poland had accepted that it would collaborate with the United States in this venture, the details of the deployment still had to be settled between the two countries. How the shield would be financed, and the means by which the US would ensure that Poland's security would not be seriously threatened, were two issues that were of particular concern for Poland.

In the negotiations with Washington, the PiS government's first defence minister, Radek Sikorski, appeared to adopt a relatively hard bargaining position. During one press conference in 2006, Sikorski stated that he needed 'to prove to the Polish people and Parliament' that as a result of the deployment 'Poland's security would increase'. He added that there were arguments against the shield: 'such a base would be a target, it would be a target of [*sic*] nuclear strikes or terrorist threats or increased penetration by foreign intelligence services. In other words, there would be down sides, and I would need to go before parliament and say why, overall, it's a good package'.<sup>87</sup> Sikorski's tenure as defence minister was, however, abruptly terminated in February 2007. No official explanation was given for his departure from the government, although it was widely believed that Sikorski was exhibiting too great a degree of independence for the taste of the prime minister, Jarosław Kaczyński. This perhaps included the position the defence minister had taken in relation to negotiations with the United States over the shield. Premier Kaczyński later stated that he was unhappy that the defence minister was insisting that the United States would have to increase significantly its military aid to Poland as a *quid pro quo* for Poland's willingness to host the shield.<sup>88</sup> The sacking of one of the administration's most talented ministers was viewed in many quarters as a major weakening of the government's authority.<sup>89</sup>

Out of office, Sikorski became a vocal critic of Poland's relationship with the United States.<sup>90</sup> While he could hardly be described as anti-American, the way Poland had been treated by its senior transatlantic partner during his tenure as defence minister clearly rankled. Sikorski went on to write a particularly critical article that was published in the *Washington Post*, accusing the Bush administration of crassness in the handling of its relations with Poland. He pointed to one incident in which the State Department passed on to the Polish Foreign Ministry a memorandum on the subject of the shield with a draft reply attached – 'a reply that contained a long list of host countries' obligations and few corresponding U.S. commitments'. He pointed out that the Polish Foreign Ministry was more than capable of writing its own diplomatic correspondence, and did not need the assistance of the State Department. Alluding to history, Sikorski argued that membership of NATO was not enough to maintain the Poles' confidence in their security. The formative experience of the Second World War ensured that Poland would never again allow itself 'to be egged on by paper guarantees not backed by practical means of delivery'. He argued that if tensions between Poland and Russia were to increase as a result of the installation of the missile shield, 'the United States must demonstrate that it will do for Poland what it is doing for Japan in the face of its confrontation with North Korea: tightening formal security arrangements and deploying batteries of Patriot missiles or the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system'.<sup>91</sup>

Sikorski's criticisms of American high-handedness were given added weight when a Polish government memo was leaked to the press that recorded a private conversation between a senior American diplomat from the US embassy in Warsaw and a Polish government official. The diplomat suggested that Roman Giertych – a deputy-prime minister and leader of one of the government's coalition parties, the LPR – should be sacked. Giertych had publicly denounced the American occupation of Iraq in the Polish parliament. Given that the Polish government was an American ally in Iraq, the diplomat obviously thought that Giertych's position within the government was untenable, and he therefore should be removed. For the Poles, these comments represented an unwarranted American intrusion in Poland's internal affairs. Jarosław Kaczyński publicly stated that the diplomat concerned had 'apparently overstepped the norms governing relations between sovereign nations'. The following day Anna Fotyga summoned the American

ambassador to the Foreign Ministry and demanded an explanation.<sup>92</sup>

Given the PiS government's nationalistic inclinations, it was always unlikely that they would feel entirely comfortable fulfilling the role of being America's 'protégé' or 'new model ally', still less a kind of 'Trojan Donkey'. The vast power of the United States, however, coupled with continuing concern about Russia ensured that PiS pursued an overtly Atlanticist foreign policy. In this, there was little substantive difference to the approach that its predecessors had adopted. However, the PiS leadership indicated during the 2005 election campaign that they would be able to extract greater material benefits from Poland's 'special relationship' with the United States. In office, they failed to live up to this promise. Indeed, after the PiS government was removed from power, its successor adopted a more robust posture in its negotiations with the United States over the missile shield. The new Polish foreign minister was none other than Radek Sikorski – the PiS government's former defence minister. The new government demanded a commitment from the US that it would be willing to defend Polish air space in return for deploying part of the shield on Polish territory.<sup>93</sup> This new approach towards this issue was almost certainly derived from a general feeling that PiS had been too willing to concede to American demands, and that this had adversely affected Poland's relations with other EU states and Russia.

### Conclusion

In spite of their radical domestic agenda, the PiS government's handling of foreign policy did not result in a 'diplomatic revolution'. When it came to dealing with the most pressing issues that confronted Poland in terms of its management of foreign affairs, the government broadly adopted the same approach as their predecessors. This attests to the continuing depth of Poland's security culture. In terms of Poland's relations with the European Union, PiS continued to defend vigorously Poland's national interests; the government's commitment to the Nice voting formula was simply a continuation of existing policy. The major issues of contention with Germany, such as the legal claims being made by expellees or the German government's support for a museum that commemorated the expulsions from the east, had strained relations between the two countries long before PiS arrived in power. Similarly, Russia's economic revival and its willingness to intervene directly in its 'near abroad' caused concern right across Poland's political spectrum.

The PiS government's close collaboration with the US and its willingness to host part of a missile shield also did not represent a departure from existing policy.

There was, however, a fundamental change in the style of the diplomacy that the government adopted. PiS was overtly antagonistic in its handling of relations with other European states. Its conservative and nationalistic impulses often impinged upon the government's conduct of foreign policy. This was especially true in the approach that it adopted towards Germany and Russia. The Kaczyński brothers continual references to the Second World War had an especially damaging effect upon Poland's bilateral relations with these two countries. As a result of these kinds of verbal assaults Poland's standing among its European partners was badly damaged. The country quickly gained a reputation for being the most difficult and obstructive member of the EU. When PiS were unexpectedly removed from power after the 2007 parliamentary elections, most European governments greeted the result with undisguised relief.<sup>94</sup> The incoming PO government made it clear that it was determined to repair the damage that the PiS government had caused to Poland's diplomatic relations. The new foreign minister, Sikorski, emphasized that Poland was 'retaking its place in the mainstream of European politics'.<sup>95</sup> This more moderate approach to foreign policy ensured that relations with both Germany and Russia rapidly improved. This was further evidence, if it were needed, that the PiS government's style of diplomacy had been disadvantageous to Poland's national interests.

<sup>1</sup> See Frances Millard, 'Poland's Politics and the Travails of Transition after 2001: The 2005 Elections', *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 7, (2006), pp. 1007-31; and Aleks Szczerbiak, "'Social Poland' Defeats 'Liberal Poland'?" The September-October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (2007), pp. 203-32, for accounts of the 2005 elections.

<sup>2</sup> The first Polish republic lasted until Poland was partitioned out of existence in 1795. The Second Republic maintained a precarious existence during the interwar period, 1918-39, but was destroyed by the Nazis and the Soviets respectively. The third republic emerged after the collapse of communism in 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Millard, 'Poland's Politics and the Travails of Transition', p. 1016.

<sup>4</sup> Szczerbiak, "'Social Poland' Defeats 'Liberal Poland'?", p. 214.

<sup>5</sup> See Millard, 'Poland's Politics and the Travails of Transition', pp. 1007-1031; and Szczerbiak, "'Social Poland' Defeats 'Liberal Poland'?", pp. 203-32.

<sup>6</sup> Deborah Hope, 'Together at the Top', 9 Sept. 2006, at <<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20358317-7583,00.html>>, accessed 26 Sept. 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Roger Boyes, 'Twins Take Up Positions of Power in Poland', *Times Online*, 19 July 2006, at <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article689895.ece?token=null&offset=12>>, accessed 31 May 2008.

<sup>8</sup> See George Sanford, 'Overcoming the Burden of History in Polish Foreign Policy', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2002), pp. 178-203 (esp. pp. 186-90), for a much more extended analysis of the way history has informed Polish foreign policy throughout the ages.

<sup>9</sup> See Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland: Volume II, 1795 to the Present*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), which is the best and most detailed history of Poland since 1795 in English.

<sup>10</sup> Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist: Poland's Foreign and Security Policy Priorities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Sanford, 'Overcoming the Burden', pp. 181-2.

<sup>12</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in 'A History of Hostility Between Poland and Germany', *Spiegel Online*, 20 June 2007, at <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,489510,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, p. 87

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in 'The Accidental Government', *The Economist*, 11 May 2006.

<sup>16</sup> See Paweł Wroński, 'Polityka Zagraniczna Według Kaczyńskiego', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 Sept. 2005, at <<http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,2914782.html>>, accessed 6 June 2008, for a neat summary of Lech Kaczyński's views on foreign policy before the presidential election took place.

<sup>17</sup> Although it has been suggested that Jarosław Kaczyński had reservations about the appointment, but was overruled by his brother. See Andrzej Stankiewicz and Piotr Śmiłowicz, 'Oczekiwana zamiana bliźniaków', *Newsweek Polska*, 25 March 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in 'Anna Fotyga, Szefem MSZ', *Wprost* 24, 9 May 2006, at <<http://www.wprost.pl/ar/90132/Anna-Fotyga-szefem-MSZ/>>, accessed 27 Oct. 2007.

<sup>19</sup> 'Fotyga: Niemcy chcą nas upokorzyć i spiskują z Rosją', *Wprost* 24, 16 Aug. 2007, <<http://www.wprost.pl/ar/112141/Fotyga-Niemcy-chca-nas-upokorzyc-i-spiskuja-z-Rosja/>>, accessed 27 Oct. 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>21</sup> The issue of the EU became more contentious towards the end of the 1990s, when the Polish political establishment and wider public opinion began to realize that membership would entail significant changes in Polish policy in a variety of different areas. See George Blazycha and Marek Kolkiewicz, 'Poland and the EU: Internal Disputes and Domestic Politics and Accession', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (1999), pp. 131-43.

<sup>22</sup> Fred Halliday, 'Warsaw's Populist Twins', *Open Democracy*, 1 Sept. 2006, at <[http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization/poland\\_twins\\_3871.jsp#](http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization/poland_twins_3871.jsp#)>, accessed 23 Sept. 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Craig Whitlock, 'In Poland, Twins Shoot for Moon', *Washington Post*, 25 Sept. 2005, at <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/24/AR2005092401466.html?nav=rss\\_print/asection](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/24/AR2005092401466.html?nav=rss_print/asection)>, accessed 20 Sept. 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Nicholas Watts, 'Polish PM Softens Rightwing Stance After EU Protests', *The Guardian*, 31 Aug. 2006, at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,329564986-106710,00.html>>, accessed 26 Sept. 2006.

<sup>25</sup> 'A Foreign Affair?', *The Economist*, 22 March 2007.

<sup>26</sup> The existing voting weights had been agreed at the Nice summit (before Poland was a member of the EU) in December 2000. Under that formula the four largest countries (Germany, France, Britain and Italy) were given 29 votes; medium sized countries like Spain and Poland had 27. This created the anomalous situation in which Poland had almost as much influence as Germany in the Council of Ministers, despite the fact that it has a population that is only half the size and an economy one tenth of the size of Germany's. The 'double majority' proposal reallocated relative voting weights in proportion to each country's size of population. For a decision to be made, it was necessary that a majority of EU countries vote in favour of it, and that they had to represent 60% of the EU's population. For analyses of the dispute over the voting formula see 'Charlemagne: Those Pesky Poles', *The Economist*, 27 Nov. 2003; and George Parker, 'Suspect Polish Maths and a Tricky Summit', 12 March 2007 at <<http://blogs.ft.com/brusselsblog/2007/03/suspect-polish-html/>>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>27</sup> 'Poland Might Play Along After All', *Spiegel Online*, 14 June 2007, at <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,488566,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>28</sup> See 'Charlemagne: The Polish Farewell', *The Economist*, 29 Nov. 2007.

<sup>29</sup> See 'The EU Summit: Tailoring a Compromise', *The Economist*, 24 June 2007, for an analysis of the deal that was reached at the Brussels summit.

<sup>30</sup> Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London: Papermac, 1999), p. 314.

<sup>31</sup> 'Charlemagne: Treaty Blues', *The Economist*, 28 June 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Szczerbiak, "'Social Poland' Defeats 'Liberal Poland'", p. 206; and Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, p. 88.

<sup>34</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, pp. 52-7.

<sup>35</sup> The politician is Bronisław Komorowski, a senior member of PO, who became speaker of the *Sejm* after the Polish election in October 2007. Quoted in 'Charlemagne: The Polish Farewell', *The Economist*, 29 Nov. 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Adrian Hyde-Price, *European Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Challenge of Multipolarity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 131.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Wayne Thompson, 'Germany and the East', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 6, (2001), pp. 921-52 (p. 929).

<sup>38</sup> See Marcin Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe: Conflict, Co-operation, and Europeanisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 103-12; and Thompson, 'Germany and the East', p. 932.

<sup>39</sup> See Thompson, 'Germany and the East', p. 934; and Zaborowski, *Germany, Poland and Europe*, pp. 134-69, for an assessment of the impact of EU enlargement negotiations on Polish-German relations between 1998-2001.

<sup>40</sup> Kai-Olaf Lang, quoted in 'Chancellor Merkel Heads to Poland as Tensions Remain High', *DW-World*, 16 March 2007, at <<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2385635,00.html>>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>41</sup> 'A History of Hostility', *Spiegel Online*, 20 June 2007. Another reason that has been posited for 'New Europe's' support for the 2003 US Iraq war was that these countries had come to resent what they perceived as France and Germany's attempts to dictate what Europe's policy on the war should be. See Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme Herd, *Divided West: European Security and the Transatlantic Relationship* (London: Chatham House, 2006), p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> 'Polish PM Prickled by "Spud" Slander' *Spiegel Online*, 11 July 2006, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,426222,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Sikorski's reaction to the agreement was especially significant because he was one of the few figures in the government with any real international experience and who spoke fluent English. See 'The Trouble with Poland', *The Economist*, 11 May 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Hyde-Price, *European Security*, p. 132.

<sup>45</sup> Christian Neef and Jan Puhl, 'We are Very Vigilant When it comes to the German-Russian Relationship', *Spiegel Online*, 6 March 2006, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,404675,00.html>>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Puhl, 'Poland's Post-Election Road Back to Europe', *Spiegel Online*, 20 Nov. 2007, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,518527,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007

<sup>47</sup> Puhl, 'Poland's Post-Election Road Back to Europe', *Spiegel Online*, 20 Nov. 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Puhl and Wassermann, 'Suit Evokes Ghosts of War', *Spiegel Online*, 2 Jan. 2007, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,456926,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>49</sup> A view that some Polish commentators shared, arguing that if the Polish government pressed the issue of a 'Full Coverage Clause', it would imply that they believed that the expellees had some kind of legal basis to make their claims. See Puhl and Wassermann, 'Suit Evokes Ghosts of War', *Spiegel Online*, 2 Jan. 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Neef and Puhl, 'We are Very Vigilant', *Spiegel Online*, 6 March 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted anonymously in Jan Puhl, 'Poles Apart', *Spiegel Online*, 23 Oct. 2006, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,444037,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Anna Wolff-Powęska, 'Trzeba Skończyć tę Wojnę', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 Nov. 2007, at <<http://wyborcza.pl/1,86733,4702238.html?as=2&ias=2&startrz=x>>, accessed 8 June 2008.

<sup>53</sup> See 'Kwaśniewski radzi Niemcom: Ostrzej z tą Polską!', *Dziennik*, 7 Sept. 2007, for an account of the episode and the criticisms that Kwaśniewski's comments sparked.

<sup>54</sup> See 'The Accidental Government', *The Economist*, 11 May 2006; and Puhl, 'Poles Apart', *Spiegel Online*, 23 Oct. 2006, which says: 'These run-ins with a neighboring country backs up Polish pride. Germans, after all, have brought it on themselves, according to the Kaczyńskis.'

<sup>55</sup> PiS's handling of foreign policy figured in a television debate between Prime Minister Kaczyński and the leader of PO, Donald Tusk, during the parliamentary election campaign in October 2007. Tusk accused the government of diplomatic incompetence, and said that Poland's relations with Germany and Russia were at their lowest ebb since 1989. For a transcript of the debate see 'Kaczyński kontra Tusk: Pełny Zapis Debaty Wyborczej', *Dziennik.pl*, 13 Oct. 2007, at

<[http://www.dziennik.pl/polityka/article56605/Pełny\\_zapis\\_debaty\\_wyborczej.html](http://www.dziennik.pl/polityka/article56605/Pełny_zapis_debaty_wyborczej.html)>, accessed 8 June 2008.

<sup>56</sup> 'Europe Applauds Polish Poll', *Spiegel Online*, 22 Oct. 2007, at

<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,512818,00.html>>, accessed 30 Nov. 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Ian Traynor, 'Divided We Stand', *Guardian Unlimited*, 14 Sept. 2006, at

<[http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/ian\\_traynor/2006/09/is\\_kaczynski\\_polish\\_for\\_putin.html](http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/ian_traynor/2006/09/is_kaczynski_polish_for_putin.html)>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>58</sup> See George Sanford, *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory*, (London: Routledge, 2005), esp. pp. 140-1, for a detailed analysis of the reasons for the massacre, how it was perpetrated, and the way it was viewed in the Soviet Union and the West after the Second World War.

<sup>59</sup> See Norman Davies, *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw*, (London: Pan, 2004), for a brilliant account of the military history of the Polish Rising, and a poignant description of how the Polish Home Army suffered at the hands of the Red Army during and in the aftermath of the 'liberation' of Poland.

<sup>60</sup> See Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), which is still the best first-hand account of the events in Poland during the early 1980s.

<sup>61</sup> Tomasz Zarycki, 'Uses of Russia: The Role of Russia in the Modern Polish National Identity', *East European Politics & Societies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (2004), pp. 595-627 (p. 614).

<sup>62</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, pp. 23-6.

<sup>63</sup> See 'The Burden of History', *The Economist*, 18 Aug. 2005, for an account of this incident.

<sup>64</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>65</sup> See Andrew Cottey, *Security in the New Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 112-16, for a survey of Russia's potential to be a security problem in 'New Europe'.

<sup>66</sup> Zarycki, 'Uses of Russia', p. 607.

<sup>67</sup> 'Into the Fray', *The Economist*, 30 Nov. 2006.

<sup>68</sup> Tomasz Bielecki and Krystyna Naszkowska, 'Dlaczego Rosja się Ugięła?', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 Dec. 2007, at <<http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,4758983.html>>, accessed 8 June 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Marcin Wojciechowski, 'Stosunki Polski z Rosją: nie Słodko, ale Normalnie', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 Dec. 2007, at <<http://www.gazetawyborcza.pl/1,76842,4740582.html>>, accessed 11 April 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski note that Gazprom provides not only 79 percent of Poland's gas supplies, but also controls the means of distribution and transportation. See Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*, pp. 62-3 for a discussion of the Poland's energy dependence influences its relations with Russia.

<sup>71</sup> Cienski, 'Relations with Russia', *FT.com*, 19 Dec. 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Jędrzej Bielecki and Jacek Przybylski, 'Gazociąg z Azji za Tarczę?', *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 Sept. 2006.

<sup>73</sup> See 'Pipedreams', *The Economist*, 24 Jan. 2008.

<sup>74</sup> 'Think Pipes, not Rockets', *The Economist*, 10 April 2008.

<sup>75</sup> 'Fotyga: Rosja nie ma Prawa Weta w Sprawie Tarczy', *Wprost* 24, 27 Sept. 2007, at

<<http://www.wprost.pl/ar/114686/Fotyga-Rosja-nie-ma-prawa-weta-w-sprawie-tarczy/>>, accessed 27 Sept. 2007.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in 'Old Comrades Harden Line Against Russia', *FT.com*, 27 June 2007, at

<[http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news\\_id=fto062720071357152012](http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news_id=fto062720071357152012)>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>77</sup> 'Fotyga: Rosja nie ma Prawa Weta', *Wprost* 24, 27 Sept. 2007.

<sup>78</sup> Kelly Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, 'America's Protégé in the East? The Emergence of Poland as a Regional Leader', *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 5 (2003), pp. 1009-28 (pp. 1010-15).

<sup>79</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, 'America's Protégé', p. 1011.

<sup>80</sup> See Ray Taras, 'Poland's Diplomatic Misadventure in Iraq', *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2004), pp. 3-17, for a very critical evaluation of Poland's decision to support the US invasion. The crux of Taras's argument is that Polish policy unnecessarily antagonized its future EU partners, and that Poland failed to gain much influence with the US. See also Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New*

*Atlanticist*, pp. 47-8, for a discussion on the Polish government's decision to participate in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

<sup>81</sup> 'Is Poland America's Donkey or Could it Become NATO's Trojan Horse?', *The Economist*, 8 May 2003.

<sup>82</sup> Craig Whitlock, 'Poland's Leader Hopes to Gain From Support of US Policies', *Washington Post*, 7 Feb. 2006, at <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/06/AR2006020601265.html>>, accessed 20 March 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Whitlock, 'Poland's Leader Hopes', *Washington Post*, 7 Feb. 2006; and also Wroński, 'Polityka Zagraniczna Według Kaczyńskiego', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 Sept. 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Whitlock, 'Poland's Leader Hopes', *Washington Post*, 7 Feb. 2006.

<sup>85</sup> Josh White, 'Leader Reaffirms Poland's Role in Iraq and Afghanistan', *Washington Post*, 14 Sept. 2006, at <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/13/AR2006091302038.html>>, accessed 20 Sept. 2006.

<sup>86</sup> Longhurst and Zaborowski, 'America's protégé', p. 1016, see also pp. 1015-16, for a discussion of the background of the Polish government's endorsement of the missile shield programme in 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in 'Poland's New Leader Touts Alliance', *Washington Post*, 13 Sept. 2006, at <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/13/AR2006091300306.html>>, accessed 20 Sept. 2006.

<sup>88</sup> See Donat Szyller and Magdalena Rubaj, 'Premier: Polsce Grozi Putinada', *Dziennik.pl*, 2 Nov. 2007, at <[http://www.dziennik.pl/polityka/article45614/Premier\\_Polsce\\_grozi\\_putinada.html](http://www.dziennik.pl/polityka/article45614/Premier_Polsce_grozi_putinada.html)>, accessed 10 June 2008.

<sup>89</sup> 'Poland's Government: Turning the Loose Screw', *The Economist*, 15 Feb. 2007.

<sup>90</sup> Even before he became defence minister, Sikorski had argued that Poland needed to adopt a more robust approach towards the US. Sikorski had attacked the SLD government for sending troops to Iraq 'in exchange for a few kind words' from Washington. Quoted in Taras, 'Poland's Diplomatic Misadventure', pp. 12-13.

<sup>91</sup> Radesław Sikorski, 'Don't Take Poland for Granted', *Washington Post*, 21 March 2007, at <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/20/AR2007032001427.html>>, accessed 28 May 2008.

<sup>92</sup> See 'Memo Leak Sparks Spat', *The Warsaw Voice*, 15 Nov. 2006, at <<http://www.warsawvoice.pl/view/12969/>>, accessed 28 May 2008.

<sup>93</sup> Jan Cienski and Demetri Sevastopulo, 'Poland Demands US Air Defence System', *FT.com*, 19 Nov. 2007, at <[http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news\\_id=fto111920071758034324](http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news_id=fto111920071758034324)>, accessed 14 March 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Puhl, 'Poland's Post-Election Road Back to Europe', *Spiegel Online*, 20 Nov. 2007.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in 'Charlemagne: The Polish Farewell', *The Economist*, 29 Nov. 2007.