

Introduction

The Polish-British relations have always been considered to be peaceful. Since the Second World War, Great Britain has maintained the position of a country shaping, or contributing a lot to creating a political arrangement in Europe; therefore, it belongs to a small group of influential countries on our continent.

The role of building a proper organizational system, in which Germany would not be a threat of security in Europe, has been played by Great Britain since the World War II. Although its actions have been taken rather cautiously and conservatively, Great Britain is still regarded as a stabilizing factor, and it still creates one of the major parts in the political arena.

However, such a character of British policy stays in accordance with the European policy of Poland. After the period of a political transformation, since the beginning of 1990s, Poland was targeting at achieving two goals: the access to the European Union and NATO as well as friendly relations with Germany. Building a solid partnership with Berlin was the basis of Polish-German reunion and, moreover, Poland perceived Berlin as an advocate of the EU enlargement.

Nevertheless, subsequent events in Germany – the change of ruling coalition, as well as in Europe – the war in Iraq, inflamed the mutual relations. Suddenly, it occurred that Poland had more convergent opinions on different aspects of integrated cooperation with London than Berlin, or Paris.

Furthermore, a parallel step in realizing Polish strategy in the early 1990s was to separate, among the countries of old continent, the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, and considered them as the main political and economic partners. Especially in 1998, bilateral relations with the members of NATO and the EU were of great importance for Poland. Having begun the negotiations of the EU membership and having ratified the Protocol of Polish accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by NATO members, Poland wished to win the favour of particular countries for its postulates. Among a number of countries, Poland counted on Great Britain.

In 1998 the position of Poland as a major partner of Great Britain underwent reinforcement. London was a very important ally, both, in bilateral relations, and in the process of joining Euro Atlantic structures. The British supported Polish efforts to become a member of NATO and the EU. In August 1998, in Washington, Great Britain turned the

documents ratifying the Protocol of Accession to Washington Treaty in connection with joining NATO by Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The British government wished to begin the EU negotiations with the associated countries during the period of the British presidency in the European Union (first half of 1998). While participating in a conference in Poland at the end of 1997¹, British Minister of Foreign Affairs Robin Cook assured that Great Britain would take advantage of its position as one of the leading countries in the EU to keep the enlargement process in motion. Moreover, the date of beginning the accession negotiations was mentioned for the first time – 31 March 1998. Among the others, the British diplomatic and promotion actions established the picture of Poland as a country realizing the guidelines of transformation processes consistently, and as a country continuing the reforms indispensable for a complete integration of Polish defence system with the structure of NATO. Such endeavours resulted in the completion of ratification process in February 1999, after which Poland obtained the official invitation to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

However, with the date of 1 May 2004, after over a ten-year preparation period, Poland officially found its place in the group of countries creating an integrated Europe; in the structure based on cooperation, but mostly, on the capability of reaching effective alliances. Poland could draw conclusions observing the efforts of member countries in recent years. It appears that the countries' interests change quite often, which results from a great number of discrepancies in their policies.

Moreover, Poland has experienced the trial of reaching agreement itself, while fighting for the defence of the Nice system. The Polish-Spanish alliance proved to be temporary, for the reason that the interests of both countries were convergent in only one issue, whereas in a lot of other matters, Warsaw and Madrid seemed to be, and still are, in conflict.

A sensible analysis of Polish interests reveals that its policy is more coherent with London, than Berlin or Madrid. First and foremost, Poland and Great Britain express a similar attitude to the European security, recognizing NATO and a transatlantic bond to play a priority role. Furthermore, both countries were the closest alliances of the USA in Iraq, and as the only in Europe, maintained the political consensus on the Iraqi war.

The Polish and British perceive the issues of sovereignty and the primacy of national state alike. Moreover, the convergence of prospects and interests of both countries also exists

¹ Stachura J., *Przegląd bilateralnych stosunków Polski z państwami europejskimi*, Sprawy Międzynarodowe, 1999, Internet: <http://www.sprawymiedzynarodowe.pl/rocznik/1999.html>.

in the area of the economic policy. The major political authorities in Poland and Great Britain object to the harmonization of taxes on the EU level.

Despite the fact that there have been a number of similarities in the defence and economic issues, does it seem to be sufficient for Poland and Great Britain to build a strategic partnership on the French-German model?

At present the Polish-British relations in the European Union are perceived to be very good; not only in political, but also in a sociological aspect. The obvious evidence of it was the opening of the British labour market for the Polish – in contrast to twelve, out of fifteen old EU members.

However, current proper relationships between Poland and Great Britain, as well as British favourable attitude to a Polish place in the integrating structures appear as a too far general picture. Does the image look similar in consideration of particular creators of political views and attitudes in Great Britain? Did the mutual relations stay untouched throughout the last 15 years? Did the particular political camps express so favourable attitudes to Polish aspirations to join NATO and the EU? Did the opinions of British political authorities result from care, assistance, or were justified by other factors?

The aim of the doctoral dissertation is to present the political attitude of Great Britain towards Polish aspirations to NATO and the EU, its influence and the range of participation in the process of democratization, forming the civil society, and adjusting Poland to the standards of NATO and the European Union. The thesis should allow being acquainted with the opinions, views, concepts, thoughts of British creators of political attitudes in the process of democratization and joining the military and economic structures by Poland.

The dissertation has been based on two research hypotheses. The first one applies to the assumption that the Polish-British relations contributed to the acceleration of the process of a political transformation in Poland and had an impact on its dynamism as well as contributed to the development of Polish ambitions to enter NATO and the European Union.

The second hypothesis, however, constitutes a basis of explaining the issue whether the political attitude of Great Britain had an influence on accepting Poland's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. Undertaking the research process will, undoubtedly, allow verifying the formulated hypotheses.

The time period of the thesis includes a fifteen-year period, starting from the year 1990, the beginning of political transformation in Poland, through the years of aspiring to NATO membership in 1999, and the period of adjusting Polish political, economic and legislative system to the European Union accession in 2004.

The offer of publications about the similar subject matters is not rich, as the biggest number of available sources concentrates on general relations among the EU members and the issues taking place on the European Union-candidate countries axis. The aspects of narrower relationships in the groups of either aspiring or being a part of the EU states rank among the minority of studies. Moreover, the attempt of the study of Polish-British relations in the aspect of the UK's contribution to Polish aspirations of the memberships has not been undertaken yet. It has been assumed that the research will allow learning a practical lesson, useful for the education as well as helpful for politicians and the observers of political arena.

Therefore, the verification of the established hypotheses has been based, first and foremost, on the analysis of the source documents of the British and Polish government, programmes of Conservative and Labour Party as well as Polish parties, and British newspaper articles. Moreover, the useful research materials, such as expertise, reports, analysis, have been provided by the sources of British Parliament, British Prime Minister, the BBC, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland, Center for International Relations in Poland, or the Polish Institute of International Affairs. The statistical data from the Internet pages of the MORI Social Research Institute, Public Opinion Research Center in Poland, TNS OBOP Research Institute, Eurobarometer, ICM Research, or European Reports of Brussels has proven to be of great usefulness.

The most crucial part of the scientific issues of the dissertation, however, has based its research on analyzing the British major creators of political opinions and attitudes towards Poland, i.e. newspapers and magazines. The British press market consists of serious broadsheets, with well-edited articles, in conformity with a code of journalistic ethics, and tabloids, engaged in scandals and affairs, the former ones being the basis of research analysis in the thesis. The research focuses on the articles printed in such newspapers as *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, as well as such magazines as *The Observer* and *The Economist*. *The Guardian* and *Observer* belong to the press of a liberal and socio-democratic nature, with a pro-European, independent and objective attitude, whereas *The Daily Telegraph* is a very conservative paper, with some tendencies against a closer integration with the EU. *The Times*, on the other hand, is one of the oldest newspapers on the press market, which used to influence the policy of the government and public opinion in terms of international issues, with a slight change into a conservative way². Finally, *The Economist* is known as a politically independent, economic-financial magazine, one of the most influential

² Fałkowski M., *Pierwsze kroki w Unii. Polityka polska w prasie europejskiej*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warsaw 2004, p. 79.

weeklies in the world, with responsible and sensible views of all world politics and global economy's issues. Nevertheless, the British most popular press is enhanced by the articles published in less widely-read newspapers, such as *New Statesman*, periodicals, such as *The World Today*, American magazines, such as *Foreign Policy*, and a great news source of BBC.

Moreover, the dissertation's research part also refers to the publications of Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej, Centrum Informacji Europejskiej, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, that is the governmental and non-government organizations which provide information on the EU process. The periodicals, such as *Central Europe Review* or *NATO Review* appear to become one of the available sources as well. *The Bruges Group*, the think-tank of the British Conservative Party serves the materials accessible from its website either.

The leading publications in the thesis have been the following books: *Demokracja Polska 1989-2003*, edited by J. Wiatr, *Polityka Międzynarodowa 1945-2000*, by P. Calvocoressi, *Szansa i zagrożenie. Polityka i dyplomacja w rodzinnej Europie*, by B. Gieremek, *O Polsce, Europie i świecie 1988-2001* by Z. Brzeziński, *NATO w XX wieku. Transatlantyckie zależności*, by A. Ziółkowski, *NATO-Polska 2000*, by J. Kaczmarek, *Integracja Europejska. Podręcznik akademicki*, edited by A. Marszałek, *Historia integracji europejskiej*, by K. Popowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna Wielkiej Brytanii*, by F. Gołębski, *Polityka zagraniczna Wielkiej Brytanii*, by H. Zins, *Polska w drodze do Unii Europejskiej*, by E. Kawecka-Wyrzykowska.

The research process mostly includes the methods based on documents, widespread in the methodology of social science³. The gathered documents have been subjected to a critical assessment in order to establish the credibility of the data included in them.

Gathering and processing the mass political, social and economic phenomena have been possible with the aid of using quantitative methods, allowing obtaining average, typical conditions of happening a phenomenon, or the relationship analysis between particular variables⁴.

For the reason that the dissertation has been based on historical facts in a part, the methods characteristic for history have been also applied. First and foremost, the methods of establishing historical facts have been used, the ones which allow presenting the events that

³ Sztumski J., *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych*, Katowice 1999, p.153-159.

⁴ Chmaj M., Żmigrodzki M., *Wprowadzenie do teorii polityki*, Lublin 2001, p. 45.

have taken place, therefore can become the background for research analysis⁵. Although the thesis concerns the events from recent years, they are already a history.

The aim of the dissertation, which is to assure the effective solution of the research problem, is accompanied by the structure of the thesis. It consists of four chapters determining successive stages of the research.

The first chapter, *Poland's road to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, which is the introduction to the research, presents the Polish way to acceding to the Atlantic Alliance. The chapter focuses on the process of a political transformation in Poland in 1989, and takes into consideration the turning points in the Polish Foreign Policy after 1990. Moreover, the NATO-Poland relations on the eve of the membership in the Treaty are analyzed as well as the procedure of ratification and Poland's participation in creating a new Treaty. The literature of the subject constitutes a basis for presenting the facts of the chapter.

The continuation of Polish preparations to the presence in the integrating structures is included in the second chapter, *Poland's road to the European Union*; the chapter, which shows the Polish efforts to become the member of the European Union. Since the Association Treaty in 1991, and the official beginning of the accession process in 1994, the whole, long way of economic, social and legal adjustments have been described. Moreover, the part presents the origins of the integration processes with a careful description of diversified concepts and models of the notion of integration. Furthermore, the period early before and the very moment of the accession, with inflaming discussions as well as negotiations on both sides, also find their place in this chapter. The presentation of the public opinions on the chances and threats in connection with the EU accession, though, allows finding some answers on the research questions about Polish-British relations. The chapter is accomplished with the literature of the subject as well as the sources of necessary data.

The third chapter, *British political thought towards the enlargement of NATO and the EU*, is based on analyzing the stances of British politicians and experts to the process of inviting new members by both organizations. The efforts to present the British disappointments and hopes connected with the process of enlarging the integrating structures as well as the efforts to contrast the British opinions about accepting the new members with the views of other participants of NATO and the EU create the basis for the first observations of the attitude to, among the others, Poland. Furthermore, the British aims of enlarging both structures are examined through the concepts and views of British Conservative Party and British Labour Party. The chapter is the first part of the research, therefore is completely

⁵ Topolski J., *Metodologia badań historycznych*, Warszawa, 1979, p. 401-424.

based on the information, debates, presentations and arguments included in the newspapers, magazines, periodicals and public opinion centres.

The final fourth chapter of the dissertation, *The political attitude of Great Britain towards Polish accession to NATO and the EU*, concerns the research problem directly. It diagnoses the political approach of the UK to Poland's membership in both organizations through the standpoints of Conservative and Labour Party, by analyzing the British press from the Polish membership's point of view as well as by presenting the British public opinions on Polish accession to NATO and the EU. The most controversial issue referred to the EU enlargement in the light of Poland's admission is taken under scrutiny either. Moreover, the British nation is presented in terms of concerns about the Poles being the EU member. The second part of the research is fully based on the articles, commentaries and necessary views published in the British press.

The end of the thesis shows conclusions, which help reject or accept the research hypotheses assumed in the introduction of the dissertation. On this basis, though, it will be possible to define the sense and the need of undertaken research efforts. As the appendix of the dissertation the author presents the list of graphs included in the chapters.

However, the presented bibliography will allow the interested people to familiarize with gathered sources, documents, reports, books and publications on the described subject matter.