

Abstract:

This Diploma thesis analyses the development of relationships between two superpowers of the Cold War, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, during the Polish crisis period at the turn of the 70's and 80's of the 20th century. The objective of the Thesis was, above all, to reconstruct carefully the Polish crisis events, to discover its reasons, effects and implications for mutual relationships of the superpowers.

The introduction of the Thesis focuses on the development of the Soviet-American relationships in the course of the Cold War from its beginning to the Polish crisis outbreak. Consequently, the foreign policy of both superpowers, their characteristics, main actors and factors are analysed.

In the 1970s, Poland struggled with enormous economic troubles which were also connected with social disorder. In summer of 1980, the disorder developed into a strike wave which the existing communist regime did not manage to get under control. The Polish events thus resulted in proclamation of the state of emergency which was supposed to "save" the communist system in Poland.

The Polish coup d'état in the 1980s definitely showed to the entire world that the communist system can be maintained in the states of Central and Eastern Europe only by force. In the international political situation at the beginning of the 1980s, the Soviet Union could no longer have no regard to opinions and attitudes of the United States as well as member countries of the North Atlantic Pact. American repressive measures which followed the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan reflected dramatically upon the Soviet Union economy. It led to the Soviet leaders' decision not to solve the Polish crisis by a military intervention using the Warsaw Pact troops. Commencement of Ronald Reagan's presidency in the United States, who did not hide his anti-communist views, represented a clear signal that the military intervention in Poland would have considerably sharpened an American approach not only towards Poland but mainly the Soviet Union. Reagan's administration accepted towards these countries a number of measures which contributed to decline of the Soviet empire and to the end of Cold War.

Keywords:

Cold War, Polish crisis, Soviet Union, United States, international relationships, foreign policy.