

Tereza Čížková

PhDr. Dissertation Assessment

Současná americká zahraniční politika ve vztahu k Polsku: vývoj, faktory, tendence

2014

Tereza Čížková has produced a fine PhDr. dissertation on American foreign policy vis-à-vis Poland. The work is an updated version of her M.A. thesis. Tereza is a very capable student and quite an expert on many aspects of Polish history and politics. It is good that she heeded the advice offered by the Department of American Studies to turn her M.A. dissertation into a PhDr. Overall, the treatise is well referenced and the structure is sound. There is an Introduction, three main chapters, and a Conclusion.

In the Introduction, Tereza spells out her aim, which is to analyze the political, historical, and international factors affecting U.S.-Polish relations. Both English-language and Polish publications are scrutinized and Tereza explains the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of United States-Polish relations.

Chapter 1 deals with the foreign policy dimension of the matter at hand. Tereza begins by recapitulating the major approaches to foreign policy, namely realism, idealism, and neoliberalism. She then gets more specific and evaluates the role played by a number of factors in the reality of U.S.-Polish relations. She rightly points out the influence of realism and idealism. History and geopolitics also play their part in the relationship and the support provided by Polish politicians for American foreign policy objectives in the war on terror has helped to enhance mutual relations. In addition, the Polish lobby groups in the United States as well as other lobbies influencing policy formation are critical

for the maintenance of good relations between the two countries. This chapter is well conceived and, in my opinion, quite illustrative.

In Chapter 2, Tereza addresses the deep historical roots of U.S. Polish relations. Mutual support for the independence struggles of the other, constitutional similarities, and the role of Polish immigrants in American society are all emphasized. When discussing the relations in the twentieth century, Tereza recalls the American support for Polish independence in the final stages of the First World War and various initial support (the Morgenthau Mission) for political consolidation (and calming of anti-Jewish sentiments in Poland) gave way to American indifference thanks to isolationist policies. Pilsudski's authoritarian approach to governing Poland after coming to power also did not help matters. The rising power of Nazism and the outbreak of World War II following Hitler's military assault on Gdansk put Poland on the American horizon once again. The progress of the war and Nazi bestialities along with geopolitical realities meant that Poland would not have the same borders after 1945. Indeed, eastern regions would be lost to the Soviet crocodile, Stalin, and Poland would gain western territories at the expense of Germany. Cold War realities and the dominance of the Soviet Union in East-Central Europe meant that the Poles would suffer under a new tyranny, this time a red one, until 1989. Once again, the United States provided support to Polish dissidents and the Solidarity trade union movement in the 1980s and Poland led the way in restoring freedom to themselves as well as other captive nations. The United States became a key partner in the Polish socioeconomic transformation in the 1990s (insisted on maintaining the borders set towards the end of World War II) and Poland became one of the first three new members of NATO in 1999. In the end, the

Poles recognized that the United States is among their most important allies.

This chapter is very well written.

Chapter 3 deals with U.S.-Polish relations since 2000. The Poles supported the United States loyally following the barbaric terrorist attacks of 9/11 and participated in the American military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike the Czech Republic, Poland has been an active supporter of American anti-missile defense proposals in East-Central Europe. One sticking point, which remains unresolved, however, is visa policy. To date, Poland remains the only Schengen country whose citizens must still obtain visas to visit the United States as tourists. This is hardly surprising considering the fact that President Barack Obama has been derelict in supporting Europe and, in particular, Poland until the very recent crisis in Ukraine, which once again pits the tyrannical designs of Russian President Vladimir Putin against the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the self-determination of its people. As usual, Obama has made promises to appeal to the U.S. Congress to include Poland in the visa waiver program, but his efforts have been limited as his priorities seem to lie elsewhere. In this chapter, Tereza accentuates the positive role played by Poland in European security, energy independence initiatives, and, most recently, standing up for Ukraine in a most steadfast manner. As usual, Tereza has argued her points well and has presented evidence to support her assertions.

In the Conclusion, Tereza recapitulates her main arguments and stresses both the historical and strategic significance of U.S.-Polish partnership. This work more than meets the requirements for a PhDr. dissertation.

.....
Doc. PhDr. Francis D. Raška, PhD.