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The international role of Belarus in the policy of the governments of the Third Republic of Poland

Introduction

An international role is a coherent system of actions selected by the state in external relations, being a function of the pressure of the international and internal environment as well as the international position achieved by the state. There are four types of such roles: 1) imposed, resulting from the expectations of the external environment towards the state, 2) selected, consisting of respondents to external influence, 3) declared – official declarations of state goals, 4) real, being the actual state position in the international system. Politicians have created several classifications of international roles. Kalevi Holsti distinguishes 17 of them, namely, the bastion of revolution, the regional leader, the defender of the region, the non-aligned, the supporter of national liberation movements, the anti-imperialist agent, the defender of faith, the mediator, the regional subsystem participant, the helper, the bridge, the independent, the faithful ally, the example for others, the own builder potential, the isolated, the protege. Margaret & Charles Hermann specify 10 roles: the fighter, the conciliator, the defender of faith, the donor, the guardian, the liberator, the mediator, the opponent, the policeman, the promoter. However, according to Stephen Walker, there are 6 types of roles: the consumer, the producer, the warrior, the facilitator, the provocateur, and the hegemon.[1]

The collapse of communism in East Central Europe, the deconstruction of the Soviet international system and the collapse of the Soviet Union into several independent states in 1989–1991 contributed to the region's recovery of independence in the creation and implementation of foreign policy. The main goal of the first non-communist governments – those of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jan Krzysztof Bielecki – was to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of the Republic in the international environment. Mazowiecki said, "Our starting point […] is the independence of the

[1] Z. J. Pietraś, *Pojęcie i klasyfikacja ról międzynarodowych*, Lublin 1989, pp. 18, 22–27, 30–32.

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Polish state." Bielecki stated, "The government will implement the Polish raison d'état and state interest".[2]

One of the states that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union was the Republic of Belarus headed by Stanislau Shushkevich as chairman of the Supreme Council (head of state) and Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kiebich. Despite the declared tendencies to maintain close ties with Russia and other post-Soviet republics, both politicians started looking for alternatives to pro-Russian orientation in Western Europe, thinking that economic assistance from the United States and the European Union would allow for the reconstruction of the Belarusian economy and provide some independence from the eastern powerful neighbor. Therefore, they had to establish close relations with Poland, recognized as an intermediary in contacts with Western structures.[3] Poland had to take into account these aspirations in its policy and take an appropriate stance towards them. This was due to several issues. Firstly, the immediate neighborhood, requiring the settlement of all disputable matters. Secondly, the high number of people of Polish origin living in the Belarusian territory was aided by the Polish authorities in the area of preserving their national identity. Thirdly, the treatment of Belarus as a transit country to Russia, with which the Polish state connected economic dependencies[4]. Polish leaders were in the position of a positive arrangement of relations with the Republic of Belarus. Prime Minister Jan Olszewski said, "The government will continue to strive to build lasting, comprehensive good-neighborly relations and close cooperation […] with the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus." His successor Waldemar Pawlak stated, "We will strive to develop good neighborly and partner relations with independent countries in the East: Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Lithuania".[5]

The article characterizes the international role of Belarus in the policy of the governments of the Third Republic of Poland. In the first part of the analysis were subjected official statements of people who run Polish foreign policy regarding Belarus. On their basis, the roles that the Polish state wanted to pursue in relations with its eastern neighbor were formulated: imposed roles, demands that Polish governments wanted to enforce in Belarus and the declared roles, official goals of Polish policy regarding this state. The second part deals with the real role played by Poland and Belarus in mutual relations.

1. The goals of the Polish policy towards Belarus

The first period of independence of the Belarusian state, in which it may seem that the political system transformed from totalitarianism to democracy and changed the political orientation of the eastern neighbor towards the west, was completed in July 1994,

[2] Website of the Sejm, http://www.sejm.gov.pl (further referred to as WB Sejm), 10th term, Speech of Prime Minister T. Mazowiecki, session 18 on 18 Jan 1990; Speech of Prime Minister J. K. Bielecki, session 48 on 5 Jan 1991, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[3] E. Mironowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna Białorusi: 1990–2010*, Białystok 2011, pp. 33–37, 40.

[4] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2012, p. 85.

[5] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of Prime Minister J. Olszewski, session 3 on 21 Dec 1991; Speech of Prime Minister W. Pawlak, session 19 on 1 Jul 1992, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

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when Alaxandr Lukashenka was elected president. From then on, we can talk about the creation of an authoritarian system in Belarus based on the dictatorial rule of the head of state, with almost unlimited powers and the opposition eliminated from political life. What is more, in foreign policy, the existing policy of balance and balancing between Russia and the European and Euro-Atlantic structures has been replaced by an unequivocal return to the East, including the ideas of re-integration of Belarus-Russia.[6]

Changes in Belarusian politics influenced the perception of the eastern neighbor by the leaders of Poland who tried to direct the foreign policy of their state in such a way that it would settle relations with Belarus in accordance with its reason. Polish diplomacy tried to implement it in two ways. Firstly, by creating an ideal model of internal relations in Belarus and indicating the best directions of its foreign policy. The prime ministers and foreign ministers of the Republic of Poland believed that by showing the benefits that would bring the Belarusian state adjustment to Polish demands, the Belarusian authorities would gradually change their policy to the desired from the Polish point of view. Secondly, by indicating the directions of actions of the Polish state towards the Republic of Belarus, aimed at achieving its goals in relation to it. The Polish rulers were of the opinion that only the active attitude of Poland could force the desired changes in Belarus, which is why they stressed the need for an active eastern policy of their state.

Among the imposed roles of Belarus, the role of the independent state and the opponent can be mentioned in the first place. The former means that a given state should pursue a policy based on its own raison d'état, while the latter defines the policy of the state as the one which stops the expansion of other countries by means of all non-military measures. This is how they tried to determine the role of the eastern neighbor of the managers of Polish diplomacy. In their opinion, for the good of Poland and Belarus, as well as for the stabilization of the Central and Eastern Europe region, the Belarusian state should strive to be an independent state and carry out a sovereign policy. They were convinced that if the Belarusian authorities wanted to pursue their own national interest, then they would try to implement such goals as territorial integrity, independence in domestic and foreign policy, economic development and society's standard of living. This meant conducting partnership relations with all neighbors and avoiding antagonisms that could have a negative impact on the stabilization of the region and the Belarusian state. Polish decision-makers warned the rulers of Belarus against integration with Russia. Understanding the motives that led Lukashenka (economic dependence and cultural proximity of both nations), tried to show that this rapprochement would deprive the eastern neighbor of political and economic independence and would prevent the socio-economic development of the state, exploited and used by the eastern superpower. For this reason, they urged Belarus to oppose all aspirations to integrate in its own and European interests.[7] Minister Dariusz Rosati said, "It is in the interest of Europe to preserve the

[6] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 260–261; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 61–62, 68–70.

[7] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Skubiszewski, session 43 on 29 Apr 1993; 2nd term, Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs W. Bartoszewski, session 50 on 25 May 1995;

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state sovereignty of Belarus." According to Minister Radosław Sikorski, "We observe the solidification of Belarusian state with attention and kindness".[8]

The role of the participant in the regional subsystem, the capacity building and the consumer was associated with the sovereignty and independence of Belarus's foreign policy. The first role assumes that the state seeks to cooperate with other states and international organizations in order to create a regional community, the second is to implement socio-economic development while the third entity is the need to get help from other international entities. Polish diplomats wanted to persuade the eastern neighbor to all these three roles, considering that their acceptance was in his interest. They believed that Belarus, wishing to preserve its independence, could not isolate itself from Western structures, but should establish close cooperation with them on all possible levels. They argued that close relations with the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) would allow the Belarusian state to obtain financial and material aid to improve the economy, so that it could develop its industry, agriculture and trade, raising national income and giving citizens opportunities to improve their lives. Another benefit that the Eastern neighbor could get through Western cooperation would be political and, possibly, military support in the event of threats to his sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ministers argued that only in this way was Belarus able to protect itself against any attempts to attack its independence from Russia and use its potential for foreign purposes, unfriendly towards it and other European countries. If isolated or isolating, Belarus would be subordinate to Russia, whereas when active on the international ground and cooperating with the developed and developing countries of Western and Central Europe, Belarus would improve its internal and international position with greater opportunities to realize its political interests. That is why they encouraged Szuszkiewicz and Lukashenka to open up to the West and to take integration measures with international structures in line with the Belarusian raison d'état.[9] Minister Bronisław Geremek said, "It is not the intention of Poland to isolate Belarus, rather to break its self-isolation and to facilitate a return to a community of

Speeches of Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Rosati, session 79 on 9 May 1996 and session 106 on 8 May 1997; 3rd term, Speeches of Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Geremek, session 13 on 5 Mar 1998 and session 45 on 5 Mar 1999; Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs W. Bartoszewski, session 110 on 6 Jun 2001; 4th term, Speeches of Minister of Foreign Affairs W. Cimoszewicz, session 40 on 22 Jan 2003 and session 67 on 21 Jan 2004; 6th term, Speeches of Minister of Foreign Affairs R. Sikorski, session 15 on 7 May 2008 and session 35 on 13 Feb 2009, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[8] WB Sejm, 2nd term, Speech of D. Rosati on 8 May 1997; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski, session 64 on 8 Apr 2010, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[9] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speeches of K. Skubiszewski, session 14 on 8 May 1992 and on 29 Apr 1993; 2nd term, Speech of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996; 3rd term, Speeches of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998 and session 78 on 9 May 2000; 4th term, Speeches of W. Cimoszewicz, sessions 16 on 14 Mar 2002 and on 21 Jan 2004; Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Rotfeld, session 96 on 21 Jan 2005; 5th term, Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Fotyga, session 35 on 2 Mar 2007; 6th term, Speeches of R. Sikorski on 7 May 2008, 13 Feb 2009 and session 87 on 16 March 2011, inf. 1 December 2015.

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democratic states." Sikorski stated, "We hope that Belarus will also choose the European perspective".[10]

By promising Belarus the benefits of international cooperation within the framework of Western structures, Polish diplomats imposed on the authorities the requirements on which they made the release of the eastern neighbor dependent on the expected benefits. They thus put out the role of a conciliar and an example for others that Belarus had to implement. The first consists in the implementation by the state of its interests while respecting the interests of other international entities. The second is the implementation of internal policy by the state, which strengthens its prestige on the international arena. Foreign ministers of Poland wanted their eastern neighbors to pursue their political interests, but they opposed the violation of Poland's and other countries' interests. It was believed that Belarus should respect the inviolability of the borders and the sovereignty of Poland. This meant counteracting attempts against the territorial integrity of Poland, a tendency which manifested itself especially in the first years of Belarusian independence. Another demand was the need to reduce the Belarusian military potential, because they were afraid of using the Belarusian armed forces to possible blackmail against their neighbors. Polish diplomats warned against the violation of the national minority rights by the authorities in Minsk. They believed that the Union of Poles in Belarus (Związek Polaków na Białorusi, ZPB), existing beyond the Eastern border, is an autonomous organization that cares for the cultural and educational development of Belarusian Poles and supports Polish national consciousness in this country, so its status should be respected by the governing bodies in accordance with international requirements regarding national minorities. Repressions against members of the ZPB were considered an attack on Polish nationality and striving to deteriorate relations with Poland by Belarus. It was also demanded that the Eastern neighbor change the style of government from authoritarian to democratic. This would consist in introducing a democratic alternation of power, allowing the opposition to apply for positions in the state, stopping repressions against those who disagreed with the rulers and respecting human rights. The fulfillment of the above requirements would allow the Eastern neighbor to realize its interests that could be fully satisfied only through cooperation with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The provocation of Poland and other countries through Belarus would lead to sanctions imposed on it and its isolation in the international environment, which would result in dependence on Russia[11]. Minister Adam Rotfeld argued that "democratic and libertarian tendencies in Belarus

[10] WB Sejm, 3rd term, Speech of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 13 Feb 2009.

[11] WB Sejm, 2nd term, Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 25 May 1995; Speeches of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996 and 8 May 1997; 3rd term, Speeches of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998, 5 Mar 1999 and 9 May 2000; 4th term, Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 22 Jan 2003; Speech of A. Rotfeld on 21 Jan 2005; 5th term, Speech of Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Meller, session 10 on 15 Feb 2006; 6th term, Speeches of R. Sikorski on 7 May 2008, 13 Feb 2009 and 8 Apr 2010, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

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could count on our full solidarity". According to Minister Stefan Meller, Poland's wish is to "win what is civil and democratic in Belarus".[12]

Polish diplomacy declared the goals it wanted to pursue in relation to Belarus. The most important were the roles of the conciliator and opponent. The rulers believed that the Polish state should develop on various levels, but it needed international stability. One of the conditions for realizing this goal was the establishment of friendly relations with the Belarusian state. The Polish authorities argued that for the good of both countries, a partnership was needed that would allow them to develop their potential to a greater extent. Political benefits would be to eliminate resentmentist claims on both sides and stabilize the common border, which would enable the Polish state to be more active in other international directions. Poland intended to support Belarus in its independence tendencies and to oppose integration with Russia, believing that Russian influence on the eastern border could have a negative impact on the state of security of the Polish state. Maintaining Belarus's sovereign policy was in the interest of Poland also because it was easier for its politicians to conclude and execute favorable agreements with an equivalent partner than with the Russian satellite. Belarus was important for economic reasons, as it was a transit state through which Poland was able to transport its products to the Commonwealth of Independent States markets as quickly as possible, as well as import important raw materials, mainly gas and crude oil. Belarus was also an important market for investments and investments for Polish entrepreneurs, provided that adequate conditions for business operations were provided in its area. An important role was attributed to cross-border cooperation between local governments, contributing to raising the standard of living in Poland and Belarus, which was important because many Poles lived in the border zone on the Belarusian side.[13] Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka said that in relations with Belarus, "we are interested in issues of security and balance, economic exchange and the situation of Poles living beyond our eastern border." Prime Minister Leszek Miller, assessing mutual relations, said: "We will look for ways and means of dialogue and – as far as possible – approximating positions".[14]

Poland declared itself a country in whose interests lay the pro-Western orientation of the Republic of Belarus, which is why the role of the helper and promoter appears in the statements of Polish decision makers. The first is to support economically less developed countries, the second – to get other countries to integrate with international

[12] WB Sejm, 4th term, Speech of A. Rotfeld on 21 Jan 2005; 5th term, Speech of S. Meller on 15 Feb 2006.

[13] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of K. Skubiszewski on 8 May 1992; Speech of Prime Minister H. Suchocka, session 20 on 10 Jul 1992; 2nd term, Speech of Prime Minister W. Pawlak, session 2 on 8 Nov 1993; Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 25 May 1995; Speech of Prime Minister W. Cimoszewicz, session 73 on 14 Feb 1996; Speech of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996; 3rd term, Speech of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998; Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 6 Jun 2001; 4th term, Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 22 Jan 2003; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 7 May 2008, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[14] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of H. Suchocka on 10 Jul 1992; 4th term, Speech of Prime Minister L. Miller, session 2 on 25 Oct 2001, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

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structures. In relation to Belarus it meant willingness to support it economically by creating permanent links between economic structures of both countries, trade exchange, Polish investments on the territory of the eastern neighbor as well as joint financial or industrial projects serving the development of both countries. An important role was to be played by helping the Belarusian society by introducing a scholarship system for citizens educating themselves in Poland, facilitating the crossing of the border by the Belarusians and intensifying social contacts between the population from border areas by introducing provisions on local border traffic. The Polish state to the developed countries did not belong to and needed help from the Western structures, so the governments of Republic of Poland combined promises of help with encouraging the Republic of Belarus to join the cooperation with the structures of the European Union. Poland, which considered itself to be the creator of the EU's eastern policy, set itself the goal of pulling the neighbor from integrating with Russia and encouraging him to get closer to Western organizations and convincing the EU authorities about friendly relations with Belarus and supporting it in overcoming internal difficulties. In this way, Belarus was able to receive full support for internal modernization, gaining greater independence. It was believed that Belarus's appreciation of Poland's large contribution to its own social and economic development would contribute to strengthening friendly relations between the two countries, which would result in ensuring stability and peace in Eastern Europe.[15] According to Rosati, Poland should conduct such a policy towards Belarus, which "would contribute to strengthening the independent and sovereign existence of this country." Sikorski claimed, "We will be ready […] to help Belarus develop it".[16]

The requirements imposed on Belarus to change its policy towards pro-western, pro-Polish and democratic forces forced the Polish authorities to declare efforts to force the eastern neighbor to implement these processes in practice. They set Poland as a liberator and mediator. The role of the liberator means that the state supports liberation movements in other countries and the mediator conducts a policy of reconciliation among other countries or political forces. The governments of the Polish state wanted to undertake actions and initiatives, independently and together with international structures (EU, NATO) in order to convince or force the Belarusian authorities to democratize public life. The declared funds were to be positive or negative. Positive resources include economic, social and political support and assistance, strengthening Belarus's position in the international environment. Negative measures included the application of sanctions and boycotts, resulting in the international isolation of the

[15] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of K. Skubiszewski on 29 Apr 1993; 2nd term, Speech of W. Pawlak on 8 Nov 1993; Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 25 May 1995; Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 14 Feb 1996; Speech of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996; 3rd term, Speech of B. Geremek on 8 Apr 1999; Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 6 Jun 2001; 4th term, Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 22 Jan 2003; Speech of A. Rotfeld on 21 Jan 2005; 5th term, Speech of A. Fotyga, session 41 on 11 May 2007; 6th term, Speeches of R. Sikorski on 7 May 2008 and 13 Feb 2009, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[16] WB Sejm, 2nd term, Speech of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 7 May 2008.

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eastern neighbor if Lukashenko's rule did not introduce democratic standards. Cooperation with Belarus was dependent on the direction of the evolution of its political system. Attempts to support the Belarusian opposition have also been attempted: supporting candidates for the Belarusian presidency, creating a Belarusian radio station in Poland allowing the eastern neighbor's citizens to access information other than governmental and financial and legal aid for political activists who have been imprisoned and expelled. Interesting were the postulates of Poland's creation of a Belarusian "round table" in which representatives of the president, government and all factions of the opposition would take part. Its aim would be to create a platform for negotiations among Belarusian politicians and to reach a compromise and settle all disputable matters. In addition to supporting the opposition, the Polish governments declared taking protection under the Union of Poles in Lithuania. In the event of violations of the rights of the Polish minority, the Republic of Poland reserved the restriction and even severance of international relations with the eastern neighbor.[17] Prime Minister Donald Tusk said, "The task of our policy towards Belarus will be to convince all political circles in this country that it is worth putting on democracy".[18]

The speech of the leaders of the Polish state showed Poland as a country that wants and has the opportunity to change the political situation in Belarus and its foreign policy. This can be deduced from the analysis of the declared roles, because each puts Poland in a better position than its eastern neighbor, showing that it can, if it wishes, contribute to the socio-economic development of Belarus and strengthen its independence in the international environment. Assistance and support depended on the appropriate policy of the Belarusian state, which had to be in line with the interests of Poland. This meant Poland's pursuit of subordinating its eastern neighbor and imposing its influence on it, even through the use of coercive measures in the form of sanctions or supporting the opposition. Theoretically, the Polish authorities had solid convincing arguments for their reasons, but such an attitude, showing superiority over their neighbor, did not favor closer relations between the two countries.

2. Political practice

The actual role of Poland and Belarus in mutual relations differed significantly from what Polish decision-makers expected. Belarus did not want to become a democratic state or to bind with Western structures. Its role in internal politics can be described as a provocateur and opponent. A provocateur is a state that by its conduct leads to deterioration of its relations with other international entities. Such policy has been applied by Poland's eastern neighbor since the beginning of Lukashenka's presidency. Knowing

[17] WB Sejm, 2nd term, Speech of W. Bartoszewski on 25 May 1995; Speech of D. Rosati on 8 May 1997; 3rd term, Speeches of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998 and 9 May 2000; 4th term, Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 22 Jan 2003;Speech of A. Rotfeld on 21 Jan 2005; 5th term, Speech of S. Meller on 15 Feb 2006; 6th term, Speeches of R. Sikorski on 13 Feb 2009 and 16 March 2011.

[18] WB Sejm, 6th term, Speech of Prime Minister D. Tusk, session 2 on 23 Nov 2007, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

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that democracy and respect for human rights are among the most important Western values, the Belarusian authorities consistently acted against the requirements of the European Union, which tried to force the president and the government to respect their orders. Lukashenko undertook actions aimed at eliminating the opposition from political life and assuring him full power. These include the change of the constitution in November 1996. It assured him of extending the term of office from 5 to 7 years, the possibility of dissolving the parliament, total control over the government and state administration, equating presidential decrees with parliamentary laws, influencing the rulings of the Constitutional Tribunal and the Council of the Republic, the upper chamber of the Belarusian parliament. The constitution sanctioned the authoritarian system in Belarus, giving the president considerable powers and almost depriving other authorities of the possibility of opposing the head of state. In October 2004, the restriction on the office of President to two terms was abolished. It meant ensuring Lukashenka's lifetime power. The President of Belarus also used repressions against the political opposition – in the autumn of 1996, he dissolved the Verkhovna Rada, the then unicameral parliament, getting rid of his opponents in the legislative body. The next elections to the House of Representatives, the lower house of the new bicameral parliament (2000, 2004 and 2008) took place in an atmosphere of fear, because representatives of the anti-presidential opposition were intimidated, beaten, arrested and subject to harassment by the militia and special services. Presidential elections in 2001, 2006 and 2010 had a similar course. The electoral commission in Belarus falsified the results, allowing it to win the office of the president. The protesters against the verdict of the opposition leader and the citizens were beaten and some of them arrested.[19] When referring to the elections of March 2006, Meller predicted that the "Stalin's maxim" would win in them, meaning "it does not matter who votes, what matters is who counts". Sikorski, after the election of December 2010, said that Belarus "is violating elementary human and civil rights".[20]

The role of the provocateur and opponent was the behavior of the Belarusian authorities towards other countries and international organizations. The European Union and the United States of America, as a response to the strengthening of Lukashenko's dictatorship, began to apply sanctions to the leaders of Poland's eastern neighbor. These were: limiting political and economic cooperation and financial assistance for Belarus, as well as introducing by the EU and the US a ban on entry into its territory of the named high officials of the state administration headed by the president. This was to force Lukashenko to stop fighting the opposition and persuade him to democratize the country. The Belarusian authorities considered the interference of other international

[19] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 174–175, 260–261, 332, 387; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 68, 140–142, 180; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki polityki zagranicznej Polski po zimnej wojnie*, Warsaw 2010, pp. 233, 235, 237–238.

[20] WB Sejm, 5th term, Speech of S. Meller on 15 Feb 2006; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 16 Mar 2011.

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entities in the internal affairs of their state for violating sovereignty and independence, which is why they tried to eliminate it by applying measures that aggravated mutual relations. One of them was an order to travel to EU, US and Polish ambassadors from the Drozdy estate in Minsk on the pretext of renovation (June 1998) or to eliminate the observation mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on charges of cooperation with the opposition (October 2002). Szykany also concerned Poland, whose leaders criticized the violation of human rights and democratic principles in Belarus. The Belarusian authorities have hindered the activities of Polish NGOs in their area (the Stefan Batory Foundation/Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego or the Polish-American Freedom Foundation/Polsko-Amerykańska Fundacja Wolności), removed Polish diplomats from the state and imposed total control on the Union of Poles in Belarus. The ZPB, led by Andżelika Borys, joined the anti-presidential democratic opposition, so he was recognized by Lukashenka as an anti-state organization and a Polish revisionist organization, acting by order of the Republic of Poland. Actions towards Borys supporters from ZPB, taken in 2005 (arrests, removal from work, intimidation), were aimed at removing the president and her supporters and replacing people who support the existing system of government in their place.[21] Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek said that Belarus "seems to evolve in a different direction than the rest of Europe". Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz stated, "We fully support the premises on which the restrictions of the European Union and the USA on members of the Belarusian leadership were based".[22]

The imposition of the potential and consumer building roles by Belarus was not entirely successful. The eastern neighbor sought to develop socio-economic, but the country the support of which he counted the most was Russia and not Western states. At the end of the period of Szuszkiewicz's rule, Prime Minister Kiebicz signed the Treaty of Tashkent (April 1993) on collective security within the Commonwealth of Independent States. The rise to power of Lukashenko has intensified the process of the two countries approaching, especially when Russian leaders, headed by President Boris Yeltsin, were ready to give comprehensive assistance to their western neighbor, wanting him to remain in the Russian sphere of influence. Belarus benefited from this cooperation: it had an assured market for its goods and supplies of gas and oil at low prices as well as financial subsidies and material support. The Belarussian president also sought to influence Russian policy. For this reason, he wanted to integrate the two countries and create a rotating office of the head of state, which the presidents of Russia and Belarus would take turns to change. This was the purpose of signing the agreement on the Union of Belarus and Russia (April 1997) and the establishment of the Union of Belarus and Russia in Moscow (December 1999). Lukashenko believed that as one

[21] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 175, 261–262, 331–332; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 69, 100, 169–170; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki...*, pp. 231, 233–236, 238.

[22] WB Sejm, 3rd term, Speech of Prime Minister J. Buzek, session 2 on 10 Nov 1997; 4th term, Speech of W. Cimoszewicz on 22 Jan 2003, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

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of the two main decision-makers of the union he would become one of the main decision-makers of European politics, thanks to which he would strengthen the position of the Belarusian state in the international environment. After Vladimir Putin's rise to power in Russia, relations between the two countries deteriorated, nevertheless, despite many years of controversy, the Belarusian leader each time chose the pro-Russian option as the most beneficial for his policy. In contrast to Western international structures and states, Russia did not demand changes in its domestic policy. Thus, after the period of tension, economic and political agreements were always signed, maintaining the status quo in mutual relations: in June 2004 in Sochi and in December 2010 in Moscow, thanks to which the Russian authorities continued to influence Belarus's policy, which could still count on help from the side of a powerful neighbor.[23] On the subject of Belarusian policy, Rosati said, "This country does not see any other possibilities but a connection with Russia". Geremek stated, "It is not in our interest to accept that her great neighbor can speak on her behalf".[24]

There were, however, periods when it seemed that Belarus would pursue a policy in line with the expectations of the Polish authorities. This meant performing the role of a conciliator, consumer, participant of the regional subsystem and opponent. The first period took place at the time when Szuszkiewicz was the head of state. He and Prime Minister Kiebicz sought help for the Belarusian economy among Western countries, believing that in this way Belarus would protect its sovereignty against Russian domination. The effect of this policy was frequent Polish-Belarusian meetings at the level of prime ministers and foreign ministers in 1992–1993. The Belarusian authorities believed that Poland could be a mediator for their country in dealing with the EU and the US, hence they tried to pursue a policy of partnership, friendship and good relations with it. The second period took place after 2001 and was caused by Putin's desire to completely include Belarus as a member of the Russian Federation or to impose control over its economy and politics on the smaller neighbor. Among the means by which Russian leaders – Putin and his successor Dmitry Medvedev – wanted to force the Belarussian state to agree to annexation, one can mention: raising prices for energy resources several times (in 2003, 2007 and 2008), temporarily stopping gas supplies (January 2004) and crude oil (in 2010), limitation of imports of Belarusian goods to the Russian market and introduction of export duties on oil supplies (January 2007). This caused a crisis in the Belarusian economy, dependent on Russian aid, which is why Lukashenko, not wanting to agree to the demands of a powerful neighbor, was forced to seek help among Western countries. The European Union, interested in changing the political orientation of the Belarusian state and democratizing its system, agreed to provide Belarus with assistance and establish comprehensive economic cooperation. As a result, in 2008, 1/3 of Belarus's trade turnover fell on EU countries. In return for

[23] E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 33, 44–45, 61–62, 70–81, 152–157, 164–165, 180.

[24] WB Sejm, 2nd term, Speech of D. Rosati on 9 May 1996; 3rd term, Speech of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1999.

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help, Lukashenko briefly played the role of an example for others, alleviating repression in 2007–2010, limiting censorship and letting political prisoners out. He also agreed to enter his country into the Eastern Partnership (May 2009), a system of cooperation between the European states of the former USSR and the EU. As a result, he led Belarus out of international isolation, gained an alternative source of aid for the economy, and showed Russia that it could be independent of its pressure. The hopes of Polish leaders for a permanent change in Belarusian policy have not been realized. In 1993, the EU was not interested in cooperating with Belarus, and in 2010 Russia agreed to all economic conditions of Lukashenko, so that the policy of rapprochement with the EU ceased to be profitable.[25] Minister Anna Fotyga said, "We are counting on the eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy to be the dimension that equally engages in relations with the Belarusian society." Sikorski expressed the hope that Belarus "will open [...] the way to closer relations with its western neighbors and with the entire European Union".[26]

The actual role of Poland in relations with Belarus was more similar to the role declared than it did in the case of the role imposed on the eastern neighbor. For many years Polish leaders have been the reconciliation's role, and despite various reservations, they were perceived by the Belarusian authorities. The best relations between the two countries took place in 1992–1993. At that time, a number of political, economic, social and cultural agreements were signed, including the Treaty on Good Neighborhood and Friendly Cooperation (June 1992) as well as numerous agreements on joint investment and economic projects, cross-border cooperation, facilitation of movement, scientific exchange and technological development, combating crime and maintaining military contacts. Economic cooperation led to an increase in trade between the two countries and in the mid-nineties it made Poland the third, after Russia and Ukraine, trade partner of Belarus. Between these two countries, there were also close political contacts at the level of heads of state, prime ministers and ministers. The presidents of Poland Lech Wałęsa (June 1993) and Aleksander Kwaśniewski (March 1996) and prime ministers: Olszewski (March 1992), Suchocka (November 1992), Pawlak (January 1995) and Cimoszewicz (September 1996) went to Belarus. Poland was visited by the chairman of RN Szuszkiewicz (June 1992) and prime ministers of Kiebicz (April 1992) and Mikhail Czyhir (September 1996). Close relations between leaders led to the fact that Poland for a long time did not join the EU and US sanctions and, despite the limitation of diplomatic contacts after 1996, implemented multifaceted cooperation with Belarus. The Belarus-Russian conflict from the beginning of the 21st century contributed to the resumption of positive relations between the two countries. In November 2001, the first, for nearly four years, the meeting of the heads of diplomacy of both coun-

[25] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 261–262, 386; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 33–35, 39–40, 147–178; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki...*, pp. 228, 239–241.

[26] WB Sejm, 5th term, Speech of A. Fotyga on 11 May 2007; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 13 Feb 2009.

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tries – Cimoszewicz and Mikhail Chwastowa – took place, and Belarus two years later was visited by Prime Minister Miller (October 2003). Thanks to this, we managed to increase trade twice, to over half a billion dollars and to start liberalization of regulations on crossing the common border. The next stage of the rapprochement took place in connection with the transitory reversal of Lukashenko's political orientation to the West, in 2007–2010. Prime Minister Siarhei Sidorsky (September 2009) and Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Kobiakov (September 2008) came to Poland, Belarus was visited by Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak (February 2009) and repeatedly by Minister Sikorski. The result of these meetings was the signing of several agreements, including on the construction of a coal-fired power plant near Grodno and a pipeline supplying diesel fuel from Belarus and on small border traffic, as well as the cessation of repressions against ZPB and the possibility of investing in Belarus by Polish companies.[27] Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, while assessing the first period of cooperation, said: "Good neighborly relations between Poland and Belarus are successfully developing, with which we managed to agree on many concrete forms of cooperation." On cooperation from the period of Donald Tusk's government, Sikorski said, "I am ready […] to talk with representatives of the undemocratic government".[28]

The declared role of the promoter towards the approximation of Belarus to Western structures has not been realized, because Kwasniewski's attempts and subsequent attempts by the next governments to establish close cooperation between the Belarusian state and the EU and NATO have not produced results. It was only the tightening of Belarusian-Russian relations and the liberalization of internal politics by Lukashenko that made it possible, as it seemed, to implement this postulate. In the autumn of 2008, during a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Siarhjem Martynau, Sikorski persuaded the Belarusian authorities to approximate political and economic relations with the EU, offering to act as an intermediary. In December this year, he presented a proposal to establish an Eastern Partnership, consisting in the regional cooperation of six European post-Soviet republics, including Belarus, with the EU, thanks to which these countries could obtain financial and material assistance for socio-economic development. The proposal met with the approval of the EU authorities and in May 2009 a declaration was signed in Prague that initiated this system of cooperation. As a result, for a short period Poland could consider itself as a promoter and a bridge (a link between two other international entities) between Belarus and the European Union and try to partially influence the eastern neighbor's domestic policy, such as Sikorski's visits to Minsk and positive ones, it seemed that the talks with Lukashenka about the observance of human rights and national minorities.[29] Tusk said, "We have started a very difficult and still fledgling

[27] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 86, 174–175, 260–262, 386; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 39–42, 94–95, 194–196; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki...*, pp. 226–229, 231–232, 236–237, 239–241.

[28] WB Sejm, 1st term, Speech of K. Skubiszewski on 8 May 1992; 6th term, Speech of R. Sikorski on 8 Apr 2010.

[29] E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 172–179, 194–195; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki...*, pp. 240–241.

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dialogue, which aims not only at supporting democratic processes, but also at effectively protecting the interests of Poles in Belarus".[30]

Poland played two different roles: a liberator and a provocateur. The first consisted in supporting the democratic opposition in Belarus, while the second was an assessment of Polish actions by the Belarusian authorities as interfering in the internal affairs of the state and thus aimed at worsening mutual relations. Criticizing the anti-democratic policy of the eastern neighbor and taking action to limit the dictatorial system of power has already begun in principle from the very beginning of office by Lukashenko. During Kwasniewski's visit in March 1996, the Polish president met with the Belarusian opposition and spoke in defense of its rights. The authorities of the Poland did not recognize the dissolution of the Belarusian parliament in autumn 1996 and adopted its former chairman Siamion Szarecki (December 1999), and also issued several documents criticizing changes in the internal situation of the eastern neighbor. One of them is among others statement by the presidents of Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania (Kwasniewski, Leonid Kuchma and Algirdas Brazauskas) on the need to respect human rights and democratic freedoms through Belarus (November 1996) and the Sejm's resolution regarding support for the democratic opposition (January 1999). Poland actively engaged in the attempt to change the political system in Belarus. Minister Geremek, as the OSCE chairman in February 1998, opened an observation mission for this organization in Minsk, Polish governments supported opposition candidates in the presidential election, including Alyaksandr Milinkevich in 2006 and also launched media, sending to Belarus other news than those contained in the government's mass media: radio "Russia" (November 1999) and TV "Belsat" (December 2007). At the same time, Polish leaders in talks with the Belarusian authorities tried to persuade them to stop the repressive policy towards the opposition. While the attempts made by Geremek and Cimoszewicz ended in failure, Sikorski's meetings with Lukashenka and Martynau led to the possibility of opposition parties for relatively free action and participation in the 2008 and presidential elections in 2010. Belarus, however, considered the above actions as violating the sovereignty of its own state and treated it as a manifestation of the hostility of the Polish state. That is why she often used various kinds of difficulties in the activities of Polish NGOs, including ZPB.[31] Geremek said, "It is not in our interest to isolate Belarus […] but can I not ask about what is with political prisoners?" According to Meller, "in the promotion of Belarusian democracy, especially we […] do the most in Europe".[32]

The actual roles of Belarus and Poland in mutual relations were different from what the leaders of the Polish state expected. The Belarusian authorities during Lukashenko's

[30] WB Sejm, 6th term, Speech of D. Tusk, session 29 on 20 Nov 2008, inf. 1 Dec 2015.

[31] R. Kuźniar, *Polityka...*, pp. 174–175, 260–262, 386; E. Mironowicz, *Polityka...*, pp. 95–96, 179–180, 187–197; R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki...*, pp. 232–238.

[32] WB Sejm, 3rd term, Speech of B. Geremek on 5 Mar 1998; 5th term, Speech of S. Meller on 15 Feb 2006.

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presidency were not interested in the democratization of the system, even in exchange for the help of Western states in the development of their economy and improvement of the society's standard of living. The authoritarian regime believed that a better alternative to Belarus was the rapprochement with Russia. This position was based on two premises: first, Russia was ready to offer (at least during Yeltsin's presidency) far-reaching economic aid for Belarus's stay in its sphere of influence; secondly, the Russian authorities did not force Lukashenko to change his internal policy. There was a period when a Belarusian leader, concerned about Russia's imperial aspirations for his country, had to ask for help from the EU and liberalize a bit of governance. However, it lasted only three years and was aimed at showing the more powerful neighbor that Belarus could conduct independent foreign policy without complying with its interests. The only thing that Poland managed to some extent to achieve was maintaining and developing good neighborly cooperation (the role of a conciliator), because the Belarusian authorities were keen on positive relations with their western neighbor. However, the Polish authorities could not use this opportunity in a total way. The involvement of Polish leaders in the processes of democratization and support of the anti-systemic opposition provoked anger on the Belarusian side and treated Poland as a state of hostile sovereignty of Belarus, which hindered Poland from pursuing the eastern policy.

Concluding remarks

Relations between Poland and Belarus can be divided into two categories: theoretical plans and real achievements. While evaluating the former, one can have the impression that the Polish state had a great potential with which it could induce its neighbor to implement the policy in line with its expectations, while taking into account the second category it should be noted that there is considerable disproportion of funds in relation to intentions, to the detriment of those first. The declared roles of Poland showed her as the conciliator, the liberator, the helper, the promoter and the mediator who can change the Belarusian policy to the desired from its point of view, i.e., to perform the role of a conciliator, an independent state and an opponent in Russian policy, a western aid consumer, participant in a regional subsystem and an example for others. Meanwhile, reality turned out to be largely different than the Polish leaders wanted. While Belarus was a consumer but counted more on Russia's help than the European Union, it acted as an opponent, but first and foremost against attempts by Western states and organizations to take part, it also became a participant in the regional subsystem, but largely focused on integration with the Eastern power. The only role, a conciliator that Poland could realize, also failed fully, because at the same time she wanted to be a liberator and was treated as a provocateur. Thus, it should be stated that the policy of the Republic of Poland towards Belarus ended in the failure of Polish diplomacy.

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Abstract: The article analyzes the international role of Belarus in the policy of the governments of the Third Republic of Poland. It consists of two chapters. The first one analyzes the declared and imposed roles formulated by the decision-makers of Polish foreign policy – prime ministers and foreign ministers – directed towards the eastern neighbor. The Republic of Poland wanted to impose on Belarus the demand to democratize the authoritarian system and respect human rights and to establish correct relations with Poland and Western states, while at the same time leaving the Russian sphere of influence. In return, it offered assistance to the eastern neighbor in obtaining material and technological aid for modernizing the state and improving the living conditions of the population as well as close bilateral and regional cooperation. The second chapter analyzes the actual role of Belarus and Poland in mutual relations. The Belarusian decision-makers did not intend to change the existing system, believing that economic assistance and political and military support would get from Russia, but they regarded all interference in internal affairs as a manifestation of the hostility of Poland and Western states. Therefore, in response, they applied sanctions against Western and Polish diplomats and exacerbated repressions against the opposition, believing in help and support from Russia in the event of sanctions exercised by the European Union or NATO.
Keywords: the international roles, Polish-Belarusian relations.

Międzynarodowa rola Białorusi w polityce rządów III RP

Streszczenie: Artykuł analizuje międzynarodową rolę Białorusi w polityce rządów III RP. Składa się z dwóch rozdziałów. W pierwszym dokonano analizy ról deklarowanych i narzucanych, formułowanych przez decydentów polskiej polityki zagranicznej – premierów i ministrów spraw zagranicznych – kierowanych wobec wschodniego sąsiada. Rzeczpospolita Polska chciała narzucić państwu białoruskiemu żądania demokratyzacji systemu autorytarnego i przestrzegania praw człowieka oraz ułożenia poprawnych relacji z Polską i państwami zachodnimi z jednoczesnym wyjściem z rosyjskiej strefy wpływów. W zamian oferowała wschodniemu sąsiadowi pomoc w uzyskaniu pomocy materialnej i technologicznej na modernizacją państwa i poprawę warunków życia ludności oraz bliską współpracę dwustronną i regionalną. Drugi rozdział stanowi analizę rzeczywistej roli Białorusi i Polski we wzajemnych relacjach. Białoruscy decydenci nie zamierzali zmieniać istniejącego ustroju, wierząc, że pomoc ekonomiczną i wsparcie polityczno-militarne uzyskają od Rosji, natomiast wszelką ingerencję w wewnętrzne sprawy uważali za przejaw wrogości Polski i państw zachodnich. Dlatego w odpowiedzi stosowali sankcje wobec zachodnich i polskich dyplomatów i zaostrzali represje wobec opozycji, wierząc w pomoc i wsparcie ze strony Rosji w przypadku sankcji Unii Europejskiej czy NATO.
Słowa kluczowe: role międzynarodowe, stosunki polsko-białoruskie.

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Международная роль Беларуси в политике правительств Третьей Польской Республики

Аннотация: В статье анализируется международная роль Беларуси в политике правительств Третьей Польской Республики. Она состоит из двух глав. Первая анализирует заявленные и навязанные роли, сформулированные лицами, принимающими решения в польской внешней политике – премьер-министрами и министрами иностранных дел – в отношении восточного соседа. Республика Польша хотела навязать белорусскому государству требование демократизировать авторитарную систему, уважать права человека и установить правильные отношения с Польшей и западными странами, одновременно оставляя российскую сферу влияния. Взамен она предложила помощь восточному соседу в получении материально-технической помощи для модернизации государства и улучшения условий жизни населения, а также тесного двустороннего и регионального сотрудничества. Во второй главе анализируется реальная роль Беларуси и Польши во взаимоотношениях. Белорусские лица, принимающие решения, не собирались менять существующую систему, полагая, что экономическая помощь, а также политическая и военная поддержка будут получены от России, но они рассматривали любое вмешательство во внутренние дела как проявление враждебности Польши и западных государств. Поэтому в ответ они применили санкции против западных и польских дипломатов и усугубили репрессии против оппозиции, веря в помощь и поддержку со стороны России в случае санкций со стороны Европейского Союза или НАТО.

Ключевые слова: международные роли, польско-белорусские отношения.

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