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POLISH DIASPORA IN THE USA IN THE PROCESS OF POLAND'S ACCESSION TO NATO

Rafał Raczyński*

ABSTRACT

In recent years diasporas and their political impact have become an important research issue in political science and international relations science. At the turn of the 21st century, diasporas gained the status of important actors with impact both on the global politics, interstate relations and directions of domestic policies. One of the diasporas which in the 1990s actively participated in the American political life were Polish-Americans, with the reason being the intense efforts undertaken by Poland in 1992 to join NATO. The purpose of this article is to present the activities of the Polish Diaspora in the US undertaken in favour of the accession of Poland to the North Atlantic Alliance, analysed however not in the factual (historical) approach, but against the background of the theory developed so far regarding the functioning of diasporas and ethnic groups in the US political system. The article has been prepared with the use of the historical method, the comparative method and the behavioural method, the basis for its preparation was primarily literature on the subject, press materials, and source materials (letters, articles and publications) contained in the collection of documents after Jan Nowak- Jeziorański entitled *Poland's road to NATO* (Wrocław 2006). The conducted analysis indicates that the merits of Polish Americans for Poland's membership in NATO are invaluable and should be considered one of the most important achievements of the Polish Diaspora for the country of origin. The activities undertaken in 1993-1999 by Polish Americans are the most important but at the same time unfortunately also the isolated manifestation of the involvement and organized influence of the Polish ethnic group on shaping the American politics.

Key words: Polish diaspora in the US, Poland, NATO enlargement, Polish American Congress, political activity of diasporas, political activity of ethnic groups

Introduction

In the last decade of the 20th Century and in the early years of the 21st Century, diasporas gained the status of important actors with impact both on the global politics, interstate relations and directions of domestic policies. It was

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noted that diasporic communities may have significant economic, political and socio-cultural capital, which allows them to participate actively in the political processes and affect the socio-economic situation. Most often, it is indicated that the role and importance of diasporas as subjects of politics may be expressed, among others, by lobbying activities, supporting the government or the opposition; providing financial aid for political parties, non-governmental organisations or social movements; the so-called diaspora diplomacy; initiating public debates on topics relevant to the diaspora; advisory and expert activities; exerting influence on the public opinion; or promotion of specific values, ideals and solutions. Currently, emigrant communities use a diverse catalogue of tools, which enable them to achieve the desired political objectives. The most important of them include lobbying and direct participation in government, lawsuits, fundraising, demonstrations, electronic communications and even electoral participation (Newland, 2010). There are principally several factors deemed as determinants of the intensification of the activities of diasporas in politics observed in the recent years (Vertovec, 2005). Undoubtedly, an essential role in this regard is played by the development of modern means of communication, which greatly improve the stimulation capacity of emigrant communities, make it possible to maintain regular contacts with the countries of origin and to stay abreast of the political situation. The second important factor is multiculturalism policy, introduced in many highly developed countries, which aids pride and confidence of diasporas. Another consideration is associated with growing prosperity and better social position enjoyed by members of diasporas, which thus gained the ability to engage more effectively in political activities. The political empowerment of Diasporas was also encouraged by the democratisation processes, which emerged at the turn of the 1990s.

One of the ethnic groups, which in the 1990s actively participated in the political life were Polish-Americans, with the reason being the intense efforts undertaken by Poland in 1992 to join the NATO. While the process of “seeking” the NATO membership by Poland (as well as by the Czech Republic and Hungary) has been relatively well described in the literature on the subject, information on the activities of Polish Americans in this field is much scarcer in scientific literature, especially in Polish literature¹. The purpose of this work, therefore, is to present the activities of the Polish diaspora in the US undertaken

¹ Exceptions in this respect include works such as D. E. Pienkos (1995, 1999), L. Kuczyński (1999), J. Knopek (2003).

for the accession of Poland to the North Atlantic Alliance, analysed however not in the factual (historical) approach, but against the background of the existing theory on the functioning of diasporas and ethnic groups in the US political system. The article has been prepared with the use of the historical method, the comparative method and the behavioural method, the basis for its preparation were primarily literature on the subject, press materials, and source materials (letters, articles and publications) contained in the collection of documents after **Jan Nowak- Jeziorański**, entitled *Polska droga do NATO (Poland's road to NATO)* (Wrocław 2006).

1 Political activities of diasporas in the American political system

The active participation of ethnic groups in shaping the American policy (including primarily foreign policy) from the very beginning aroused lively controversy. As noticed by **John DeWind** and **Renata Segura**, Americans from the very beginning have been rather ambivalent about the links between their compatriots with their countries of origin. On the one hand, as a nation of immigrants, they accepted a double attachment both to the country of origin and to the new homeland - the United States, perceiving it as the common and expected aspect of hyphenated ethnic-American identities. On the other hand, they were often suspicious of foreign ties, identifying them with potential disloyalty and threat to the national security (DeWind, Segura, 2014, p. 3). At the same time, in recent years, the influence of ethnic groups on American politics has strengthened. **Nathan Glazer** and **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** already in 1975 claimed that diasporic communities may be the most important factor shaping the American foreign policy (Glazer, Moynihan, 1975). Intensification of the activities of diasporas in this area, however, became fully visible only after the end of the Cold War. One of the reasons for such a state of affairs, apart from the initiated democratisation processes (which in relation to many countries meant a new opening in the relations between the state and diaspora), the triumph of multiculturalism policy, acceptance of human rights and the development of new communication channels (increasing the stimulation capacity of diasporas and facilitating contacts with the country of origin), was, according to **Tony Smith**, the fact that “the end of the Cold War has weakened the American state relative to the society so that in many domains interest groups are gaining in strength” (Smith, 2000, p. 30). In this

context, weakening of the government's political leadership gave the interest groups more opportunities to define and shape American foreign policy. Therefore, the ability and power of ethnic groups to influence the policy created by the federal government is today widely accepted by politicians, journalists, as well as researchers and analysts.

The growing importance of diasporas in the American political reality, discernible in recent years, exacerbated old fears. It was reflected in the scientific discussion on the positive and negative consequences of the inclusion of ethnic groups in political processes. In general, there are two positions here. The first indicates that ethnic lobby has a major impact on the US foreign policy and represents a dire threat to the American national interest. Supporters of this approach include researchers such as **Samuel P. Huntington**, **Arthur M. Schlesinger**, **Tony Smith** or **Bruce Robbins**. They argue that political participation of diasporas can lead to risks such as prioritizing particular interests of ethnic groups over and above the American national interest; activity of diasporas as agents of foreign governments; promotion of inconsistent foreign policy; inhibiting necessary changes in American foreign policy; undercutting democratic principles; engaging the US in conflicts that do not involve the reason of state; or simply exercising too much influence and power by the diasporic communities. The representatives of the other position claim, however, that the importance of the ethnic influence on the foreign policy of the United States is greatly exaggerated, and the participation of diasporas in the process of forming this policy brings the country more benefits than problems. In their view, the involvement of ethnic groups strengthens the interests of the US; helps resist isolation tendencies; leads to the spread of democratic principles in the world; is an expression of respect for diversity; forms the multicultural character of foreign policy (which is reflected in the American liberal democratic ethos) or makes it possible to rectify the old "white" foreign policy (Ambrosio, 2002). The most recognizable representatives of this approach are **Yossi Shain** and **Thomas Ambrosio**.

The key to assess the impact of diasporic communities on the process of shaping the US foreign policy towards specific states, regions or issues is the degree of compatibility of goals and interests of ethnic groups with the US national goals and interests. As observed by **John DeWind** and **Renata Segura** "the influence of diasporas and the US government on one another in shaping foreign policy increases when convergent interests and goals become recognized, whether these are pre-existing or constructed, and decreases when

interests and goals are seen to be divergent” (DeWind, Segura, 2014, p. 6). The problem is, however, that often these convergences are not easily visible, especially in the long-term perspective. From the point of view of ethnic communities, it is essential to convince the federal administration and the Congress that the particular interests represented by a particular diaspora are part of the wider national interest of the United States. The activities of ethnic groups are therefore legitimate if their interests are subordinated to public well-being.

Literature on the subject usually recognizes three factors, which largely determine the political strength of diasporas and their influence on shaping the American foreign policy. These are electoral force (strength of votes), financial resources (campaign financing) and organisational strength (ability to win allies, exert pressure and stimulate). With regard to the first factor, both qualitative and quantitative conditions are of importance. In the first case, it is best if members of ethnic groups are well assimilated or integrated with the American society, while maintaining a certain indispensable level of identification with the country of origin. It weakens the intensity of potential accusations of prioritizing ethnic interests over national (American) ones, enabling at the same time the involvement of members of a specific ethnic group in activities for the benefit of the country of origin. The quantitative aspect, on the other hand, means that the larger the population of an ethnic group, the higher number of potential votes, and hence, the greater the power of political influence. Studies show, however, that also less numerous ethnic communities can have a significant impact on political decisions. What matters is not only the total number of members of the ethnic group, but also their concentration in certain constituencies (i.e. the proportion of the electorate in a given constituency). This is especially important in elections to the Congress. An example might be the Jewish minority, which constitutes merely approx. 3% of the total population of the country. Yet in the New York City, the Jewish community comprises 9% of the population. Given that most New York Jews traditionally vote for Democrats, it means that they constitute around 15% of the Democratic electorate there (Smith, 2000, p. 99). As noted by **Smith**: “since they tend to vote at twice the levels of the state average, they may perhaps account for 30 percent of all the votes cast in a Democratic primary in that state. Through their vote in New York State alone, then, Jews rather automatically have a place at the table in foreign policy deliberations in Washington” (Smith, 2000, p. 99). The geographical concentration is a strong asset also of the Cuban or Armenian diaspora in the

US. In this context, **David M. Paul** and **Rachel A. Paul** even estimate that for an ethnic group to have a real chance of influencing a given Congressman, its representatives in the Congressman's constituency should constitute at least approx. 10% of the voters (Paul, Paul, 2009, p. 109). The second factor that determines the political potential of diasporas concerns financial resources. It is noted in this context that the American electoral process is extremely expensive. This is due to its professionalization, marketization and medialization. It is estimated that the total spending on presidential and Congress campaigns in 2016 amounted to approx. 6.5 billion dollars (Ingraham, 2017). The high cost of the electoral race makes the candidates and parties constantly search for money. It means that an ethnic group can influence a candidate or Congressman not only through the number of potential votes in the constituency, but also by co-financing their campaigns. What is important, according to the solutions adopted in the US electoral system, it is not obligatory to reside in a given constituency in order to financially support the candidates who run for the election there. In this system, even if an ethnic group is not able to vote in a given constituency, they can still try to influence the candidate / Congressman, paying for his or her campaign. It may be illustrated by the Senate election in the District of South Dakota in 1996. The Republican candidate, **Larry Pressler**, was financially supported by Americans of Indian descent and advocated against the US military aid for Pakistan. He was defeated by a Democrat, **Tim Johnson**, who received significant financial assistance from Pakistani Americans. The antagonism between Pakistanis and Indians played a significant role in the electoral race, despite the fact that the South Dakota district was virtually not inhabited by either of them (Smith, 2000, p. 101-102). Out of all ethnic groups, Jewish Americans donate the most money to political campaigns. It is estimated that funds from this group represent at least half of the means the Democratic Party receives for nationwide elections (Smith, 2000, p. 107). Another ethnic lobby, successful in its activities and at the same enjoying a large financial potential are Cuban Americans. The last factor to affect the efficiency of diasporas in achieving their goals is the organisational strength (structure), which allows the electoral and financial potential to be channelled. **Smith** notices in this context that: "[...] like any interest group, an ethnic community becomes a seriously viable political force only when it has an organization whose chief purpose is to influence decision makers to adopt policies favorable to the group's interests" (Smith, 2000, p. 109). In other words, a well-organised ethnic group that wants to pursue political goals must have

specialised institutions whose activities will be oriented towards:

- ensuring the organisational unity of the ethnic community itself;
- forming or supervising alliances with other social forces to call in unison for government actions;
- advocating policy positions and monitoring the behaviour of government officials responsible for formulating and implementing policy (Smith, 2000, p. 109).

In addition to the three outlined above main factors, which determine the diasporas' action strategy, it is also worth mentioning the possibility to influence the political process by ethnic groups through performing the function of experts, both towards the state administration and the public opinion. Strengths such as command of languages, knowledge about historical and cultural conditions or contacts often allow them to sit in consultative bodies or fulfil the role of consultants, thus being at the centre of the decision-making process and obtaining direct access to persons or decision-making bodies.

In order to effectively reach the assumed goals and pursue their interests, diasporas in the American political system should actively work in three interrelated areas: in terms of the executive (the president and administration), the legislature (the House of Representatives and the Senate), as well as mass media and the public opinion. Commitment to these fields makes it possible to create the synergy effect, which increases the effectiveness.

2 The Polish road to NATO

After the Second World War, Poland found itself in the sphere of the USSR's domination. The institutional expression thereof - in the political and military dimension - was the participation in the Warsaw Pact, and in the economic dimension - membership in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Belonging to the Eastern bloc meant that during the Cold War Poland was a relatively safe country. The price of the relative security was, however, the satellite status towards Moscow, the resulting limited sovereignty, authoritarian state system and civilisation backwardness (Kuzniar, 2012, p. 91). The collapse of the bipolar system in international relations and stepping into the path of political transformation in the late 1980s by Central and Eastern European countries gave Poland a chance for a radical change of the situation. The ongoing transformations in the international environment, which were accompanied by changes in the political, economic and social system, quickly

led to re-evaluations in both the Polish foreign policy and security. Generally speaking, the vectors of Polish foreign policy were reoriented from the East to the West. It was expressed by three main priorities in Polish foreign policy, which in the 1990s were reflected in the stages of its formation. In the first stage, falling on 1989-1993, the main goal of Poland was to regain full sovereignty (eradication of the character of the satellite state, confirmation of the borders, removal of the Soviet / Russian troops from the territory of the Republic of Poland, etc.). The second stage (1993-1997) was a period of dynamic efforts to provide Poland with security, that is, efforts to enter NATO. The third stage (1998-2002/2003) was about intensification of activities aimed at Polish accession to the European Union (see Kuźniar, 2012).

The geopolitical position of the Polish state, between historically expansive powers, i.e. Germany in the west and Russia in the east, makes security a special consideration in the Polish foreign policy. At the same time, the transformation of the late 1980s and early 1990s brought a significant decline in the security standards. Poland found itself in the 'grey area' of security. The new situation, symbolized by the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, on the one hand was an opportunity, and on the other one, forced to redefine the place of Poland in security systems and structures. At the beginning of the 1990s, there appeared in Poland various concepts, such as maintaining the alliance with Russia, declaring Poland a permanently neutral country, building a collective security system within the Central European countries, strengthening the security system as part of OSCE, or finally joining the North Atlantic Alliance. Ultimately, Poland, alike other countries of Central Europe, decided that the best guarantor of security would be NATO. Therefore, in the autumn of 1991, Polish Government and specialized state institutions commenced analytical and conceptual works associated with the action strategy to be granted membership in this system of collective security. However, the official announcement of Poland's NATO aspirations was delayed. It was, first of all, the reaction of the USSR/Russia that was feared. It was predicted that joining the 'hostile' (as it was perceived by Russia) collective security system by Poland would cause Moscow to prevent or abolish the ongoing changes (it should be remembered that until 1991 Poland was formally a member of the Warsaw Pact, and until mid-September of 1993 Russian military units still stationed on the Polish territory). In the early 1990s, also NATO and its member countries, along with its leader - the United States, rejected the possibility of extending the Alliance to include former members of the Warsaw Pact, encouraging Central European

countries to exercise restraint in articulating their intentions. In the context of the efforts aimed at the membership in the Alliance, the turning point in the Polish foreign policy was the year 1992. First, in January 1992, the newly appointed Defence Minister, **Jan Parys**, announced that Poland would seek NATO membership, then this postulate was reiterated in his May exposé by Minister of Foreign Affairs **Krzysztof Skubiszewski**. The final confirmation thereof was inclusion of the Euro-Atlantic direction in the document signed in November by President **Lech Wałęsa** entitled *Zasady polskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa* (*Principles of the Polish Security Policy*). At the same time, the countries of the Visegrad Triangle (Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) already in early May committed to cooperate closely in their efforts to join the Alliance.

From mid-1993, Poland took intensive measures aimed at gaining membership in NATO. It was crucial to win favourability and acceptance of the US, especially since the idea of extending the Alliance from the very beginning was strongly opposed by Russia. This task was not, however, easy, because the new democratic administration of President **Bill Clinton** was guided in its relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe by the 'Russia first' principle. According to this principle, the priority for the US foreign policy in the region was political stability in Russia, further deepening of the democratisation processes taking place there and counteracting the increase of the influence of political radical groups and politicians (like **Vladimir Zhirinovsky**). The advocates of this option oriented on Russia were people such as Secretary of State **Warren Christopher** and, above all, his deputy **Strobe Talbott** (who was regarded as Russophile, and by the way was a close friend of President **Clinton** back in the times of studies). In the American perspective, the quick and one-sided support of the concept of the NATO enlargement to include the countries of Central Europe, which until recently had been in one military alliance with the USSR / Russia, could have undermined these goals.

Hence, the Polish authorities tried to neutralize even more Russia's negative attitude towards the enlargement of the Alliance. An opportunity to achieve it was a visit of President **Boris Yeltsin** to Warsaw, on 24-24 August 1993. During the talks held late into the night, attempts were made to persuade the Russian head of the state not so much to accept the Polish plans for NATO membership but not to object to them. Admittedly, thanks to the intense efforts made by Poland in the summary of the visit, it was possible to create the following text: "The Presidents raised the issue of the intention of Polish accession to NATO. President **Lech Wałęsa** explained Poland's known stand in this matter, which

was accepted with understanding by President **Boris Yeltsin**. In a perspective, such a decision of a sovereign Poland, aimed at European-wide integration is not contrary to the interests of other countries, including Russia” (cited in Kuźniar, 2012, p. 110-11). However, already on 15 September, President **Yeltsin**, under the pressure of his advisors and co-workers, in a confidential letter addressed to the leaders of the US, France, the UK, and Germany, withdrew from this position and announced that the ideas of NATO enlargement to include the Eastern countries would be met with strong opposition from Russia.

Such a situation however, did not discourage Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The countries even increased their pressure on Washington and Brussels regarding their strategic aspirations. It was feared in these countries that such a situation in the future could lead to Central Europe being granted a permanent buffer status between NATO and Russia. The response of NATO and Western countries to the efforts of Central European countries to integrate with the structures of the Alliance was the Partnership for Peace program, which the American administration, with the support of the German government, began to promote from October 1993, i.e. from the meeting of NATO defence ministers in Travemünde. **Roman Kuźniar**, the expert in the subject matter notices that: “The concept of the Partnership for Peace, i.e. enhanced [...] cooperation between NATO and former Warsaw Pact countries, from the very beginning looked like a substitute of the idea of membership, which in the first place was to alleviate Moscow's concerns, expressed more and more often, and to soothe the political conscience of the Alliance states [...]” (Kuźniar 2012, p. 123). For these reasons, the program came for criticism in the Central European countries interested in a prompt accession to the Alliance. It was under its influence, among other things, that the US administration decided to modify some of the partnership assumptions, and to send to Warsaw a special mission composed of **Madeleine Albright** and Gen. **John Shalikashvili**, who were supposed to convince Poland to participate in this project. Warsaw talks were held just before the NATO summit in Brussels, planned for the beginning of January 1994 and, as a result, during the above-mentioned summit Americans managed to announce the launch of the Partnership for Peace program. Right after the visit in Brussels, President **Clinton** went to Prague for a meeting with the leaders of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, where he delivered the historic words: The enlargement is “no longer a question of «whether» but «when» and «how»”. Although this statement undoubtedly reflected a certain

change in the attitude of the United States towards the enlargement of NATO to the East, it should not be forgotten that it was only of a declarative character and did not specify any further steps in this direction. Concerns of the Central European countries were additionally aggravated by the fact that Russia deemed the adoption of the Partnership for Peace as its greatest diplomatic success, hoping that it would block once and for all the idea of expanding the Alliance.

Poland, despite the fears and some disappointment with the attitude of Western countries, decided to join the Partnership for Peace program, from the very beginning doing so quite intensively. Already in the first days of February, in Brussels, the Polish Prime Minister signed the so-called the Partnership for Peace Framework Document, and then Poland, as the first of all the invited to participate in this initiative, submitted the Partnership for Peace Presentation Document, thanks to which as soon as in the early July it was possible to agree on the Individual Partnership Program. At the same time, Warsaw did not resign from its ultimate goal - the membership. It was expressed by the inclusion of Poland's aspirations to join NATO in the documents related to the Partnership for Peace program.

An important event on the road of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to NATO was the decision taken at the December 1994 meeting of the North Atlantic Council to prepare a study on various aspects and consequences of possible NATO enlargement. In consequence, in September 1995, Study on NATO Enlargement saw the light of day. The document in question did not contain any political decisions regarding the enlargement of the Alliance to include new member states, but it was important as it defined the criteria and actions that had to be taken to make the enlargement possible. The study was therefore a kind of 'signpost' for countries aspiring to the membership.

The breakthrough in the process of Polish accession to NATO was year 1996. Already in the first months of that year, there were serious indications suggesting the evolution of the Alliance's approach to the admission of new members from Central Europe. One of its manifestations was an April visit in Warsaw of the new NATO Secretary General, **Javier Solana**, who declared that the decisions regarding the enlargement had already been taken. The momentous change of the Alliance regarding the enlargement issues became even more evident in the summer of 1996, which was related to the US plans to transform the functioning of this organisation and adapt it to new challenges. In the new Washington view, the enlargement of the Alliance was to be a vital

component of this process. An essential development in this context was the proposal of President **Clinton** put forward in September during the election campaign to convene in the summer of 1997 a special NATO summit on the issue of the admission of new members. Then, even before the Election Day, President **Clinton** advanced arguments in favour of NATO enlargement during a meeting with the Polish community in Detroit, which was held on October 22, 1996. The result of the final approval of the US administration for the idea of opening the Alliance to new members was the decision in December to convene the promised summit in mid-1997, at which an invitation to start accession negotiations was to be issued.

At this stage of the enlargement process, the question of overcoming Russia's resistance was of key significance. For that reason, there was arranged a special meeting between President **Clinton** and President **Yeltsin**, which took place in Helsinki in March 1997. Eventually, at the price of certain concessions and proposals, it was possible to allay Moscow's fears and sign NATO-Russia Founding Act, which regulated mutual relations. It paved the way for the formal commencement of works on the admission of new member states to the Alliance.

Therefore, in line with President **Clinton's** declaration, the NATO summit was held in Madrid on 8-9 July, during which an invitation was issued for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to start the accession negotiations. The negotiations themselves, which took place in September and October, turned out to be quite straightforward and, therefore, as expected, on 16 December, the Ministers of the Alliance gathered in the North Atlantic Council signed the accession protocols.

The formal decision on the enlargement made by NATO in December 1997 did not mean the ultimate success yet. The accession protocols still had to be subjected to ratification by all member states of the Alliance, in accordance with their relevant procedures. It was essential to obtain the consent of the US Senate in this respect. Under the provisions of the American Constitution, the President may only conclude treaties "upon the advice and consent of the Senate, granted by a two-thirds majority of sitting senators". Hence, both Polish diplomacy (including, first of all, the Polish embassy in Washington) and the American Polonia almost from the very beginning of Polish efforts to be granted NATO membership, conducted in the US a broad campaign to win favour for the idea of the Alliance enlargement among the Congressmen, opinion-forming circles, as well as American public opinion. They tried to confirm the supporters

of NATO's opening to new members in their opinion, win those who were undecided and convince, through constant persuasion, declared opponents of this idea. A wide range of strategies and instruments were used for this purpose. A particular intensification of these activities occurred in the winter of 1998, months before the ratification debate in the Senate. On February 11, 1998, President **Clinton** submitted the ratification protocols to the upper house of the US Congress. Despite attempts to complicate the decision-making process carried out by the opponents until the last moments, on April 30, 1998, the US Senate adopted the ratification resolution with a large majority. Finally, on March 12, 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary became full members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

3 Advocating Poland's entry into NATO by the Polish Americans

The Polish diaspora in the United States undoubtedly played an important role in the campaign for the Polish accession to the North Atlantic Alliance. There were even voices that argued that the accession of Central European countries to NATO was not so much a matter of national or geopolitical security, but rather a consequence of the influences in the internal policy of the US, in particular, the activities of ethnic groups from Central and Eastern Europe countries. In this context, in 1997, "Canadian prime minister **Jean Chrétien** complained to Belgian prime minister **Jean-Luc Dehaene** and Luxembourg prime minister **Jean-Claude Juncker** (and inadvertently into an open microphone) that NATO expansion was occurring because «ethnic voting blocks in United States are pushing their cause». **Chrétien** went on to object that NATO expansion «has nothing to do with world security. It's because in Chicago, Mayor [**Richard**] **Daley** controls lots of voters for the [Democratic] nomination" (Paul, Paul, 2009, p. 1). Such views, however, are too far-reaching simplifications.

Polish efforts to gain membership in the Alliance, as stressed by **Jerzy Koźmiński**, the ambassador of the Republic of Poland in the USA in 1994-2000, were taken simultaneously in two areas. The first concerned activities of Polish politicians and diplomats, and the other one revolved around Polish Americans, including outstanding figures such as Professor **Zbigniew Brzeziński** or **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański**. The activities carried out by Poland and Polish Americans for the entry into the structures of NATO were divided by

Ambassador **Koźmiński** into four categories: "First, there was the exertion of unrelenting pressure on the American institutions and persons on whom NATO enlargement directly or indirectly depended. Second – input into the development of the concept and strategy of opening up the Alliance to new members. Third – participation in public debates on international security, the future NATO, U.S. – European relations, relations with Russia. Fourthly – creating a positive image of Poland as a country of rich traditions and culture, a country which blazed the trail to freedom for other nations of our region, a country which [...] which will be an asset in NATO, not a burden" (Koźmiński, 2006, p. 10). At the same time, the Polish diplomat, as a person directly involved in these activities or their eyewitness, stressed that most effort was put into the first task, i.e. exerting pressure, the recipients of which were the White House and administration; National Security Council; Department of State; Pentagon; the Congress (especially the Senate, which was to finally decide on the consent for the enlargement); opinion-forming centres, including the media; as well as various environments and interest groups (ethnic organisations, trade union leaders, business) (Koźmiński, 2006, p. 10).

As it was already signalled, for the Polish diaspora in the US to be able to effectively sway politicians, institutions, media and the public opinion, it was necessary to be based on organisational structures which would represent and express its postulates on NATO enlargement, monitor the political process and public discourse on the issue and encourage the members of the American Polonia to act in this regard. This role, for objective reasons, must have been assumed by the Polish American Congress (PAC), which through its office in Washington coordinated the activities of local Polonia organisations.

The Polish American Congress is a federal 'umbrella' organisation, which, according to its own data, gathers over 3,000 diverse Polish-American organisations. It was founded on May 30, 1944, at the congress of Polonia organisations in Buffalo, and ever since it has been considered to be representative of the interests of the Polish diaspora in the United States in contacts with American authorities. The organisational structure of the Congress is based on the head office in Chicago, office in Washington and 41 divisions operating in 23 states. The governing body is the Board of Directors (composed of 125 directors elected by state divisions and national organisations as well as 10 directors elected by the Board), which, in turn, appoints the Executive Committee chaired by the President (in 1988-2005 it was **Edward Moskal**). In addition to the political representation, Congress promotes also various civic,

educational and cultural programs aimed at not only expanding knowledge about Polish history, language and culture in the US, but also at stimulating engagement and popularizing achievements of the American Polonia (Polish American Congress, 2017a). During the Cold War, the organisation was critical of the authorities and the system of the Polish People's Republic. At the same time, however, Congress supported all activities consistent with the interests of the Polish nation (for example, championed US recognition of Poland's borders on the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, supported granting loans by American authorities and institutions to Poland, advocated the debt relief for Poland). In the 1990s, one of the fundamental goals of the organisation was to contribute to Poland's entry into NATO. However, it should be emphasized that although PAC undertook or coordinated the most important initiatives related to this objective, an essential role in this area was also played by bottom-up activities, undertaken not rarely by small Polish communities or individuals who in a spontaneous way cooperated with other Polonia groups or Czech or Hungarian organisations.

Nonetheless, the organisational impact of the Polish diaspora at the national level was not solely limited to the PAC. The second organisational force (albeit, in contrast to the PAC, of not a mono-ethnic but rather multi-ethnic character) that played a key role in the efforts to expand NATO was Central and East European Coalition (CEEC). The founding meeting of this organisation took place on the initiative of the Washington office of PAC (headed by **Myra Lenard**) at its headquarters, on December 6, 1993. As noted by **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański**, it was during that meeting that "the decision was made to resurrect the dormant coalition representing in total over 20 million US citizens from Central and Eastern Europe" (Nowak-Jeziorański, 1998a, p. 1). The structure included 18 national organisations, gathering Americans from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary. The coalition was set up in order to coordinate the efforts of ethnic organisations whose members wished to maintain political, economic, cultural and religious ties with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The pillar of its establishment was a willingness to cooperate in issues concerning US policy towards Central and Eastern Europe as well as in matters related to Russia's policy towards its neighbours (Central and East European Coalition, 2017). The issue of the accession of Central European countries to NATO, combining the two above-mentioned issues, was one of the main impulses for the development of cooperation between ethnic groups originating from this part of the world.

As it has already been mentioned, for the Polish American Congress, as well as for the Central and East European Coalition, the primary task was to exert constant pressure on politicians and decision-making centres to engage in actions to expand the Alliance. For that purpose, there was applied a catalogue of various instruments, such as meetings and 'face-to-face talks'; letter, mailgram and e-mail campaigns, as well as telephone campaigns; petitions, draft resolutions, memoranda, press polemics, etc. As for the decision-making centres, the addressees of these pressures from the beginning were both the executive (president and administration) and the legislature (Congress), yet it was persuasion of the US head of state and his environment that was of key importance.

Although the first postulates regarding the membership of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary in NATO were formulated by PAC already in 1991², wider activities in this area were commenced by the organisation in question in the autumn of 1993, which was associated with the appearance of the first version of the Partnership for Peace program and the resulting fears. Consequently, on 28 October, representatives of the Polish American Congress convened a meeting in Pittsburgh, during which there was adopted a resolution that contained the following provision: "Now be it resolved: To urge the Government of the United States to ensure that Poland become a full member of NATO as soon as possible" (Polish American Congress, 2017b). The resolution and a special letter were then sent to President **Clinton**. At the same time, PAC sought to encourage favourable Congressmen to put pressure on the White House. In November, two important decisions were made at a meeting in the Washington office of PAC. Firstly, that the organisation's representatives had to arrange the meeting with President **Clinton** before his January trip to Europe; and secondly, that a meeting of ethnic groups from Central and Eastern Europe

² For example: 1991 June 14 - The Polish American Congress discussed removal of Soviet troops from Poland and membership for Poland in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Polish American Congress Council of National Directors meeting in New York City); 1991 September 22 - Resolution was passed by Polish American Congress, Northern California Division, calling for NATO membership for Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; 1991 October 16 - Polish American Congress, National Vice President, Wojciech Winkler sends a petition with 700 signatures to President Bush recommending economic aid to the former Soviet Union, strengthening security of East Central Europe by extending full membership in NATO to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and granting emergency credits to independent republics of the former Soviet Union for purchase of food and medicines from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Polish American Congress, 2017b)

should have been organised in order to establish an action strategy to counteract common threats (which gave rise to the subsequent establishment of CEEC). At the end of November, in a letter sent to the White House, the US President was asked for a meeting (Polish American Congress, 2017b). When these actions did not trigger the desired effect, PAC authorities chaired by **Moskal** decided to change the strategy. PAC leaders decided to exert mass pressure spurring the American Polonia and its friends into action. With this end in view, on 6 December, PAC President **Edward Moskal** sent a special letter to the members of PAC, in which he wrote: "We are at a historic moment – at a crossroad – with an opportunity to ensure Poland's recovery as an independent democracy after being under the communist yoke for almost half a century. However, ominous clouds of totalitarianism are over Poland again. [...] The time is now for the collective stand of the Polish American community to be recognized. In the attached sample letter, we discuss Russia's neo-imperialism and her objections to Poland's NATO membership. [...] I urge you to rise up and have your voice heard. I am requesting that you write this to President **Clinton**; Secretary of State **Warren Christopher**; Secretary of Defense **Les Aspin**; Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Mr. **David Wilhelm**, and your two Senators (List of addresses is enclosed). You may wish to change or edit the letter to best reflect the spirit of your member organisations and that of your individual members. Most importantly, however, is that you generate as many letters from your area as possible, expressing dismay and astonishment at the possible turn of events in Europe against your mother country. This you express as United States citizens, as informed and concerned voters [...]" (*List Prezesa Edwarda Moskala do członków KPA z dnia 6 grudnia 1993 r.*). The letter informed also about the establishment of the Central and East European Coalition and the fact that its members would call on their communities to join in campaigns of writing letters "to public officials on all federal, state and local levels; to business people; professional people; academia; and to the ethnic and the American media [...]" (*List Prezesa Edwarda Moskala do członków KPA z dnia 6 grudnia 1993 r.*). For that to happen, on 8 December, President **Moskal** issued a special appeal to representatives of Central and Eastern European countries associated in the Coalition, in which he informed about the activities of PAC (See *Appeal sent to representatives of countries of East-Central Europe, united in the Central and Eastern European Coalition*). At the same time, in mid-December, the Polish American Congress launched a special 'NATO membership for Poland' phone line, thanks to which it was possible to send a

mailgram to President **Clinton** (See *List Prezesa Edwarda Moskala do członków KPA z dnia 16 grudnia 1993 r.*). Besides, PAC sent to its members a model letter to be sent to all senators. The letter ended with the following words: "We are asking you Mr. (last name) to oppose vigorously any policy that could be perceived in Moscow as condoning, tacitly or explicitly, Russian ambition to dominate other nations either by coercion and military threat or economic blackmail. We ask you to share these views with President **Clinton**, Secretary of State **Warren Christopher**, Secretary of Defence **Les Aspin** and **David Wilhelm**, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, as soon as possible" (*Sample letter which was to be sent to all Senators*). The activities taken by PAC were publicized by the Polonia press and radio stations. The whole campaign was all about making the American administration publicly declare that NATO would expand in the future and that Poland would be in the first group of countries included in this organisation.

The action initiated by PAC authorities was strongly welcomed by the American Polonia. According to **Donald E. Pienkos**, in December 1993, more than 100,000 postcards and mailgrams were sent to the US President and other indicated above addressees. Over 14,000 e-mails were sent to the White House in this matter. There were so many phone calls that both telephone lines designed for servicing citizens were blocked altogether (Pienkos, 1999, p. 331). In addition to the Polish diaspora, it was the Ukrainian and Lithuanian ones that were to the most active (Nowak-Jeziorański, 1994, p. 125).

Such an extensive action could not go unnoticed in the White House. Therefore, immediately after the New Year, PAC and representatives of other countries of the Visegrad Group associated in CEEC received an invitation to participate in a meeting with the US President in Milwaukee, scheduled for 6 January (a day before his departure to Europe), during which **Clinton** was to explain the details of the American foreign policy, and then meet with representatives of selected ethnic communities interested in this topic. It was also decided to hold in Milwaukee one day before a 'round table' meeting, i.e. a meeting between, among others, the White House, State Department and National Security Council delegates with 20 representatives of the ethnic groups of the Visegrad Group countries (half of whom were American citizens of Polish origin). The aim of the meeting was to discuss the concerns of ethnic groups related to the American foreign policy towards Russia and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. During the meeting, the ethnic communities presented a unified stance regarding the enlargement of NATO and the

American policy towards Russia, and showed a high degree of assertiveness in relation to the position of the American administration regarding this subject. The meeting ended at 00.30 at night and, as reported by an eyewitness of those events, **Donald E. Pienkos**, it led to the re-writing of the presidential speech on foreign policy issues, which was to be presented a dozen hours later (Pienkos, 1999, p. 334-335). In replacement of President **Clinton** (whose mother died unexpectedly), it was delivered by the US Vice President **Al Gore**. Reminiscing it, Pienkos wrote: "I sensed that we had just heard a speech in which an argument had been made for NATO's enlargement" (Pienkos, 1999, p. 335). A few days later, in Prague, President **Clinton** spoke the historic words: «not whether», but «when» and «how». Then, the President of the United States repeated these words on March 2, 1994 in the White House during a meeting with representatives of PAC and CEEC, ensuring that "the door to NATO enlargement is open" (Pienkos, 1999, p. 335).

Trying to influence the administration and politicians, PAC and CEEC very often exposed their potential electoral power (strength of votes). According to estimates, the population of the Polish ethnic group in the US was nearly 10 million (which made it the sixth largest ethnic group with European roots) (Pienkos, 1995, p. 184), and the number of Americans coming from Central and Eastern Europe oscillated, as it has been indicated above, around 20 million. Therefore, already in the very introduction of the PAC draft letter to President **Clinton** dated October 26, 1993 its authors noticed: "As you may know, we represent an umbrella organization of 10 million Americans of Polish descent" (*List do Prezydenta Williama J. Clintona z dnia 26 października 1993 r.*). This content was later repeated many times on various occasions. The electoral pressure was taken advantage of also by President of PAC **Edward Moskal** during the above-mentioned meeting in Milwaukee. In response to the harsh statement by **Sanford Berger**, then the President's Deputy National Security Advisor, President of PAC did not fail to note that congressional elections would be held as early as in November 1994, and if the presidential administration ignored the NATO related voice of 20 million Americans from Central and Eastern Europe, in autumn they would have to face some unpleasant consequences associated therewith (Pienkos, 1999, p. 334).

The electoral force of the Polish ethnic group was not, however, only about its population, but also about its distribution. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, at the end of the 20th Century, most Americans of Polish descent lived in states such as: Wisconsin (9.3% of the population), Connecticut (8.3%),

Michigan (8.6%), Illinois (7.5%), Pennsylvania (6.7%), Delaware (5.2%), New York (5.2%), Massachusetts (5.1%), Minnesota (4.9%), New Hampshire (4.1%), Rhode Island (4.1%), Nebraska (3.7%), Ohio (3.8%) and Maryland (3.5%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). States such as Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are counted among the so-called traditional swing states (FiveThirtyEight, 2017), i.e. states in which both a Republican and Democratic presidential candidate can win. Therefore, they are subject to particularly fierce electoral rivalry.

PAC authorities from the very beginning of the 'NATO campaign' were aware of the electoral potential and they tried to take advantage thereof. Already in the aforementioned appeal to the representatives of Central and Eastern European countries associated in CEEC, sent out in December 1993, it was noted that "according to the official federal census, over 21 million Americans consider their roots to be from East-Central Europe. 21 Congressmen and 7 Senators have in their districts over 10% of voters whose descent is from that part of the world" (*Appeal sent to representatives of countries of East-Central Europe, united in the Central and Eastern European Coalition*).

Exerting the election pressure became particularly important during the campaign of the 1996 election. In this context, already in September 1995, **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański** in a letter to President **Moskal** wrote: "[...] Polish and other East-Central European groups represent the last hope to influence the White House, Capitol and both parties in the right direction. Never since the time of **Wilson** and **Paderewski** have we had such an opportunity to make an impact. [...] The leadership of both parties believes that no candidate for president can win the election without getting the majority of voters in six states: Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. The Polish ethnic group is heavily concentrated in these states. Both parties consider that in a close race the ethnic vote may tip the balance. **Clinton's** people are afraid that Republicans may attract the ethnic vote by raising the slogan: «No more Yalta, not another **Roosevelt**». The Republicans are concerned that **Clinton** could use the NATO card to win over Polish and other ethnic groups. Both parties' estimate of the Polish-American influence is very high. We never enjoyed such prestige" (*List Jana Nowaka-Jeziorańskiego do Edwarda Moskala z dnia 20 września 1995 r.*). At the same time, **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański** advocated the following electoral strategy: "1. President **Moskal** meets with the leadership of Republican and Democratic parties and briefs them orally and in writing about the PAC position and expectations as well as about the strength and

geographical breakdown of Polish and other ethnic groups. We do not say how we are going to vote, but what kind of program will attract or discourage Polish voters. The President's memo should be published in Polish media. 2. The state leadership of both parties should be approached either by President **Moskal** or by local Divisions with a request that our position be included in the state recommendation for the election platforms of the respective parties. A memorandum should be published with request that our people should send letters or cables to support the memorandum. 3. Appeals from candidates asking voters for support should be answered with the list of our questions. [...] 4. We should establish close cooperation and common platforms with 12 members of the Central and East European Coalition and to coordinate with them our strategy and tactics. 5. At the proper time we should approach the leadership of both parties with requests to include our position in their election platform [...]. 6. Candidates nominated by both parties and possibly an independent candidate should be approached by President **Moskal** in a memorandum which would be widely publicized and followed by massive telephone calls, cables, letters and so on. The outcome will largely depend on the magnitude of our action. Similar letters and questions should be sent to candidates in congressional elections. 7. The appeal should be made to all PAC members as well as to address meetings called by the PAC Divisions. Speakers would appeal to rank and file and offer guidance how everybody could contribute as an individual to our success. [...]” (*List Jana Nowaka-Jeziorańskiego do Edwarda Moskala z dnia 20 września 1995 r.*). Some time earlier, on June 23, 1995, the Polish American Congress Council of National Directors adopted a resolution in which it was decided that Polish American Congress would turn to the organisers of the presidential campaigns of both parties and to all presidential candidates, as well as candidates for positions in the US Congress, asking them to take their positions either ‘for’ or ‘against’ NATO enlargement and to declare related deadlines. At the same time, they requested all Americans of Polish origin to join the concerted PAC action (*Resolution. An appeal from The Polish American Congress Council of National Directors to all Americans of Polish Descent*). Then, at the end of October 1995, President **Moskal** wrote a special letter to President **Clinton**, in which it was demanded that the US President publicly pledged that in the case of being re-elected, he would make his best to ensure that Poland would be admitted to NATO before 2000, meaning before the end of his second term. In the communique addressed to the Polish community, every American of Polish

descent was called to send by phone, cable or mail to the White House just one sentence: "I support the Polish American Congress position on NATO enlargement as presented in a letter to you from **Edward Moskal**, dated October 30, 1995" (*Odezwa Kongresu Polonii Amerykańskiej*). As it was the case two years earlier, PAC again launched a special phone line. Getting through to the indicated number meant that the letter demonstrating support for PAC activities was automatically sent to the US President and the Congressman from the sender's district. As it was expressed in the appeal - it was "a double-barrelled approach" (*Western Union Hotline – Appeal of the Polish American Congress*).

Clinton initially avoided unambiguous declarations as to the date of NATO enlargement, restricting himself only to the assurance that he would not procrastinate or derogate from the dates of the Alliance enlargement. At the same time, already at the beginning of 1996, the presidential administration announced that the decision would be taken in December, i.e. after the election. PAC authorities, obviously, could not consent for such a course of action, as they realized that this way the Democrats wanted to free themselves from the pre-election pressures of the Polish diaspora and CEEC. Therefore, they were incessantly striving to make the matter of NATO enlargement the subject of an electoral auction. The first significant commitment in this matter was made by the Republicans. Thanks to the efforts of **Paula Dobriansky** (Ukrainian American), international policy adviser, in June the Republican presidential candidate - Senator **Robert Dole** announced solemnly that if he won the election, he would do his best to ensure Poland's accession to NATO before the end of 1998 (Nowak-Jeziorański, 1998b). The fact that the Republican candidate took his stand on the case also forced the electoral staff of the Democrats to react. Consequently, on October 22, 1996, two weeks before the election, at a meeting at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit, **Clinton** eventually announced that in 1999, on the 50th anniversary of the founding of NATO and 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first countries would become full members of the Alliance. This declaration, combined with Clinton's electoral victory, ended the first phase of the American Polonia's activities for the enlargement of NATO (addressed mainly to the presidential administration).

From this point forward, the activities of Polonia focused primarily on the Senate, which in the future was to consent for the ratification of the Alliance enlargement treaty. Here, again, the authorities of PAC employed a similar tactic based on exerting pressure and persuading Senators about the reasonability of

expanding NATO. For this purpose, for example in February 1997, Americans of Polish descent were called to send letters to their Senators, urging them to support the so-called Roth-Lieberman Concurrent Resolution reinforcing US Congress support and commitment to the extension of membership in NATO to the democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (Polish American Congress, 2017b). There were also held numerous meetings and talks with Congressmen. Their general course and goal are well reflected by the words of **Sophie Miskiewicz-Peters**, activist of the Polish American Congress: "Before you talk to a Senator or Congressman, you have to prepare yourself, you have to make sure that your data is correct, so you tell them how many of us live in this country, that there are 10 million Polish Americans. Then, they want to know how many Polish Americans a given Senator or Congressmen has in your region. The more they have in their region, the more they realize that these are votes. Citizens vote and that's what it's all about. What is the Congressman or Senator really worried about, especially right before the election? They want to win votes, so they will come for them even to us. These people give speeches. They say «we will take care of you and your affairs», because they want your voice and everyone knows it. It is evident. We mean convincing them that we will vote for them and people openly say «we are not going to vote for you if you do not do it, if you do not show that you care about us». It's not that they are interested in a given country, these are issues that American citizens are interested in and that is why they will listen to us"³. At the same time, thanks to the activity of the Polish community, in all the states with larger aggregations of Polish Americans, governors, state legislatures, mayors and city councils adopted resolutions and memoranda, which obliged the Senate to agree on the membership of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. These activities, combined with the diplomatic measures of the concerned countries and a wide information campaign undoubtedly contributed to the success of the Senate's vote of approval for the ratification of the enlargement treaty.

It should be noted that in its efforts for Poland's accession to NATO, from the very beginning, PAC used a skilful communication strategy. Its main goal was to formulate a clear message that the purpose of PAC (which was the Alliance enlargement) was compatible with the national interest of the United States. This was significant since there existed wide disparities on this issue among

³ Documentary *Prawdziwy koniec zimnej wojny (The Real End of the Cold War)*, directed by Jerzy Śladowski, Scorpio Studio Sp. z o. o. 2011, 25.50 min.

American policy elites, particularly within the presidential administration. So, for example, while after the aforementioned meeting in Milwaukee, Vice President **All Gore** declared in his speech that “a new NATO must take into account the issues of countries lying between Western Europe and Russia, because the security of these countries is tied to the security of the United States”. A day before, at the meeting in the White House organised for non-governmental experts, **Warren Christopher** stated: “We are proceeding slowly in the matter of expanding NATO, because we are not certain that the defence of countries of East-Central Europe lies within the interest of the United States” (as cited in J. Nowak-Jeziorański, 1994, p. 126). Therefore, already in the model letter, which in December 1993 was to be sent to President **Clinton** by members of the Polish diaspora in the US, there was contained clear statement saying that “the security of the Western World and of the U.S. is closely tied with NATO membership of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic” (*Letter to President Clinton, which was supposed to be sent by all Polish Americans*). This thesis was then reiterated many times in correspondence addressed to politicians, officials and experts; in resolutions; in talks; at conferences; or in the press. It was also supported by a number of arguments that NATO enlargement would positively affect the internal balance of power within the Alliance (the participation of traditionally pro-American Central European states would reduce fears of economic domination of Germany and strengthen US leadership and presence in Europe); provide the US with a “powerful and effectual political tool” that would contribute to the strengthening of democratic processes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, to solving ethnic conflicts and to the general stabilization in the region; lead to an increased friendliness and support for the US in the countries of Central Europe; be likely to have a positive impact on the US-Russia relations in the long term (by limiting Moscow's imperialist and militaristic aspirations, which could result in focusing its efforts on internal development and socio-economic modernisation), etc. What is important, as for the attempts to build a concerted perception of interests, PAC did not act on behalf of Poland (a sovereign state). At every step, they were emphasizing that they represented the interests of Polish Americans – that is American citizens. It is well reflected in the words of **Donald E. Pienkos**, who in the context of the aforementioned meeting in Milwaukee noted: “I had declared that I was not speaking on behalf of Poland and its neighbours. Poland and the other East Central European states have their own embassies and their own foreign ministers who can argue their case for themselves. The inclusion of Poland and

the others into the Alliance, I argued, was necessary because such a policy was critical to our American national security interest” (Pienkos, 1994, p. 335).

To enhance the impact and gain favour of the US political and administrative elite; experts and analysts; mass media, as well as the general public for the idea of NATO enlargement, the leading representatives of the Polish diaspora in the United States were engaged also in a number of other ‘public diplomacy’ activities, such as:

- participation in conferences, seminars and public debates, presenting arguments relating to the need to enlarge the Alliance; explaining intricacies of the Russian policy and the geopolitical situation in Central-Eastern Europe; analysing the future of NATO, etc. (for example, the participation of **Jan Nowak- Jeziorański** at the session of the Polish Affairs Commission of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in April 1993, in the deliberations of the working Committee of Atlantic Council in June this year or delivering a speech in the panel discussion entitled “NATO and Poland”, organised by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in June 1994; co-organization of the Security and Stability in Central and Eastern Europe conference by PAC - Capital Hill, April 1997);
- publishing articles and polemics associated with the subject of the Alliance enlargement (eg. **Z. Brzeziński** *A Bigger – and Safer – Europe*, “New York Times”, 01.12.1993; **J. Nowak-Jeziorański**, *Polska droga do NATO*, “Dziennik Polski” and “Dziennik Żołnierza”, 24.07.1993; **J. Nowak-Jeziorański**, *Letter to the Editor. The New Duchy of Muscovy*, “Washington Post”, 07.12.1993; **J. Nowak-Jeziorański**, *Letter to the Editor*, “Washington Post”, 16.05.1995);
- consulting and expert activities (e.g. a meeting of **Zbigniew Brzezinski** and **Anthony Lake**, National Security Adviser on December 21, 1993; suggestions concerning the talks of Minister **Andrzej Olechowski** with **Warren Christopher** and his public appearances in the US; meeting of the representatives of PAC and CEEC with **Jeremy Rosner**, Special Adviser to the President and Secretary of State for NATO Enlargement Ratification; consulting and support for the Ambassador of Poland in Washington, D.C.);
- attempts to influence the formation of bilateral relations between Poland and the United States (for example, support for issuing an invitation letter by **Lech Wałęsa** for President **Clinton** to participate in

the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising; an attempt to organise a meeting between **Bronisław Geremek** and the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, **Stephen A. Oxman**; initiative concerning the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Andrzej Olechowski** to the US at the turn of 1994; suggestions regarding the appointment of a candidate for a new US Ambassador in Warsaw).

As shown, the activities carried out by PAC were of comprehensive and multifaceted character, addressed to a diverse group of recipients. Its actions were directed to both the executive (President and Administration), the legislative (Congress), as well as the mass media and the general public.

Conclusion

Poland's accession to NATO was undoubtedly one of the most important objectives of Polish foreign policy in the last decade of the 20th Century. From the 1992 official announcement of Poland's aspirations to the membership, the successive Polish governments consistently undertook actions aimed at achieving this goal. The struggle to enlarge the Alliance took place mainly in the United States, the country with the role of the undisputed leader in the organisation. The efforts made by the Polish state and Polish diplomacy for the NATO accession were significantly supported by the Polish diaspora settled in the United States, which almost from the very beginning undertook autonomous initiatives in this regard. As emphasized by **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański**: "The Polish American Congress, speaking on behalf of American citizens and the Embassy, representing the Polish Government, acted independently of each other, but concurrently" (Nowak-Jeziorański, 1998b, p. 565-566). In retrospect, the merits of Polish Americans for Poland's membership in NATO are invaluable and should be considered one of the most important achievements of the Polish diaspora for the country of origin. At the same time, activities undertaken in 1993-1998 by Polish Americans are the most important but, unfortunately, an isolated manifestation of the involvement and organised influence of the Polish ethnic group on shaping the American politics. We need to agree with **John Radzilowski**, who at the beginning of the 20th Century noticed: "In the issue of NATO, the Polish diaspora demonstrated its strength, with the campaign at the same time revealing its serious internal weaknesses. The short-lived activity of 1998 did not entail any further actions. Energy and enthusiasm were not translated into long-term and concrete political success in America. The political

impact of Polish Americans, even in the states where they are so numerous, as in Illinois, remained negligible or nearly non-existent” (Radzilowski, 2001, p. 112). Unfortunately, these words are still true, especially if we compare organised political activity of the Polish ethnic group with Jewish, Armenian or Cuban ones.

Nevertheless, the issue of Poland's membership in NATO proved that the Polish diaspora in the US, in matters of rudimentary meaning for the country of origin, which was the case with a higher level of security, can unite and actively participate in shaping the American politics. It is noteworthy to pay attention to the strategy adopted by the Polonia elite for the enlargement of the Alliance, which is very well in line with the theoretical framework of political activities of ethnic groups in the American political system. Polish Americans effectively used their organisational structures and contacts and they managed to increase their influence by building a wider coalition of ethnic groups from Central and Eastern Europe. In moments of key importance, the Polonia elite succeeded in encouraging the Polish community to exert mass and coordinated political pressure. In contacts with politicians, they based the arguments on the potential electoral force, they also put efforts to lead to the convergence of the perception of goals, exposing that NATO enlargement was equally in the interest of the US as well as of Poland, etc. In addition to engaging in the American debate on the legitimacy of admitting new members to the Alliance, the American Polonia elite also tried to influence the leaders and the political class in Poland (offering contacts or explaining the situation and suggesting which actions should have been taken and which avoided), as well as the nature of bilateral relations between Poland and the US (e.g. lobbying the appointment of particular persons for key positions). These activities, undoubtedly, significantly supported the efforts of the Polish state and Polish diplomacy.

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