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## PRAGMATIC PARTNERSHIP: RUSSIAN RESET VERSUS AMERICAN-GERMAN RELATIONS\*\*

On 7 February 2009, during the 45<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference, the United States Vice-President, Joseph “Joe” Biden, stated:

“We will not agree with Russia on everything (...). We will not recognize any nation having a sphere of influence”.

But he added:

“the United States and Russia can disagree and still work together where our interests coincide, and they coincide in many places. (...) The last few years have seen a dangerous drift in relations between Russia and the members of our Alliance – it is time to reset the button and to revisit the many areas where we can and should work together”<sup>1</sup>.

This statement was quickly criticised by the Republican Party politicians and analysts, mainly from the conservative think tanks. On 9 February, Nile Gardiner, the Director of *The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom*, wrote:

“Biden’s speech should be viewed as one of the weakest projections of U.S. leadership on foreign soil in recent memory. The message was confused, apologetic, over-conciliatory, and remarkably lacking in substance and detail. It was the kind of speech, heavy in platitudes and diplo-speak, that could easily have been given by a continental European bureaucrat nestled in Brussels, Paris, or Berlin. It was not the voice of the most powerful

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\*\* Artykuł powstał w ramach projektu o nazwie „Niemcy i Polska w wielobiegunowym łańdźie międzynarodowym. Strategiczna wizja i potencjalne sojusze” (nr projektu 00340/2015/KJ) współfinansowanego przez Fundację Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej.

<sup>1</sup> Citation from: <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/02/07/biden.germany/index.html> (accessed: 30 October 2016)

nation on earth. (...) Strategically, it would be both naïve and risky for the new Administration to turn a blind eye toward an increasingly belligerent and nationalist Moscow that is actively flexing its muscles in Europe and across the globe”<sup>2</sup>.

He also criticised the attitude toward the missile defence system, i.e. the withdrawal from agreements with the Central and Eastern European allies announced by Obama administration, and he called it sowing the seeds of uncertainty.

The symbol of the reset that has been engraved in the social memory was the gift the Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, passed to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, in Geneva on 6 March 2009. It was a red button with an inscription ‘reset’ in English and in Russian with the use of Roman letters: ‘peregruzka’ (overload). However, the word that should have been printed as the Russian equivalent of ‘reset’, as Lavrov immediately noticed, was ‘perezagruzka’. This mistake may be, in some sense, symptomatic of Obama’s Administration’s policy toward Russia. It proved to be a ‘mistake’ in many ways.

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After the collapse of the USSR, relations between Russia and the USA encountered turbulence but altogether they were proper. Russia, also because of its inability to oppose, accepted the choice of its former satellites: Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, which announced their will to join NATO and became its members in 1999.

The bilateral relations between the United States and Russia worsened in the period after Vladimir Putin came to power (from 31 December 1999, and formally after the election in March 2000). In March 2000, the United States started the Iraq War, which soured the relations with Russia. The region had also been the area of influence clash between the superpowers during the Cold War.

Also other aspects of Bush administration’s policy, e.g. the support for the so-called colour revolutions (and assistance offered), met with the Kremlin’s strong criticism<sup>3</sup>. Russia loudly protested against the plan of allocating the

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<sup>2</sup> Biden’s Munich Speech: Obama Administration Foreign Policy Projects Weakness and Confusion, by N. Gardiner, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/02/bidens-munich-speech-obama-administration-foreign-policy-projects-weakness-and-confusion>

<sup>3</sup> AE. Stent, *The Limits of Partnership. U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton, p. 97 and the following.

elements of missile defence system in Europe<sup>4</sup>. It protested against NATO enlargement, i.e. Georgia and Ukraine's eventual accession to the Alliance.

In the 1980s, the FRG became a very important partner to the USA in Europe, not only an economic one, which it had already been, but also a political one. After the collapse of the Eastern Block and the German reunification, the position of the FRG strengthened, which also resulted from its position in the European Community and then the European Union, especially after the reform of the EU structure.

In the early 1990s, the FRG's foreign interests were to great extent similar to those of the United States, thus the relations between Berlin and Washington did not account for many tensions. The Iraq War was a critical event. It also encumbered the US relations with other states, e.g. France and Italy<sup>5</sup>. The FRG, a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council then, opposed giving the UN a mandate to intervene in Iraq. Chancellor Angela Merkel, after she took office in 2005, made attempts to improve the bilateral relations and had considerable success.

But in case of Russia, the two states had a different vision of cooperation. Germany was interested in entering the Russian market and saw great possibilities of cooperation with Russian energy concerns, especially Gazprom. Nord Stream gas pipeline has become a symbol of this cooperation (the agreement on its construction was signed in September 2005 and the first pipeline was laid and inaugurated in 2011). Then Poland's defence minister, Radosław Sikorski called the project a new Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, i.e. an alliance posing a threat to the interests and security of East Central Europe.

## 1. OBAMA' DOCTRINE AND THE RESET POLICY

The Inauguration of the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Barack Obama, in January 2009 was the beginning of changes in American policy and relations with third countries, also Russia.

Obama emphasised the weight of internal affairs and first of all announced a redevelopment of social relations in the USA. He seemed to be more

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Was Amerika ausmacht. Multidisziplinäre Perspektiven [What is America's importance? Multidisciplinary perspectives], Ph. Gassert, Stuttgart 2.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. B. van Apeldoors and N. de Graaff, *American Grand Strategy and Corporate Elite Networks. The Open Door since the end of the Cold War*, Routledge 2016, p. 166 and the following.

sensitive to issues connected with social care and ecology. Obama's doctrine was to consist in:

“Overarching American retrenchment and accommodation internationally, in large part to allow the president to focus on securing liberal policy legacies at home”<sup>6</sup>.

Obama was interested in changing the international order to a ‘liberal’ one, remodelling relations with overseas partners, including closer partnership<sup>7</sup>. American leadership was to be maintained and what was to serve this was restoration of economic foundations of American power, weakened by the crisis and the two wars (in Iraq and Afghanistan). As researchers notice:

“With the exception of Obama confidant Susan Rice, who was named US Ambassador to the United Nations, the rank of the major Cabinet and NSC positions were held by realists rather than idealists (raising implicit issues about a gender divide at the heart of Obama administration's foreign – as well as domestic – policy making)”<sup>8</sup>.

The attention of American policy was focused on the emerging states with leadership aspirations and growing economic power, turning to Asia (the Asian pivot)<sup>9</sup>. Undoubtedly, Obama's vision of the world order as well as the United States' role was different<sup>10</sup>. Obama often referred to American values and the necessity for building on them American soft power, which attracts other states to cooperate with the USA<sup>11</sup>. One of the declared objectives was nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation<sup>12</sup>. A call for a return to talks on disarmament and refraining from discussing the deficit

<sup>6</sup> C. Dueck, *The Obama Doctrine. American Grand Strategy Today*, Oxford University Press 2015, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> B. van Apeldoorn, N. de Graaf, *American Grand...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–208.

<sup>8</sup> R. Singh, *Barack Obama's Post-American Foreign Policy. The Limits of Engagement*, Bloomsbury Academic, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> B. van Apeldoorn, N. de Graaf, *American Grand...*, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 205–208.

<sup>11</sup> J. Wilzewski, *Taking Smart Power Seriously: Obama, preventive Inhaftierungen, gezielte Tötungen und die Zukunft amerikanischer Weltführungspolitik [Obama, preventive imprisonment, oriented killing and the future of American global leadership policy]*, [in:] *Weltmacht vor neuen Herausforderungen. Die Außenpolitik der USA in der Ära Obama [World superpower facing new challenges. USA's foreign policy in Obama's era]*, S. Hagemann, W. Tönnemann, J. Wilzewski (Hg.), Trier, WVT 2014, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Non-proliferation and reduction of nuclear armament did not mean a complete resignation from nuclear weapons. See e.g. M. Senn, *Ending Nuclear Ambitions? Die USA, die nukleare Nonproliferation und Rüstungskontrolle und die Zukunft amerikanischer Weltführungspolitik [USA, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and armament control*

of democracy in Russia created a better starting point for talks with Moscow, inter alia, in order to finish the war in Afghanistan and block the Iranian nuclear programme<sup>13</sup>.

Many people in Germany perceived Obama as a modern politician caring about human rights and looking at social issues, in some sense, in a European way<sup>14</sup>, as well as a politician interested in ‘pacifist’ policy and extinguishing conflicts, which correlated with the narration dominating in the FRG.

The idea of resetting the relations with Moscow received a positive response also because the FRG was involved in their improvement and economic relations development.

The reset was an American initiative typical of policy-making practice in this country. For the Russians, the reset policy was not theirs<sup>15</sup>.

2009 was the year when the relations between Washington and Moscow warmed<sup>16</sup>. Obama visited Russia in July. The successive meeting in June 2010 also took place in a very friendly atmosphere. Due to the fact that Obama invited his guest to a hamburger restaurant, the meeting was called a ‘cheeseburger summit’. Observers drew attention to a slight age difference, which was deemed to facilitate communication between the two presidents. In order to improve the relations, Moscow agreed, inter alia, to American planes using the Russian air space in order to supply troops in Afghanistan. The START Treaty and the SORT agreement of 2002 had expired in December 2009. That is why the signing of the new START Treaty in April 2010 was important.

The return to disarmament talks was in fact more advantageous for Russia, e.g. because of financial reasons (e.g. maintaining old nuclear arsenal was very costly) but also prestigious ones. Russia became a partner to the USA in military issues. Russia reserved the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it recognised that the development of American missile defence system

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*versus the future of American policy of world leadership*], [in:] *Weltmacht...*, p. 313 and the following.

<sup>13</sup> R. Singh, *Barack Obama's...*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Obama enjoyed very big popularity in many western states. If election of American president depended on the European electors, before the 2008 election almost 90% of the electorate would have voted for Obama.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in A. Stent, *The Limits...*, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>16</sup> F. Eder, G. Mangott, *From Reset to Paralysis? Die Beziehungen zu Russland und die Zukunft der amerikanischen Weltführungspolitik [Attitude toward Russia and the future of American policy of world leadership]*, [in:] *Weltmacht...*, p. 181 and the following.

(not covered in the Treaty) posed a threat to it. The Treaty was criticised by the Republicans as an excessive concession and its ratification dragged on<sup>17</sup>.

The withdrawal of the USA from the plan to deploy the elements of the missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic (the so-called third position system), which the countries had negotiated at the time of G.W. Bush administration, was undoubtedly Russia's success. Obama announced a withdrawal from the project during his visit to Russia in July 2009 without consultation with the countries involved, which caused concerns over the plans toward East Central Europe<sup>18</sup>. It was deemed that Obama was abandoning this part of Europe and even recognised Russia's special influence there.

However, Obama's decision to withdraw from deploying elements of the missile defence system in East Central Europe was greeted with applause in the FRG.

Chancellor Merkel recognised the decision as a chance of intense cooperation with Moscow in the field of international issues<sup>19</sup>.

It was believed at that time that cooperation with Russia would be advantageous for the USA in the long run. The USA helped Russia to join the WTO<sup>20</sup>. Steps taken then resulted in economic benefits for Russia, e.g. the USA signed and ratified an agreement on nuclear cooperation for non-military purposes<sup>21</sup>.

One of the elements of the reset was the development of economic contacts. Undoubtedly, the policy of supporting the development of the so-called Russian 'Silicon Valley' in Skolkovo was advantageous. Russian government created favourable conditions for the development of companies involved in genetic engineering, nanotechnology, nuclear technologies, lasers, drones, etc. Critics believe that the cooperation substantially contributed to the development of the Russian armament industry through easier access to modern technologies.

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<sup>17</sup> A. Stent, *The Limits...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–225.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 226.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dw.com/pl/niemcy-o-tarczy-dobrze-ze-jej-nie-bedzie-4705786>, R. Romaniec, 18 September 2009. The quoted statements of German politicians clearly indicate that the support for Obama's decision dominated (accessed: 20 September 2016). Compare with the critical ones: <http://humanevents.com/2009/09/25/merkel-cheers-obama-exodus-on-missile-defense/> (accessed: 20 September 2016).

<sup>20</sup> C. Dueck, *The Obama...*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Agreement 123, concerning supply of enriched uranium from Russia and waste disposal in Russia, was terminated by Russia in 2016.

Moscow's response to Washington's policy was rather restrained. Although it modified its policy toward Iran then, it did not support the USA's postulates unequivocally. However, it did not block the UN Security Council resolution against Iran and the resolution introducing no-fly zones over Libya.

The reset policy history shows that it was not an American 'dogma' and the United States acted flexibly. When it did not give expected results, certain elements of this policy were abandoned.

Initially, in order to improve the situation, Washington did not openly criticise non-observance of human rights or the state of Russian democracy. Nonetheless, the Department of State reports on the state of democracy in Russia indicated negative and positive aspects of changes<sup>22</sup>. In the second half of 2010, the USA again started speaking about the violation of human rights in Russia. In September 2010, the Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, described Russia as a totalitarian state and critical opinions intensified after the falsified election to the Duma in December 2011<sup>23</sup>. The presidential election in March 2012 and Vladimir Putin's success ended a period of certain hopes for change in Russia, also the hopes of those politicians in the USA and western countries who expected Medvedev's re-election.

## 2. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RESET

It is difficult to speak about single withdrawal from the reset in the relations between the United States and Russia. The withdrawal was a process. Dissatisfaction with the other party's intentions and will to cooperate was gradually growing in Washington. A belief that there were considerable differences, other objectives and another mentality occurred again. Undoubtedly, American administration's negative feelings as far as the possibility of continuing the 2009 policy toward Russia is concerned increased when Putin came to power in March 2012.

A lack of accommodation became evident after Obama and Putin's meeting at the G20 summit in June 2012. The bilateral American-Russian meeting planned for 2013 was cancelled after Russia had refused to extradite Edward Snowden to the USA.

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<sup>22</sup> See Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Russia in 2010 and 2011. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011/eur/186397> (accessed: 30 October 2016).

<sup>23</sup> The turnout in Chechnya and Dagestan reached e.g. almost 100% and United Russia's victory was overwhelming.

The reset policy started to be criticised in the United States and abroad as not advantageous for the USA and resulting from the American president's 'naivety'<sup>24</sup>. The lack of the USA's ability to respond to Russia's action was also criticised. There was criticism of foreign policy dependence on social feelings. Also people involved in peacekeeping processes, e.g. V Nasr, expressed criticism<sup>25</sup>. From 2011, serious difficulties started to occur in the bilateral relations and the conflict in Syria became the main controversy<sup>26</sup>. The need to modify the policy toward Central Eastern Europe started to be noticed, too. The reset in the relations with Russia might be and was perceived as the expression of the weakening interest of the USA in the region, but the analysis of the level of American involvement in East Central Europe in a longer period results in conclusions that one should rather speak about a fluctuation of this interest connected with the change in priorities in a particular moment in international relations. The change was also taking place in the attitude toward the military possibilities of NATO on the eastern flank. There were also talks about Obama's shield – the project of allocating mobile systems. In spring 2012, after the (parliamentary and presidential) elections in Russia, it was announced that Turkey gave consent for deploying mobile radar in its territory.

At the end of 2012, the then Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, warned against Moscow's turn to 're-Sovietisation' in the region of the former USSR and added that the USA was considering the methods of prohibiting these steps<sup>27</sup>.

The situation clearly changed after the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, especially the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014<sup>28</sup>. A political dialogue was the only possible solution but Washington wanted the aggression to be 'painful' for Russia<sup>29</sup>. Thus, the USA's pressure to impose economic sanctions on Russia, which it and the European Union actually imposed, as well as the United States declaration of 2014 that it was ready to sell oil and

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<sup>24</sup> J.F. Douglas, S. Cropsey, *How the Russian 'Reset' Explains Obama's Foreign Policy*, 16 October 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/10/16/how-the-russian-reset-explains-obamas-foreign-policy/> (accessed: 20 September 2016).

<sup>25</sup> V. Nasr, *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> F. Eder, G. Mangott, *From Reset...*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>27</sup> B. van Apeldoorn, N. de Graaf, *American Grand...*, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>28</sup> M. Cage, *The failure of the reset*, 4.03.2014, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/04/the-failure-of-the-reset-obamas-great-mistake-or-putins](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/04/the-failure-of-the-reset-obamas-great-mistake-or-putins) (accessed: 14 September 2016).

<sup>29</sup> F. Eder, G. Mangott, *From Reset...*, *op. cit.*, p. 200,

shale gas to Europe was in fact in conflict with the American doctrine so far. Cooperation with the petroleum exporting countries that resulted in price fall also struck a blow against Russia's interests.

In February, five years after an announcement of a necessity for a reset in the American-Russian relations, also during the Munich Security Conference, Joe Biden stated that the reset policy should be replaced by a new approach: assertiveness<sup>30</sup>. Biden also suggested that the USA might verify its stand on the support for Ukraine, i.e. a possibility of supplying armament to Ukraine was considered as a response to the Russia's support for the so-called separatists in Donbas.

In Munich, Chancellor Merkel also clearly indicated that Russia was responsible for the crisis in Ukraine. Nonetheless, in line with the policy of avoiding increasing tension in the relations with Russia by supporting its opponents, both the Chancellor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were against supplying armament to Ukraine. Germany fears that the conflict might escalate but does not refuse to provide Ukraine with economic support.

Public opinion in the FRG is in favour of this stand. For the society, Russia is the most important partner to Germany, a state whose interests should be taken into consideration. Ukraine is a state, about which people know very little.

The successive steps taken by the USA, indicating that Washington was not going to recognise Russia's special rights in East Central Europe, were not received in Germany with enthusiasm, especially the return to the conception of increasing NATO presence in the post-Soviet block countries, Poland and the Baltic States, which was of vital importance for their interests and what they strove for as they did not want to be second class members. Russia refers to NATO promises made at the time of the first enlargement (imprecise Founding Act) and protests against deployment of NATO bases and military facilities. However, the countries did not want to be second category members and these arguments convinced the USA and some western states. Nevertheless, the FRG was against the presence of NATO battalions and explained that in the contemporary conditions, the so-called NATO Response Force would be sufficient enough. When the Anaconda 2016 NATO exercise was underway in Poland, Germany's Foreign Affairs Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmaier, spoke about unnecessary brandishing

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<sup>30</sup> J. Biden was deemed to be a little more critical of Russia also earlier. His attitude probably resulted from better knowledge of international relations, as he had been the Vice Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

a sabre<sup>31</sup>. With regard to the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016, during which a decision was to be taken on the deployment of NATO battalions in Poland, the FRG believed that it was also necessary to speak to Russia<sup>32</sup>.

The states that did not want to be in the sphere of Russia's influence treated United States as a country ready to support their right to choose their political way, including the choice of membership in alliances. As a matter of fact, in the long run, the United States could not accept Russia's stand and its refusal to accept the fact that some countries are not interested in the sphere of its influence, because of the role of soft power in the development of Washington's international position (and it is also based on the so-called American values) as well as strategic reasons.

Germany's attitude to these aspirations worsened the relations with some Eastern and Central European countries, mainly Poland.

### 3. AMERICAN-GERMAN RELATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE RESET PERIOD

It would be difficult to admit that the reset was a phenomenon, which had no impact on the relations between the USA and the FRG. It was a period of relatively similar attitudes toward cooperation with Russia. Nonetheless, it was not what was decisive.

Obama's presidency meant the beginning of the implementation of his 'great strategy' in international relations, and one of the elements of Obama's doctrine was specific offshore balancing<sup>33</sup>. The USA wanted to make the relations with Europe more balanced and expected serious treatment of partnership from Europe, i.e. also at the level of taking responsibility for crisis resolution or defence related issues. This strategy influenced the relations with Bonn, too.

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<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Nato: Warum Frank-Walter Steinmeier irritiert "Säbelrassen und Kriegsgeheul" [NATO: Why is Frank-Walter Steimeier irritated by 'brandishing a sabre' and calling for war?], [www.spiegel.de/Nachrichten/Politik/Deutschland-Frank-Walter-Steinmeier/](http://www.spiegel.de/Nachrichten/Politik/Deutschland-Frank-Walter-Steinmeier/)

<sup>32</sup> Inter alia [www.iz.poznan.pl/publikacje/biuletyn-instytutu-zachodniego/biz-nr-248-stano-wisko-niemiec-na-szczyt-nato-w-warszawie-dialog-i-odstraszanie](http://www.iz.poznan.pl/publikacje/biuletyn-instytutu-zachodniego/biz-nr-248-stano-wisko-niemiec-na-szczyt-nato-w-warszawie-dialog-i-odstraszanie) (accessed: 30 October 2016).

<sup>33</sup> C. Dueck, *The Obama...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Although the USA wanted to avoid talking only to one European partner about Europe, however, as one can think, it expected the strongest European partner, Germany, to be more involved in global issues.

After Obama took office, the USA made gestures indicating that Washington appreciated the role of Bonn, e.g. making it possible for Chancellor Merkel to make a speech in the American Congress in November 2009. It was believed that Bonn would get more involved in Afghanistan (the FRG participated in the peacekeeping operation, without the Bundeswehr's military involvement) and also that the FRG would be willing to contribute to the resolution of the economic crisis. As far as the crisis was concerned, the two states had different visions of overcoming it. The USA hoped for some new investment (which was connected with getting indebted), in the FRG it was believed that a policy of retrenchment was the right way out of the crisis. It was Chancellor Merkel's idea. Washington expected a more active process of overcoming the euro zone crisis but not necessarily with the use of budget cuts, which also had impact on Europe's international activeness.

The interest in the FRG or in cooperation with the FRG was a logical outcome of the observation of reforms in the European Union, which strengthened the FRG's position. Moreover, the EU structures are rather inert as far as decision-making processes are concerned. Also the consequences of the crisis were less painful in Germany than in France, Italy or Spain, which made them focus on their internal affairs.

Personal relations between Obama and Merkel did not go beyond standard ones. Obama did not pay an official visit to the FRG during his first term. It took place in June 2013. The FRG did not share Washington's opinion on the proposed ways of solving conflicts. And it expressed its separate opinions. For example, in 2011 the FRG abstained from voting on the UN Security Council resolution on Libya, by the way together with Russia, Brazil and China. Europe and the FRG preferred not to get involved in the resolution of that crisis, which was criticised, inter alia, by the US Secretary of State, Robert Gates<sup>34</sup>. Bonn also distanced from other ideas, e.g. in case of the Middle East, providing finance and armament for those who were fighting against Assad in Syria<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> J. Kiwerska, *Stan i perspektywy relacji niemiecko-amerykańskich [State and prospects for German-American relations]*, 2012, ([www.iz.poznan.pl/publikacje/biuletyn-instytutu-zachodniego/biz-nr-110](http://www.iz.poznan.pl/publikacje/biuletyn-instytutu-zachodniego/biz-nr-110).)

<sup>35</sup> *Berlin war sich allzu sicher, dass Amerika nicht in den Syrien-Konflikt eingreifen werde [Berlin was convinced that America would not interfere in the conflict in Syria]*, [in:] *Rhetorisch an der Seite der Verbündeten [Rhetorically siding with allies]*, 6 August 2013,

For Washington, Bonn's non-indulgence in global policy issues was not in line with renewed rumours about Bonn's interest in being a permanent member of the Security Council. The USA was also disappointed with the attitude of many Western European countries, including the FRG, to the issue of the earlier agreed percentage of the budget to be spent on the military.

In general, because of its historical experience, the FRG is unwilling to use force. What is also important in case of Germany, decision-making is more dependent on social feelings due to the fact, that Bundestag makes a decision on a potential involvement of the Bundeswehr abroad each time even if it is not connected with Germany's military intervention.

The FRG is willing to participate in talks, e.g. it believes that there should be a return to the Middle East talks, and similarly to the USA, it criticised Israel's activities in the occupied areas. The FRG together with the members of the UN Security Council also participated in the talks concerning the termination of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The FRG and the USA are important economic partners to one another. Their cooperation is also important for international or even global trade relations. But also in this field, there are differences, e.g. the 'turn to Asia' had not only an economic but also political dimension for the USA (threat to Washington's global role) while for the FRG it was mainly economic in character. Because of global interests, both states undertake steps to liberalise trade and are interested in the conclusion of the treaties aimed at that (the USA-Europe TTIP or the USA-the Pacific states).

In general, the bilateral relations were and are pragmatic, despite some arguments occurring, e.g. telephone tapping in 2013, when it turned out that even the Chancellor's phone had been tapped.

After the reset, also the policy toward Russia, as far as the main directions are concerned, is similar although emphasis is placed on different things. The USA clearly strengthened its criticism and rhetoric after Russia's aggression against Ukraine and took concrete political and military steps. The FRG prefers more careful moves. There are two different camps in the FRG, e.g. the Chancellor supports the policy of sanctions against Russia, which the USA is in favour, but the Vice-Chancellor, Gabriel, is against, and the

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[www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/deutschland-und-der-syrien-konflikt-rhetorisch-ander-seite-der-verbundenen](http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/deutschland-und-der-syrien-konflikt-rhetorisch-ander-seite-der-verbundenen) (accessed: 20 September 2016) [www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/krieg-in-syrien-alle-wichtigen-fakten-erklaert-endlich-verstaendlich-a-1057039](http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/krieg-in-syrien-alle-wichtigen-fakten-erklaert-endlich-verstaendlich-a-1057039), 10 August 2016; T. Meyssan, *Deutschland versucht sich aus dem Syrienkonflikt herauszuziehen [Germany tries to get out of Syrian conflict]*, 25 October 2015 [in:] [www.voltairenet.org/article189113](http://www.voltairenet.org/article189113) (accessed: 30 October 2016).

Foreign Affairs Minister emphasises the necessity for returning to the policy of treating Russia as an important partner in international policy. Obama's administration did not consider former administrations' experiences and, in some sense, 'was learning' Russia on its own. Nonetheless, as one can assess based on the steps taken, the lesson resulted in a conclusion that tough policy is necessary. Germany tends to be less tough because, in some sense, it is a hostage to its energy policy and investment in it. The FRG, according to the Chancellor's declaration, has a plan how to close nuclear power plants until 2022, which means it is vitally interested in other energy resources. They include the so-called green sources but also, to a great extent, gas. German companies got involved in the construction of gas pipelines that allow for trading in this raw material with Russia. And it seems that the FRG aspires to the position of the main middleman in its import and distribution in Europe. This has impact on foreign policy, relations with Russia and the attitude to Russia. The USA does not have economic interests in Russia. However, in political issues, for Washington Russia started to appear to be a player guided by its own imperialist interests and interested in regaining influence and extending it in Europe.

## CONCLUSIONS

American-Russian as well as American-German relations have their own dynamic. Nonetheless, because of the fact that international relations are a network of links and the relations discussed concern the major players on the international arena, an analysis of their mutual connections is a fully justified research objective.

The reset failure took place when the differences between Washington and Bonn became stronger. They concerned bilateral relations (telephone tapping) but also international policy: the Middle East, changes to NATO functioning, and strengthening the eastern flank of the Alliance in particular.

Germany is much less willing than the USA to carry out a tough policy toward Russia. German political circles and public opinion seem to be more willing to accept Russia's 'special' rights in the post-Soviet area, regardless of the will of the region's citizens.

The end of the reset policy did not have a decisive influence either on the improvement or the worsening of the American-German relations. Their condition mainly results from how the two states define their political

objectives and their ability to cooperate in the areas that require solutions based on multilateral relations.

At the moment, at the level of government elites in the two states, there is a belief that it is necessary to cooperate, and with regard to Russia, its imperial activities in Eastern Europe are assessed similarly.

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## PRAGMATIC PARTNERSHIP: RUSSIAN RESET VERSUS AMERICAN-GERMAN RELATIONS

### Summary

A reset in the relations between Washington and Bonn resulted from the reorientation in the United States' foreign policy that took place when President Barack Obama took office. It was assumed that the problems piling up in front of the new administration in connection with international involvement and the economic crisis were global in character and required cooperation with the allies from NATO (with whom the relations were not good) as well as Russia. President Obama hoped for cooperation with Russia, which many observers described as naïve and attributed to his lack of experience. The reset policy soon started to burn out and there was a gradual process of going away from it. It was stopped by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. The influence of the failure of the reset policy in the American-Russian relations on the American-German relations should be analysed in the context of the two states' policy and hopes they had in connection with their reciprocal relations. Regardless of the disappointment, because of the two states' role in international relations, bilateral relations are rational and moderate in character. This concerned and also concerns the policy toward Russia.

## PRAGMATYCZNE PARTNERSTWO – RESET W STOSUNKACH AMERYKAŃSKO-ROSYJSKICH A STOSUNKI AMERYKAŃSKO-NIEMIECKIE

### Streszczenie

Reset w stosunkach na linii Waszyngton–Bonn wynikał z reorientacji w polityce zagranicznej USA, która dokonała się po objęciu urzędu prezydenta przez Baracka Obamę. Uznano wówczas, że problemy piętrzące się przed nową administracją w związku z zaangażowaniem międzynarodowym i kryzysem gospodarczym miały charakter globalny i wymagały współpracy nie tylko z sojusznikami z NATO (z którymi stosunki też były nie najlepsze), ale również z Rosją. Prezydent Obama miał nadzieję na możliwość współpracy z Rosją, co niektórzy obserwatorzy określali mianem naiwności i zrzucali na karb jego braku doświadczenia. Polityka resetu dość szybko zaczęła się wypalać, a odchodzenie od niego następowało stopniowo. Przekreśliła go zaś

agresja na Ukrainie i zajęcie Krymu przez Rosję w marcu 2014 roku. Wpływ załamania się resetu w stosunkach amerykańsko-rosyjskich na stosunki amerykańsko-niemieckie należy rozpatrywać w kontekście charakteru polityk obydwu państw i nadziei przez nie pokładanych we wzajemnych stosunkach. Niezależnie od zawodu, ze względu na pozycję obu w stosunkach międzynarodowych, relacje dwustronne cechuje podejście rzeczowe i wyważone. Dotyczyło i dotyczy to również polityki wobec Rosji.

#### ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ПАРТНЁРСТВО – ПЕРЕЗАГРУЗКА В АМЕРИКАНО-РОССИЙСКИХ ОТНОШЕНИЯХ И АМЕРИКАНО-ГЕРМАНСКИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ

##### Резюме

«Перезарядка» в отношениях между Вашингтоном и Бонном была обусловлена переориентацией во внешней политике США, которая имела место после вступления в должность президента Бараком Обамой. В то время было принято во внимание утверждение о том, что нагромоздившиеся у новой администрации проблемы, обусловленные международными обязательствами и экономическим кризисом, имели глобальный характер и ставили во главу угла сотрудничество не только с союзниками по НАТО (отношения с которыми тоже оставляли желать лучшего), но также с Россией. Президент Обама надеялся на возможность сотрудничества с Россией, что некоторые наблюдатели определяли, как проявление наивности, и объясняли это отсутствием опыта. Политика «перезарядки» достаточно быстро начала себя изживать, а отказ от неё происходил постепенно. К невозможности осуществления этой политики привели агрессия на Украине и аннексия Крыма Россией в марте 2014 года. Влияние провала политики «перезарядки» в американо-российских отношениях на американо-немецкие отношения следует рассматривать в контексте особенностей политики обоих государств и их ожиданий относительно взаимоотношений. Несмотря на возможные разочарования, исходя из позиции обоих государств на международной арене, их двусторонние отношения характеризует деловой и выверенный подход. Это касалось и касается также политики в отношении России.