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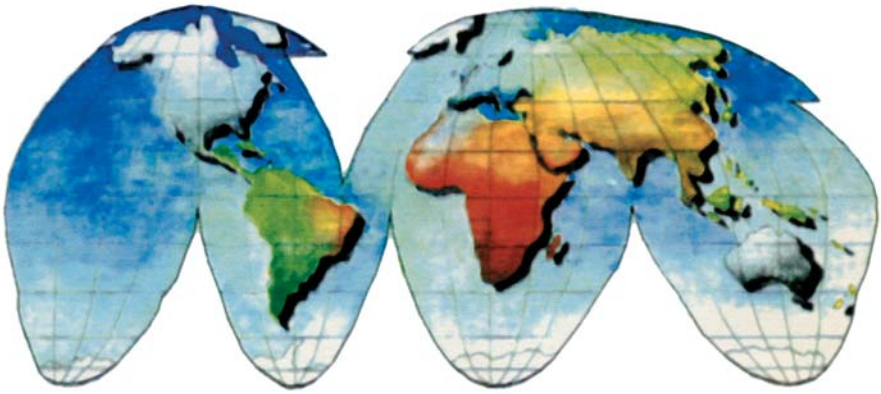

TWO DECADES OF SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY

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Miroslav Lajčák

Twenty years of Slovak foreign policy

In January 2013 we are commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Slovak Republic. This seems to be a good opportunity to look back, recall the road we have walked for the past two decades and assess our achievements so far. Where were we twenty years ago? What were our strategic foreign policy goals? And what were our biggest challenges? How far have we come since then? To ask these and similar questions is not an end in itself. It is important for another reason. The answers could help us address our most important foreign policy issue, concerning our way forward.

Our return to the family of democratic nations

Two decades ago a story began that turned out to be a success story. It was a story about our return to the family of democratic nations. Political and social changes that got under way in our part of the continent in the late 1980s served as a kind of prologue to it. Three years after the Velvet Revolution, Slovakia peacefully agreed with the Czech Republic to call it quits. For our country, now sovereign, the transformation into an open democratic society with a market-based economy and integration into the Euro–Atlantic community remained the topmost priority.

Slovakia's story has been in some respects different from those of our neighbors. Besides a painful but inevitable transformation process, we had to begin building our statehood virtually from scratch. We had to create the standard institutions of a new state and to staff them.

When we began to establish the Slovak Foreign Service, it was clear that it had to be small, yet truly professional and efficient. In spite of all the challenges we faced back then, we succeeded in creating a well-founded institution, operating with adequate intellectual and expert capabilities.

Lajčák, M., "Twenty years of Slovak foreign policy," *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* Vol. XXI, No. 3–4, 2012, pp. 3–9.

The Slovak Foreign Service has raised up several internationally recognized professionals, who now hold important posts in international organizations: Ján Kubiš, former OSCE Secretary General and currently the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan; Maroš Šefčovič, Vice President of the European Commission; Peter Tomka, President of the International Court of Justice; and Miroslav Jenča, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Central Asia – just to name a few.

Slovakia's road to membership in the community of western democracies was not always straightforward, and in no respect was it easy. Our diplomats needed to maintain and strengthen existing contacts abroad as well as to look for new ones, and under circumstances in which political developments in our country were not favorable for the achievement of its integration ambitions. Nevertheless the foreign policy staff remained highly professional, aware that their main task lay in serving Slovakia's long term national interests.

The goal of integration played a crucial role in our reform endeavors. Our aim to become a fully-fledged member of the Euro–Atlantic community was not externally imposed; it was absolutely essential to our own development. We can see now how important it was to be focused on our own performance. We have grown stronger and more confident with each obstacle we have managed to overcome.

Regional cooperation

One other factor must be highlighted when addressing two decades of Slovak foreign policy, namely regional cooperation. It is good when a country can rely on its neighbors. This was the very idea behind the Visegrad Four Group of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. This informal regional grouping, even with all its internal ups and downs, has become a real beacon of partnership in Central Europe and a well-established trademark for stability and prosperity.

Visegrad Four Group serves as a positive inspiration for others, including our partners in the neighborhood.

It has also been and remains an excellent school of communication, as each country both promotes its own interests and searches for consensus. Since the fulfillment of its most strategic priority – Euro–Atlantic integration – the

Visegrad Four Group has been evolving towards a dynamic regional platform for the exchange of views and the coordination of activities within the EU and NATO. It is with deep satisfaction that I see the group exploring a new agenda of cooperation in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. The idea of a common Visegrad Battle Group, to be fully deployable in 2016, is a good example illustrating the unprecedented level of mutual confidence reached within the region so far.

The importance of regional cooperation and good neighborhood relations – and this is the first essential point of my deliberations – can in my view hardly be overestimated. In this regard the Visegrad Four Group serves as a positive inspiration for others, including our partners in the neighborhood.

The way forward

Following the experience of more than eight years of Slovak membership in the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, we can now say that our return to the family of European democratic nations is a success story.

Today, when we have achieved our strategic integration targets, the question arises: What new vision should the Slovak Foreign Service pursue, and how should it define its new objectives?

I would guess that many of us are rather wavering at this point. At a moment when we have become part of the Euro–Atlantic community, the global financial and economic crisis, followed by the debt crisis in the Eurozone, has somewhat disturbed our system of certainties "carved in stone." Many of us are asking whether the future implies continuity or change. I think a good answer is to observe continuity as regards our values, while making changes in the ways that we act.

Certainly one of the biggest challenges we face today is the debt crisis in Europe. I am far from having illusions: the situation is serious; yet it is not desperate. Our destiny is in our own hands. We have identified the root causes of our current difficulties and drawn the basic lines of action. The crucial question is: how consistent will we now be?

These challenges are accelerating the political integration of the EU in an unprecedented way. The system of one currency and twenty-seven or seventeen fiscal and economic policies has not worked well in its current version. We need a new and improved model. And we have to be prepared that this objective necessity could take integration much further than many of

us dared to think only a few years ago, when we were just about to join the EU. The way forward for us is "more Europe" otherwise we will be marginalized.

Besides determination and political courage, we need one more crucial element: in order for us to succeed, our citizens must be on board. We must explain to our public that the European political union is needed, not because some elite behind closed doors in Brussels wants to realize a dream of the United States of Europe, but because this is a logical next step reflecting the depth of the integration reached so far.

Given our membership in the eurozone, we are at the very core of Europe and at the very core of ongoing discussions about the future of the European project. It is we who will decide the way forward.

We must not forget – and this is the second point I would like to highlight – that for the first time in our history it is we who can determine, in a dialogue between equals, our long term perspective. The EU represents the key to the prosperity of Slovakia. Given our membership in the eurozone, we are at the very core of Europe and, at the same time, at the very core of ongoing discussions about the future of the European project. It is we who will decide the way forward. The same applies to our membership in NATO, which remains the guarantor of our security. We, the member states, must ensure that this Alliance will be able to face its current and future security challenges and to accomplish its main tasks, both in terms of our collective defense and in terms of international crisis management. This is a unique opportunity for Slovakia, as a fully-fledged EU and NATO member, to voice its suggestions and opinions. We should not leave this opportunity neglected.

Our responsibilities abroad and the power of example

Even in these challenging times we must not forget that there is life outside the EU and NATO. We should not leave behind our ambitions to play an active role in providing stability and prosperity abroad, especially in our immediate surroundings. But it is not only about ambitions. It is also about our responsibilities and our own interests. In order to implement our standards and values, we need to have our neighbors on our side, rather than leaving the space open for instability or turbulence.

We should not underestimate the power of example in this regard. The support provided to Slovakia by our partners during the period of transformation and integration was exceptionally important. Countries in our neighborhood, in the Balkans, in Eastern Europe, as well as those in the Arab world, are struggling with problems now that are similar to what we struggled with back then. Therefore it is our moral duty to provide any necessary assistance we can, and to share our experience with them. Our success story has the power to inspire and encourage. This is, to my mind, the third important message to be delivered when evaluating two decades of Slovak foreign policy and focusing on its current visions and objectives.

More than two decades ago – when Slovakia along with its neighbors set off for democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy – a vision was offered to us: the vision to become part of a united, peaceful and prosperous Europe. It is of utmost importance to keep this vision alive. For this reason the Thessaloniki Agenda was adopted in 2003, as an expression of unequivocal support for the European aspirations of the Western Balkans countries. For this reason also the Eastern Partnership project was launched in 2009, with the ambitious aim of promoting political affiliation, economic integration, and visa liberalization between the EU and our Eastern partners.

Slovakia has supported both of these processes since the very beginning. We are active in diplomatic negotiations and at discussion tables. We are on the one hand the most resolute supporter of the Western Balkans countries, but on the other hand their most vocal and direct critics when they do not deliver satisfactory results. Thanks to our expertise, our country's voice is heard and widely respected. We provide practical assistance as well. While the focus of the financing of development projects has been gradually moving towards developing countries outside Europe (e. g. Kenya, South Sudan), technical assistance is considered to be the most effective instrument suiting the current needs of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. This approach is outlined by specialized programs of the Center for the Transmission of Transformation and Integration Expertise (CETIR).

Since 2003, when Slovakia's Official Development Assistance began, our engagement worldwide has increased sixfold in financial terms. More than four hundred ODA projects have been implemented to date. The total annual funding available for development assistance, currently in thirteen priority countries, amounts to more than 60 million Euros.

When speaking about responsibilities abroad, our engagement in international crisis management operations should not be ignored. Our armed

forces and civilian experts are currently serving in ten foreign missions led by NATO, the EU, and the UN. Even in distant Afghanistan, Slovakia is assisting in the consolidation of a post-war society, both in training Afghan soldiers and implementing development projects. Cyprus can serve as another example of our international engagement. In addition to its military presence, Slovakia has been playing a supportive role for two decades now in seeking a resolution to the Cyprus issue, by organizing bi-community dialogues.

It is clear that we can serve our national interests simply by strengthening the position of the Euro–Atlantic community on the global stage. This is undoubtedly the only way for our success story to continue.

These facts and figures demonstrate the transformation of Slovakia and its foreign policy over the last twenty years – from a recipient country to a donor, from a consumer to a provider of security, and from a candidate for EU and NATO membership to a committed proponent of the further enlargement of the Euro–Atlantic community.

Thanks to our engagement and the commitments we have undertaken – including the specific areas of international crisis management and development assistance – Slovakia is now regarded as a reliable partner and a trustworthy ally.

New tasks

With regard to the new tasks and priorities of Slovak foreign policy, its economic dimension, along with the coherent presentation of the country abroad, must not be forgotten. The financial and economic turbulence of recent years has significantly accelerated a shift towards a more pronounced economic emphasis within diplomacy. As a result, the responsibilities of the Foreign Ministry, in terms of promoting the trade and economic interests of the Slovak Republic, have been continuously expanded. New responsibilities go hand in hand with new tasks, as well as new expectations among our partners in the business community. It is of utmost importance that we create an efficient institutional foundation and suitable instruments to meet these expectations.

Another challenge (on a positive note) is our preparation for the first ever Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which is scheduled for the second half of 2016. Among the current tasks is the creation of an efficient coordination structure, as well as the development of a national program of education. To these ends the Slovak Foreign Ministry has recently been given enhanced responsibilities with respect both to the overall coordination of EU affairs and the preparation for the Presidency. This very important shift is reflected in the new name of the institution – The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The success story goes on

When I look back at the past twenty years, I feel that I have lived a success story with my country. This success has been the result of a combination of genuine efforts made at home, reliable regional cooperation, and generous help from our friends in the Euro–Atlantic community. But this is not the end of the story. We are still living in a fascinating and dynamically changing epoch, which is full of challenges.

Compared to the situation two decades ago, Slovakia and its Foreign Service are in a totally different position today. We are an integral part of a powerful community of good and respectful friends. It is now the strategic aim of Slovak foreign policy to capitalize on our experience, and to exploit the opportunities resulting from membership in the EU, NATO and other international organizations. Against the background of expanding globalization, geopolitical shifts, current challenges of all types, and the objectively limited potential of our country, it is clear that we can serve our national interests simply by strengthening the position of the Euro–Atlantic community on the global stage. This is undoubtedly the only way for our success story to continue.

Peter Holásek

The beginnings of Slovak foreign policy

Today it seems natural to ask many questions connected with the expression of Slovak foreign policy – mainly conceptual questions but also institutional ones. Surprisingly, the current status of Slovakia as a full-fledged member of the European community, after 20 years of dynamic development, for some is not a sufficient enough reason to systematically return to the past and think about the beginnings of Slovak foreign policy, in order to reveal its motivations and the behavior of the politicians at the time. For others, 20 years is too short a time to leave the evaluation of this period solely in the hands of historians, and not see that these beginnings of Slovak foreign policy also provide us with important messages and lessons for the present. When we wish to look back, with whatever motivation, we find – in the Slovak bibliography covering these 20 years of foreign policy – many works of political journalism, as well as essays, studies, and memoirs. Many of them are written from the perspective of a direct witness, which in regard to particular questions is naturally biased according to party affiliation. Moreover, some works use as the basis of their interpretation a later period, after 1994, by which time the original Slovak integration plans were halted. What we must realize, then, is that our picture of the beginnings of Slovak foreign policy can be complete only if it is objectively placed in a wider domestic and international political context, in which the first conception of foreign policy was born and its ideological starting point shaped. This, however, will be possible only after an interval of longer than 20 years, when the possibility that recent history will be a tool in the hands of politicians will be minimized.

For familiarizing oneself with the foundations of Slovak foreign policy, there is available the view of Miroslav Mojžita in his book,[1] which offers the most complex picture to date of nascent Slovak foreign policy, its significance lying in the fact that it does not evaluate the events, but leaves that task to the reader. The

Holásek, P., "The beginnings of Slovak foreign policy," *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* Vol. XXI, No. 3–4, 2012, pp. 10–24.

discussion found within this publication concerning Slovak national and state interests is a testimony to the high level of foreign-political thinking existing in Slovakia even before its independence. Another comprehensive contribution to the study of the beginnings of Slovak foreign policy and its development is the work of Alexander Duleba, Miroslav Wlachovský and Pavol Lukáč.[2] Without wishing to ignore other important contributions, one publication that should be mentioned is the series *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky* [*Documents on the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic*], which originated in 1993 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Its aim was to offer an authentic resource for Slovak foreign policy, and at the same time systematically to build the institutional memory of the ministry. The ministry published this series until 1994, when its publication was terminated. The documents included in the series map out the first activities of Slovak foreign policy, the speeches of constitutional politicians (both formal and informal), and diplomatic correspondence(s), as they responded to the current needs and goals of the time in which they originated. They represent one of the resources for the study of the activities of Slovak foreign policy during the first two years of its existence, and they contribute to the understanding of the development of the thinking and argumentation of Slovak foreign policy representatives during that short period.

Slovak foreign policy – first tasks

The concept of Slovak foreign policy at the time of its origin was not worked out in detail as we know it today, but it did have well-defined integration priorities which the government had negotiated at the end of December 1992. In April 1993 further specific tasks and priorities were added to this concept. The first complex evaluation of the foreign policy steps that had been taken in 1993 was presented at the National Council of the Slovak Republic by the Foreign Minister Jozef Moravčík in February 1994. In April 1994, in the program declaration of the new Slovak government under the leadership of J. Moravčík (who had replaced Vladimír Mečiar as Prime Minister), integration

[1] M. Mojžita, *Kňažko/Demeš/Kňažko. Formovanie slovenskej diplomacie v rokoch 1990 až 1993*, Bratislava: Veda, 2004.

[2] A. Duleba, M. Wlachovský, P. Lukáč, *Zahraničná politika Slovenska po vstupe do NATO a EÚ: východiská a stratégie*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2004.

into European political, economic, and security structures was established as the main and unambiguous goal of Slovak foreign policy.

Logically, the first immediate task of the new state's foreign policy was to complete the division of the former federation and actively contribute to the incorporation of Slovakia into the international community as a fully-fledged subject of international law. Alongside this, there were many institutional and international questions related to the succession of international agreements which had to be resolved, and which required enormous effort at the level of political and administrative leadership.

The most important starting advantage of the Slovak foreign policy operation during the first years of its existence was the fact that Slovakia entered the international scene with a positive reputation thanks to the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia.

The most important starting advantage of the Slovak foreign policy operation during the first years of its existence was the fact that Slovakia entered the international scene with a positive reputation thanks to the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia. The dividing of the foreign policy area was prepared by the old federal diplomacy, which emphasized three principles: the two new subjects would take over the duties of the former state, they were to be treated as equals by the international community, and the division of Czechoslovakia was not to endanger the stability of Central Europe. After the split, both sides continually tried to aim at these goals, which was a vital necessity for keeping the favor of the international community. This was reflected positively also within Czech–Slovak relations, namely by the willingness and responsibility felt on both sides to constructively resolve open questions. This fact served as a strong argument in the hands of Slovak political representatives when they were trying to gain the support of the international community for Slovakia's foreign policy ambitions. Between October 1992 and the end of 1993, more than 30 agreements of a technical, financial, or payment character were signed, as well as agreements on business, state borders, etc. It was not a coincidence that the first official visit of the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Ivan Gašparovič on January 7, 1993) was to Prague, which was an important signal to the world as well as internally to both nations that the two countries were not in conflict. There

were, however, problematic areas between them, which accompanied the dividing of former federal property. There was also the sensitive question of treaties related to border crossings, and a specific agreement concerning local border crossing. The Czech party was pressing for a quick signing of these treaties, while Slovakia perceived them more emotionally, as an effort to reinstate a new iron curtain (i.e. a new border between Western and Eastern Europe). It was only natural that the democratic public who aspired to incorporate Slovakia into European democratic structures had a hard time accepting scenarios which appeared to throw it back into Eastern Europe. Other problems arose around the question of succession into those organizations in which membership could not be passed on to both countries. In particular, this was the case with membership in the leading threesome of the (at that time) Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), in which both countries were interested, since the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic during the last year of its existence was the chairing country. The result of negotiations was the membership of Slovakia in the leading *Troika* of CSCE in 1993, in return for their support of the Czech Republic's nomination for the post of the nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for the years 1994–1995.

If today we use the term "above-standard" to describe the level of Slovak–Czech relations, it most definitely was not like that during the first years of independence – although it certainly was a wish on the Slovak side. Slovakia felt, however, that on the Czech side there was an effort to ignore the specifics of the relationship. What above-standard relations there were, were more in the category of the quantity of the tasks that both sides were resolving after the division, the resolution of which had more pragmatic goals. During the first two years such tasks required numerous meetings of cabinet ministers, as well as more frequent inter-parliamentary contact. Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan characterized it well on the floor of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in 1994 when – addressing the declared effort to reach above-standard or exclusive relations with the Czech Republic – he said that both countries first of all need to reach the level of relations of developed friendly cooperation, supported by a foundation of quality agreements and continuing economic interaction.[3] In fact, it was only in the next period – after resolving

[3] *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky II/3*, Bratislava: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 1994, p. 71.

the problem issues, including the problematic sections of the border – that it turned out that the coordinating of foreign policy in relation to the European Union (until 1994 the European Community), North Atlantic Alliance, Council of Europe, UN, and other international organizations would be mutually beneficial. An example of this more positive attitude was the Czech Republic's support of Slovakia during the opening of the Paris conference on the Stability Pact in Europe.

If today we use the term "above-standard" to describe the level of Slovak–Czech relations, it most definitely was not like that during the first years of independence

The reactions abroad to the development following the division of Czechoslovakia were more skeptical, and were looking for differences, mainly economical, between the two succession countries. It is generally known that they were usually less favorable towards Slovakia, whose starting point they labeled as complicated. In particular, they perceived the problem of ethnic minorities, as well as the problem of the water dam Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros, as a source of tension in its relations with Hungary. This led to the anticipation of problems in the process of including Slovakia within European integration structures. The dividing of Czechoslovakia was contrasted with the unifying of Western Europe. An unknown for many was the question of the future foreign policy direction of Slovakia. On the other hand, politicians abroad, unlike the media, were evaluating the division of Czechoslovakia without marked emotion. It is true that – in addition to certain expressions of regret coming from some countries of the (at that time) European Community – there were fears lest these tendencies should spread to them and the peaceful dividing of Czechoslovakia become an unwelcome precedent for "centrifugal" tendencies within their own countries. Nevertheless, in contrast to the media, amongst politicians a sense of political reality prevailed, as well as a willingness to offer new countries a helping hand. In the first week of its independent existence, Slovakia was acknowledged by, and entered into relations with, 73 states, including all the superpowers. During 1993, the Slovak Republic was officially recognized by a total of 117 states. German President Richard von Weizsäcker expressed his support when – in a letter to both prime ministers with identical texts – he welcomed both the Slovak and Czech Republics as new members of the community of independent states. French President

Francois Mitterand responded to the doubts stemming from the dividing of Czechoslovakia, by stating that this division did not increase the risk of instability in Central and Eastern Europe. As early as January 12, he sent his Foreign Minister, R. Dumas, on a visit to Slovakia. On the British side, there was from the beginning a proper attitude toward Slovakia, but it was only in March that British Prime Minister J. Major expressed his appreciation of the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia, and his interest in accepting Slovakia into European Communities, on the condition that the Slovak economy were to be ready for this step. US President Bill Clinton expressed his support for the new republic when Michal Kováč was elected President of the Slovak Republic in March 1993.

Diplomatic recognition, expressions of courtesy, and the acceptance of Slovakia in important international organizations during the first months of 1993, were without a doubt important factors necessary for the international anchoring of the new state. But they also constituted a phase of protocol – an inevitable precondition for the functioning of a state within the international community. Of particular importance from the standpoint of Slovakia's international position was its acceptance as a proper member of the UN. This occurred on January 19, 1993. For the first time in history, the Slovak Republic now had the opportunity to express its interests outwardly, to stand before the international community with its suggestions, and to demonstrate that, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, it is a democratic state. Thanks to an active foreign policy during the first year of its existence, Slovakia was given the opportunity to participate in certain UN peacekeeping operations – UNPROFOR (former Yugoslavia), UNAVEM (Angola), UNOMIL (Liberia) a UNOMUR (Uganda–Rwanda).

At the same time that Slovakia was establishing its position in the international community, there was also the important question of its incorporation into the community of democratic states, and their political, economic and security structures. After gaining independence, Slovakia had a good starting position with respect to the goal of integration, along with its neighboring countries of the Visegrad Group. The Slovak army was in some respects better prepared than the armies of neighboring states, and the Slovak economy was relatively stable, having undergone an economic revival following a period of recession.[4] The concept of a place for Slovakia within

[4] A. Duleba, J. Bugajski, eds, *Bezpečnostná a zahraničnopolitická stratégia Slovenska: Biela kniha*, Bratislava, Washnigton: Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2001, pp.11 – 12.

European integration was identified as a foreign policy priority, even though at the beginning there was a lack of political will for making the necessary economic reforms. However, such a priority was mostly an expression of the ambition of one part of Slovak political representation – the part that was in charge of foreign policy, understood global realities, and hence identified itself with the European context of Slovakia's existence. This political representation had to overcome obstacles, and to come to terms with the opinions of others, mainly those who were more cautious about integration, both on the domestic political scene and in Western Europe – who, as a result of this caution (or even outright rejection), hesitated to define a new vision of Europe that would take into consideration the hopes of Central European states.

Events on the home political scene – among them fears concerning divergent understandings of Slovakia's orientation – contributed to the further strengthening of the Slovak integration concept. Slovakia's internal political development led in March 1994 to a change of government, and consequently to a clear formulation of the pro-integration direction of foreign policy. The new Prime Minister J. Moravčík, after forming the government on March 17, 1994, confirmed the continuity of foreign policy, and especially stressed those features leading towards a deepening of cooperation and integration into European systems and structures, which for the first time was identified as a strategic priority of Slovak foreign policy.[5]

NATO

The CSCE was the first international institution of which Slovakia became a part. Its admission on January 1 positively influenced the process of establishing its position on the international scene. For Slovakia it was a success that from the very beginning it managed to have an opportunity to engage in European diplomacy. As a member of the leading *Troika*, Slovak diplomacy took part in all its activities. CSCE was an important and respected platform on which all security questions were discussed, and for Slovak diplomacy it was a place for communication and partnership with countries in the North Atlantic Alliance, and in the Western European Union as its European pillar. Non-formal proclamations of Western politicians – that the North Atlantic Alliance is

[5] *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky, 1/II*, Bratislava: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 1994, p. 50.

counting on the eventual acceptance of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia – contributed positively to the early defining of Slovakia's security orientation as being towards NATO. The idea of its security being guaranteed by the West has its roots in history, stemming also from the identical ambitions of Visegrad countries, given their geographic location between East and West. Activities aimed at supporting this security orientation were one of the most important foreign policy efforts of Slovakia during the first and second years of its existence, and gradually all parliamentary parties came to agreement concerning them. At that time, the larger part of Slovak politicians realized that maintaining the neutrality of Slovakia between West and East would not correspond with declarations of Slovak membership in Western integration structures – in other words, the effort to integrate into European political and economic space would not be backed up by security guarantees. Slovak public opinion was leaning towards the entering of Slovakia into NATO. This consensus opened up a space for discussion about the question: what kind of NATO would correspond to Slovak national interests? At that time there was a conflict of opinions within European security structures, between those who wanted to build NATO as transatlantic and those who wanted to build it as a strictly European organization, which was reflected also in discussions on the home political scene. Within the Visegrad Group, Poland was insistent on the presence of the US in Europe, while the attitudes of Hungary and the Czech Republic were less crystallized at the beginning. The Slovak attitude took shape gradually and was expressed in the gradual steps and measures to be taken towards the integration of Slovakia into NATO, as they were worked out in detail in the document "Projekt priblíženia Slovenskej republiky k NATO" ["Project of approximation of the Slovak Republic towards NATO"]. This document was prepared by the Slovak Foreign Ministry, who in the initial phase of this process counted on activities within the North Atlantic Council for Cooperation (NACC), and later made use of opportunities available in the American initiative Partnership for Peace. The program Partnership for Peace, which the leading representatives of NATO approved on January 10, 1994, confirmed that Article 10 of the Washington Agreement assumes the openness of the Alliance towards all states ready for membership. It offered to countries trying to enter the Alliance stronger ties, and ensured dialogue

Slovak public opinion was leaning towards the entering of Slovakia into NATO.

between member countries of NATO and candidates for membership. On the other hand, it did not offer candidate countries any guarantee of membership, which gave rise to feelings of insecurity and the fear of a Central European space possibly being filled with Russia. Along with granting Slovakia the status of associated member of the Western European Union, Partnership for Peace also played a very important part in the very beginning of the evolution of Slovak accession into the North Atlantic Alliance.

Slovak–Hungarian relations

The development of positive relations with Hungary was without a doubt one of the key tasks of Slovak politics. Both countries realized that Slovak–Hungarian relations were perceived as a source of possible conflict, which could endanger the security of Central Europe and thus make their acceptance into the North Atlantic Alliance more difficult. It was in the interest of Slovakia that the membership of both countries in NATO should guarantee a new relationship that would eliminate mutual conflict. The anti-Slovak attacks coming from Hungary not only hampered the favorable process of incorporating Slovakia into international organizations, but they were counterproductive also for Hungary itself. In particular, a heavy burden was the Hungarian attitude toward the project of the complex of water dams Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros, to which Hungary attributed a political dimension. Shortly after Slovakia gained independence, in February 1993, the Hungarian parliament turned to the legislative organs of member countries of the UN with a proclamation in which they accused Slovakia of infringing the territorial integrity of Hungary. The speaker of the Slovak parliament, Ivan Gašparovič, responded with a letter to the speaker of the European Parliament Egon Klepsch on March 11, 1993 in which he defended the Slovak position. In the letter, he mentioned formally that this project was planned and started together with Hungary, and it was necessary to finish it together.[6] For Slovakia, however, it was clear that the joint completion of the project was not the real issue of the day – rather what was more important was that this problem not burden its relations with its neighbors, and that it be resolved constructively on the basis of matter-of-fact ecological and technical argumentation – in other words, that the conflict

[6] *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky, 1/I*, Bratislava: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 1994, pp. 39-40.

return to where it began. After a diplomatic effort, the resolution of this conflict was expected to be aided by the agreement on presenting the conflict between the Slovak Republic and Hungary concerning the project Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros to the international court, which was signed on April 7, 1993 in Brussels by the state secretaries of both ministries. The agreement with Hungary was presented by Slovak diplomacy as a contribution of Slovakia to the strengthening of the stability of Central Europe. What was important was that the resolving of the conflict be left to the authorized institution, so that it not directly burden the reaching of the above mentioned foreign policy goal of either country. Slovakia further suggested that an agreement on cooperation be signed between the two countries which would, among other things, recognize the unchangeability of the Slovak–Hungarian border, and move forward their mutual relations – which now included a new dimension, the status of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The Slovak government was taking these amicable steps in an attempt to resolve the issue of ethnic minority rights within a wider integration context. It was ready to further align the issue of the protection of the human rights of minorities in compliance with the documents of the Council of Europe, which were still only being prepared. Stressing the importance of the individual rights of minorities, and clearly rejecting the concept of collective rights which (in the atmosphere of Central Europe) would work as a destabilizing element, was for Slovak politics an important and unchangeable constant. Its most important goal was that the rights of all minorities in Slovakia would achieve the standard which was regarded as the European standard.

Clearly rejecting the concept of collective rights which would work as a destabilizing element, was for Slovak politics an important and unchangeable constant.

In spite of taking accommodating steps in relation to Hungary, Slovak diplomacy shortly afterwards was forced to defend itself against a speech of the Hungarian representative in the Council of Europe (in the Committee of Ministers on June 17, 1993), who in this forum presented the Hungarian government's decision not to support Slovakia's application for entry into the Council of Europe. The speech of the Hungarian representative cast doubt on the political will of Slovakia to make certain legislative changes in accordance with the recommendations of the Parliament of the Council

of Europe. In a diplomatic note dated June 19, the Slovak Foreign Ministry pointed out that this stand is in conflict with the official statements of Hungarian representatives concerning support for Slovakia in its process of incorporation into international organizations.[7]

Several days later, on June 30, 1993, and in spite of the above mentioned events, Slovakia was accepted as a member of the Council of Europe, which showed that it had met the prerequisite conditions, which had been monitored directly on site by experts from the Council of Europe. Slovak foreign policy had overcome an important obstacle – which was presented by Slovak representatives as the demonstration of Slovakia's identifying with the democratic value system of Europe, and at the same time its determination to contribute further to its strengthening. The positive reaction from Western countries to this, as well as to other steps supporting the creating of an atmosphere of cooperation in Central Europe, was of key importance for Slovak foreign policy, whose ambition it was to further incorporate the country into European political, economic and security structures. It was only natural that Slovakia tried to catch up to Hungarian diplomacy, which had a head start on the international scene, by a faster and more active fulfillment of the obligations it took on when entering the Council of Europe.

The Visegrad Group – the road to European Communities

Besides Slovak–Hungarian reconciliation, Slovakia was also without a doubt an unambiguous supporter of strengthening connections among those countries which formed the Visegrad Group. Political representatives in Slovakia realized that in order to fulfill its integration ambitions the country needed to be oriented towards the politics of a strong Central Europe. The activities undertaken by this group of states were understood as the expression of a common determination for a quick and complete integration. But in these first years, the functioning of the regional community was (in the understanding of political circles) more a temporary and pragmatic affair, which was meant to come to an end as soon as this goal was reached. According to the words of the then Foreign Minister J. Moravčík in April 1993, the international community should try to understand this group, whose aim it was to prevent (among other things) counterproductive competition for

[7] *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky 1/I*, op.cit., p. 82.

membership in European communities.[8] The logic of this progression was understandable from the Slovak perspective. Slovakia found itself not only in a new geopolitical situation, but also in doubt about its foreign policy direction. It was more natural for Slovakia to be advocating a common coordinated integration than trying to win favor on an individual basis. If relations between Western countries and the V4 were to move to the bilateral level, Slovakia would probably find itself in an unfavorable position. That is why Slovakia kept supporting the concept of the temporary functioning of the Visegrad Group, even in a situation in which the sustainability of the group was beginning to be questioned. This tendency was apparent mainly in the Czech Republic and was represented by Václav Klaus, who thought that the coordinated approach was less appropriate and that each country should find its own way into the European communities or NATO. A different opinion within the Czech Republic was expressed by the President Václav Havel, who on the contrary saw in the possible exclusion of Slovakia the danger of "a cleavage within this geopolitical zone." Poland also was more in favor of coordinating the steps of the V4 towards the EC, the Western European Union, and NATO. In this situation, it was exceptionally important that Slovakia maintain good relations with Poland, which thanks to its geo-political position became a part of world politics and had good relations with Western countries, especially Germany and France, who could influence the speeding up of the complex integration process of Central European countries into the Western community.

Political representatives in Slovakia realized that in order to fulfill its integration ambitions the country needed to be oriented towards the politics of a strong Central Europe.

The leaders of the countries of the EC showed sympathy to the countries of the Visegrad Group, but they did not offer any promises in the area of politics or economics. On the one hand, they employed a strong rhetoric in support of widening the community, but on the other hand they showed a certain reservation in admitting post communist countries into their structures and system of rules. At the summit of European communities in Copenhagen in June 1993, a formal offer of full membership was made to the Central

[8] *Dokumenty k zahraničnej politike Slovenskej republiky 1/I*, op.cit., p. 51.

European countries (in the final document), but only on the condition that they fulfill certain political and economic requirements specific to each individual country. Contrary to their former way of addressing them – as the countries of the Visegrad Four – European Communities began to prefer an individual approach to individual countries, rather than a common approach to the V4. The subsequent association agreement with Slovakia, signed on October 4, 1993, could appear as the retreat of Visegrad countries from their original effort to proceed in a coordinated way, but in reality it was one of the biggest achievements of the first year of Slovak foreign policy. As the future internal political development revealed, it was the best way for Slovakia to take responsibility for the success of its integration into its own hands, and to further mobilize those foreign policy activities which had a vital influence on the future of Slovakia. From the standpoint of this internal political development, it is possible to consider this association agreement as vital also because of the speed at which the new state approached its renegotiation, which clearly documents its will to incorporate itself into Western integration structures.[9] Part of the pro-integration concept of Slovak foreign policy during the following period was the development of relations with key countries which could positively influence it. The priority relationships were those with neighboring countries, as well as those with countries of the European Union, whose importance increased in connection with the ratification of the Association agreement on Slovakia's accession to the EU.

Eastern neighbors

This overview of the development of Slovakia's foreign policy orientation would remain incomplete if it did not include its attitudes toward its Eastern neighbors. The geo-political importance of the territory of the former Soviet Union – i.e. the possible impact of the development of conflict within its various regions on European politics – was obliging foreign policy to follow this development. The concept of Slovak foreign policy was based on the fact that Slovakia is a strategically important place, a transit country through which important resources from East to West are transported. And even though this concept clearly declared the orientation of Slovakia towards Western values, it was of

[9] S. Bombík, *Bližšie k Európe: štúdie a články*, Bratislava: Slovenská nadácia pre európske štúdie, 1995, p. 95.

primary interest that Slovakia lead a dialogue in the political sphere with its Eastern neighbors, and that it look for possibilities for developing economic and trade cooperation. This concerned mainly relations with the Ukraine and Russia, where a complicated internal political development was taking place. Russia was not hiding the fact that it was not interested in the membership of Visegrad countries in NATO. When the heads of Slovakia and Russia signed an agreement on friendly relations in August 26, 1993, good neighbor policies, and cooperation, it was important that Slovak politicians clearly declared that the agreement was not the show of a new orientation for Slovakia, and at the same time that its interest in integration into NATO and other European structures did not mean enmity towards Russia.

The concept of Slovak foreign policy was based on the fact that Slovakia is a strategically important place, a transit country through which important resources from East to West are transported.

Relations with the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America were not given primary attention, and this area of Slovak foreign policy during its first few years was given only partial consideration. The countries of these regions were important for Slovakia from the standpoint of possibilities for economic development. These were mainly Asian countries such as Japan, the Korean Republic, Thailand, India, and China, with whom bilateral activities were taking place. Similar interests were pursued by Slovak foreign policy in the countries of the Middle East, where in addition Slovakia was resolving questions concerning the reclaiming of the Slovak share of outstanding debts owed to the former Czechoslovakia.

Concluding remarks

When evaluating the foreign policy results of the Slovak Republic during the first two years of its existence, it must be stated that it was without a doubt successful, but at the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that this success owed a great deal to the favorable effect of the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia, and of the intelligibility of Slovakia's foreign policy as it was projected abroad. Incorporation into European integration structures

changed from the category of ambition to that of strategic priority. Among the successes of Slovak foreign policy, we can include the results of the opening conference of the Stability Pact in Europe, which thanks to Slovakia was modified to include cooperation in the resolving of social and economic problems, and the whole project connected with the goal of admission of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the EU. During this period, there was also an important change in relations with NATO, as well as with the security pillar of the EU, the Western European Union. Thanks to the fulfilling of the duties assumed upon entering the Council of Europe, the de-dramatizing of Slovak–Hungarian relations was achieved, as well as the shifting of attention away from solely political questions to inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary mechanisms. From the standpoint of fulfilling the program goals of foreign policy, it was important that Slovak experts also took part in the final phase of preparation of the general agreement on the protection of ethnic minorities, which was based on the Europe-wide standard for understanding of the rights of minorities. When looking for a solution surrounding the complex of water dams Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros, a pragmatic approach on both sides led to its ultimately being perceived as a technical problem. As can be seen from the above discussion, during the first two years of independence the important prerequisites for a successful foreign policy were laid. When positively evaluating Slovak foreign policy, we must not forget that – in regard to important political questions – success was achieved also thanks to an internal political consensus concerning its direction. This consensus, however, was missing in the period that followed.

Incorporation into European integration structures changed from the category of ambition to that of strategic priority.

Alexander Duleba

Twenty years of Slovak foreign policy: teething problems, successful integration and post-accession challenges

The aim of this article is to offer an overview analysis of the development of the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic, from the time it became an independent country in 1993 up to the present day.[1] Both the evaluation of these 20 years of Slovak foreign policy and the overview of its development are based on one main criterion – the ability of each government since 1993 to achieve the goals they defined in foreign policy. The paper focuses on the key agendas of Slovak foreign policy in each period of its development as the

[1] This paper was written in November 2012. It is based on the many articles containing analyses of key issues pertaining to the evolution of Slovak foreign policy that the author progressively published in the course of the past 15 years, particularly the following: A. Duleba, *Slepý pragmatizmus slovenskej východnej politiky: aktuálna agenda slovensko-ruských bilaterálnych vzťahov*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 1996; A. Duleba, "Democratic consolidation and the conflict over Slovak international alignment," in S. Szomolányi, A. Gould, eds, *Slovakia: problems of democratic consolidation and the struggle for the rules of the game*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; A. Duleba P. Lukáč, M. Wlachovský, *Zahraničná politika Slovenskej republiky: východiská, stav a perspektívy*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 1998; A. Duleba, "Slovenská zahraničná politika – bilancia šiestich rokov a perspektívy zmeny," *Mezinárodní vztahy* Vol. 34, No. 1, 1999, pp. 36–54; A. Duleba, P. Lukáč, eds, *Zahraničná politika Slovenska po vstupe do NATO a EÚ: východiská a stratégie*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2004; A. Duleba, "Slovak foreign policy after EU and NATO accession," in M. Majer, R. Ondrejcsák, V. Tarasovič, T. Valášek, eds, *Panorama of global security environment 2010*, Bratislava: Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA), 2010, pp. 35–47; A. Duleba, "Slovakia," in J. Bugajski, ed., *Central–East European policy review 2011*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2011, pp. 77–86.

Duleba, A., "Twenty years of Slovak foreign policy: teething problems, successful integration and post-accession challenges," *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* Vol. XXI, No. 3–4, 2011, pp. 25–63.

author perceives them. This article does not aim to cover or interpret all issues connected with Slovak foreign policy over the last twenty years.

A broad consensus as to the priorities of foreign policy prevailed on the domestic scene of the newly established Slovak Republic in 1993. All parliamentary parties that formed the Slovak government since 1993 – including the so-called second and third governments of Vladimír Mečiar (1992–1994 and 1994–1998) – set as a goal of their program to become a partner of the modern democratic countries, and to attain membership in the decisive integration structures of the Western world: NATO and the EU.[2] However, two crucial resolutions were adopted in 1997 – one on the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at its Madrid Summit in July, the other on the further enlargement of the European Union (EU) at its Luxembourg Summit in December – and Slovakia was left off of both candidate lists. The year 1997 marked the end of the first period of Slovak foreign policy. It ended in fiasco as Slovak diplomacy failed to meet its goals as defined both by the government and the citizens who had delegated their power in elections.[3]

The year 1997 marked the end of the first period of Slovak foreign policy. It ended in fiasco.

[2] Slovakia has had eight cabinets chaired by five prime ministers since 1993: Vladimír Mečiar (1992–1994, 1994–1998), Jozef Moravčík (March–December 1994), Mikuláš Dzurinda (1998–2002, 2002–2006), Iveta Radičová (2010–2012) and Robert Fico (2006–2010, and since April 2012). It must be stated that there was a minor exception in the overall consensus on the priorities of Slovak foreign policy, involving the SNS (Slovak National Party) and ZRS (Association of Workers of Slovakia). SNS and ZRS were part of the government coalition led by Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) in 1994–1998. Both parties listed membership in NATO and in the EU among their foreign policy priorities in their 1994 parliamentary elections programs. They began to question these priorities – contrary to their programs – only at the end of 1995. For more on the shift in the foreign policy standpoints of ZRS and SNS in 1995, see author's study *Slepý pragmatizmus slovenskej východnej politiky: aktuálna agenda slovensko-ruských bilaterálnych vzťahov*, op. cit.

[3] During two of Mečiar's governments and the temporary government led by Jozef Moravčík (1992–1998), the foreign office was chaired by seven ministers in six years: Milan Kňažko (1992–1993), Jozef Moravčík (1993–1994), Eduard Kukan (March–December 1994), Juraj Schenk (1994–1996), Pavol Hamžík (1996–1997), Zdenka Kramplová (1997–1998) and Jozef Kalman (October 6–30, 1998). The frequent changes in the post of foreign minister in 1993–1998 are an institutional witness to the instability of Slovak foreign policy and the weak position of the foreign office. They show that it was not the foreign ministers who had the last word in Slovak foreign policy.

The second period of Slovak foreign policy commenced in 1998, and culminated in 2004 with the admission of Slovakia into the EU and NATO. The precondition for this was the political change that followed the 1998 parliamentary elections, including the unprecedented – at least in the rather short history of Slovak diplomacy – diplomatic offensive. This offensive was remarkable, not only in terms of the engagement of the Slovak government and foreign office with respect to the agenda of integration, but equally in terms of the ability of Slovakia to meet its foreign policy targets.[4] Slovakia managed to catch up from behind, and to finalize the EU accession talks together with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. At the same time, Slovakia managed not only to restore but also to attain a new level of quality of regional cooperation within the V4, which nowadays represents the main pillar of Slovak foreign policy. This period also helped to identify the dominant features of the current international position of Slovakia.

The third period of Slovak foreign policy began in 2004.[5] This period successfully outlined the post-accession priorities of Slovak foreign policy; that is, the core areas in its relations with NATO and the EU, and, at the same time, those areas that are of national interest to Slovakia – for example, advocating for the inclusion of the Western Balkans and Eastern European countries in both organizations. It is the integration process of the Western Balkans that represents the most remarkable achievement of Slovak diplomacy and its major contribution to the policy of both the EU and NATO. Naturally, it took

[4] It is characteristic that during this period Slovak diplomacy was led by only one Foreign Minister – Eduard Kukan (1998–2002, 2002–2006). E. Kukan was the longest continuously serving foreign minister of the Slovak Republic to date – eight years. This resulted in greater stability in the foreign policy sector and the strengthening of its position within the Slovak government.

[5] In the post-accession period since 2004, Slovakia has had three different cabinets – if we do not count the last two years of Dzurinda's second government (2004–2006) – two cabinets chaired by Róbert Fico (2006–2010, since April 2012), and one chaired by Iveta Radičová (2010–April 2012). If we disregard the two years that Eduard Kukan still held the post of foreign minister (up to 2006), the foreign office was headed by three ministers after the accession to NATO and the EU: Ján Kubiš (2006–2009), Mikuláš Dzurinda (2010–April 2012) and Miroslav Lajčák (2009–2010, since April 2012). In other words, the Slovak Republic has had "only" four foreign ministers since 1998 (in the last 14 years). When compared to the first six years of Slovak diplomacy (1993–1998), when this post was occupied by seven different ministers, this signifies a crucial change. And a positive one, as it led to the greater institutional stability of the ministry. First and foremost, however, it is an expression of the fact that foreign policy has ceased to be under the thumb of domestic policy, as was the case in the 1990s.

some time to convince all players on the domestic political scene to adopt these priorities. There are inevitably some differences in the foreign policies of the various political parties that have been in power since the accession of the Slovak Republic to NATO and the EU in 2004. However, with respect to the main foreign policy agendas of the parties – that is, the core issues relating to NATO and EU membership, regional cooperation within the V4, and support for the integration process of its Eastern neighbors and the Western Balkans – the main actors on the Slovak politic scene share a very similar, if not identical, attitude. This third period of Slovak foreign policy, which followed accession to the EU, brought about a shift in its key paradigm – NATO and EU membership changed from being a target to being a tool of Slovak foreign policy. However, we must admit that, even today, Slovak diplomacy is still only just learning how to handle this tool.

Over the past twenty years, Slovak foreign policy has managed (although not without major difficulties) to overcome its teething problems, has successfully mastered the accession of Slovakia into NATO and the EU, and has been (more or less) successful in coping with its post-accession challenges. At the same time, we need to bear in mind that the history of Slovak diplomacy for the greater part of its existence (notably the period 1993–2004) is predominantly the story of its domestic policy, with foreign policy coming in only second.

The first six years of Slovak foreign policy (1993–1998): one target met, two tasks fulfilled, and two failed

The positive impact of the Czechoslovak legacy on the Slovak Republic and its diplomacy

The Slovak Republic came into existence as an independent state on January 1, 1993, following the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. It was a completely new actor on the international political scene, and at the same time an entirely new geopolitical element in central Europe. If we regard its basic geographical data (a total area of 49,035 km^2, and a population of 5,287,080 as of January 1, 1993), Slovakia ranks among the smaller European states.

Being a new and independent state, Slovakia had to define its position within the international milieu, especially in its relations with neighboring states, and determine its own foreign policy. Any attempt to evaluate the birth and further

development of Slovak foreign policy during the years 1993–1998 should not lose sight of the fact that Slovakia lacks a long term tradition of statehood, and consequently of conducting foreign policy (a necessary attribute of an independent country), that is held by her direct neighbors (with the exception of Ukraine). When laying the foundations of its foreign policy, Slovakia had to face three major challenges: earning diplomatic recognition for the Slovak Republic, establishing institutions to deal with its foreign policy, and outlining the agenda of its foreign policy targets.

It was of fundamental importance for the rather swift international diplomatic recognition of the new Slovak state that the Slovak Republic declared itself as a successor state to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, rather than as a continuation of the first Slovak Republic. The peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia during the course of 1992 played a significant role in international recognition of Slovakia. The diplomatic note addressed to all governments worldwide by the Slovak cabinet in December 1992 clearly stated its readiness to accept all valid rules governing international relations, to contribute to the process of disarmament, to consolidate its democratic political system, and to guard and observe human and minority rights.[6] Both of these factors – the nonviolent disbanding of Czechoslovakia and Slovakia's claimed succession to its democratic tradition – were of massive help, in that the Slovak Republic was recognized as a sovereign state by the governments of 99 national states as early as May 1, 1993. Right from the first day of its sovereign existence Slovakia became a member state of CSCE, the predecessor of the present day OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). On January 19, 1993 the Slovak Republic was accepted as a full member state into the United Nations, and on June 30 it became a member of the Council of Europe. The signing of the European

Slovakia had to pay the price for its lack of experience as a state when it faced the second goal of its foreign policy – to provide for it institutionally.

[6] P. Demeš, M. Mojžita, "Slovakia," in H. Neuhold, P. Havlik, A. Suppan, eds, *Political and economic transformation in East Central Europe*, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, p. 315.

Union Association Agreement on October 4, 1993 represented another significant step towards full recognition.[7]

Thus Slovakia had already successfully accomplished the main fundamental goal of its foreign policy in the first year of its independent existence: to gain wide international recognition and to become a member of the most important international organizations. Moreover, despite its limited state tradition, Slovakia rather quickly attained international status and a position equal to that of its neighbors who had a longer history of conducting foreign policy: the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. However, Slovakia had to pay the price for its lack of experience as a state when it faced the second goal of its foreign policy – to provide for it institutionally.

Paying the price for teething problems: lacking qualified staff; unstable institutions

Establishing the structures of the foreign office, and a network of representative bodies abroad, presented no major difficulty – the main problem was a shortage of appropriately qualified staff. The Slovak foreign office was built on the foundations of the Ministry of International Relations of the Slovak Republic, originally constituted back in 1990 under the previous, Federal conditions. Its activity during the years 1990–1993 was limited mainly to the development of cultural contacts, and to the safeguarding of Slovak interests in the context of regional – but not national – cooperation with other states. In addition, its actions were coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. As of January 1, 1993 the Slovak Ministry of International Relations was transformed into a central administrative organ – the Slovak foreign ministry – which was authorized (according to the "competency" law) with the management of the foreign policy of the newly established independent republic.

A division ratio of two to one was applied to the dividing of all federal assets between the Czech and Slovak republics, and was applied to assets abroad as well. This enabled the Slovak Republic to open its diplomatic offices in 53 states, and to maintain four permanent missions to international organizations as

[7] P. Holásek, "Diplomatické dokumenty o uznaní a nadväzovaní diplomatických stykov Slovenskej republiky s inými krajinami," *Medzinárodné otázky/International Issues* Vol. 2, No. 1–2, 1993, pp. 148–60; M. Eštok, "Slovensko – cesta do Rady Európy," *Medzinárodné otázky/International Issues* Vol. 2 , No. 3, 1993, pp. 89–113.

early as January 1, 1993. However, this ratio was not applied to the division of qualified employees. The employees of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV ČSFR) were offered the choice to resume their jobs either at the Czech or Slovak foreign ministry. It must be said that many of them chose to work at the Czech foreign ministry, including "ethnic" Slovaks.[8]

The lack of human resources was one of the major problems that Slovak foreign policy had to cope with in the first period of its existence. It takes decades to train qualified staff and to build a stable system of qualification – time that the independent Slovak Republic did not have. Yet it was just this lack of qualified human resources that represented the fundamental institutional cause that was responsible for the gradual loss of Slovakia's international position during the years 1994–1997 (in contrast to the positions of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary) – the international position it had managed to gain in the first year of its existence. Eventually, this lack of qualified leaders within Slovak foreign policy became even more pronounced.

The weakness and instability of the newly established state institutions was another price Slovakia had to pay for its teething problems, and it affected the implementation of its foreign policy. This was a problem common to all the newly established states of the post-communist world that lacked a tradition in sovereign statehood (an exception to this rule being Slovenia, at least at the beginning). The institutions in these countries still sought to earn the respect for their administration that such institutions should naturally have. It is typical of newly established states that their societies are not structured enough, and their systems regulating political behavior are very fragile. The interests of various groups often prevail over young state institutions lacking a sufficient tradition and a widely respected role within society. "Nothing is sacred," so to say, and anyone holding the reins can adapt anything – even institutions and the rules of the game – to suit his current needs. A typical feature of these post-communist countries was an immature political party system, and the existence of (let's say) nonstandard parties, that were more a grouping of people sharing a common interest in gaining power than transparent political subjects with clearly declared political programs in both domestic and foreign policy.[9]

As history has shown (notably the years 1994–1998), these factors had an enormous impact on the conducting of Slovak foreign policy. The

[8] P. Demeš, M. Mojžita, op. cit, p. 314.

[9] G. Mesežnikov, "Political framework of the building of a civil society in Slovakia," *South East European Monitor*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 55–6.

Slovak foreign ministry failed to become the dominant authority framing and achieving the goals of Slovak foreign policy. On the contrary, it was often the foreign office that followed the lead of other actors on the domestic political scene (lobby groups close to the government) in conducting foreign policy. Such groups typically made use of the foreign office in pursuit of their own commercial interests abroad. This state of affairs led to the further unintelligibility and unpredictability of Slovak foreign policy during the years 1993–1997, especially given the clearly stated pro-Western integration goals of the Slovak Republic, and the growing incomprehension of its Western partners. On the other hand, all this helps us more easily to understand the content and character of Slovak Eastern policy, notably Slovak relations with the Russian federation during 1994–1998.

In summing up the facts stated above, we can conclude that the Slovak Republic failed to accomplish one of its main foreign policy goals during the 1990s – to make adequate provision for its institutions. Although it was able to establish the necessary formal structures, it failed to supply competent and qualified staff, and to ensure those conditions that would allow the foreign office to play an independent and decisive role in foreign policy. This was the inevitable price Slovakia had to pay for its young nationhood. The Slovak Republic presumably owes its undoubted success in foreign policy during the first year of its independent existence to the favorable international effect produced by the nonviolent and peaceful disbanding of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, rather than to the achievements of its foreign policy alone. This effect having diminished, Slovakia began to lose its international position in contrast to its V4 partners.

Internal causes of the foreign policy program failure

Slovakia had to face a similar failure when dealing with the third key target of its foreign policy – outlining and achieving the stated goals of its foreign policy program. All of the Slovak cabinets in power since 1993 – both in their election campaigns and in their documents on foreign and security policy – declared as their highest priority the establishment of good relations with the integration structures of the Western world (NATO and EU) and the attainment of full membership. The program presented in January 1995 by the cabinet chaired by Vladimír Mečiar (and elected in the parliamentary elections of October 1994) anticipated further growth in cooperation with European and transatlantic structures – not only in economics and politics,

but also in security. This clearly pro-Western orientation has to be understood as the natural and direct outcome of the political changes of the 1980s and 1990s in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It came to symbolize the defeat of totalitarian communist regimes, and became an expression of their readiness to fully integrate into those Western democratic structures "that we are tied to," as Mečiar's program declaration proclaims, "both by tradition and natural relations."[10] However, on the eve of parliamentary elections in 1998 – six years, that is, into the independent existence of the Slovak Republic – not only did the results of the Slovak cabinet's policy so far not correspond with its declared priorities, but they rather contradicted them.

In contrast to its V4 neighbors, Slovakia's relations with NATO and the EU prior to the Madrid Summit in July 1997 and the December decision of the European Council were below average – political dialogue being the main failure.

In contrast to its V4 neighbors, Slovakia's relations with NATO and the EU prior to the Madrid Summit in July 1997 and the December decision of the European Council were below average – political dialogue being the main failure. The decisions of both NATO and the EU not to invite (or better put, not to advocate for) Slovakia to commence accession talks were only the predictable outcome of this failed political dialogue. Slovakia was alone among countries associated with the European Union to be sent a series of official démarches and warnings both from the EU and the USA – threatening suspension of the European Agreement, a decline in the qualitative level of political and economic cooperation with the EU, and the imminent failure of Slovakia's endeavor to attain membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.[11]

The political dialogue between Slovakia and its Western partners in the 1990s on the subject of "democracy in Slovakia" can be subdivided into three main periods: 1. Pre-démarche (January 1993–November 1994), 2. Démarche (November 1994–October 1995), and 3. Post-démarche (October 1995–September 1998). While the subject of concern of the

[10] "Programové vyhlásenie vlády Slovenskej republiky, Part I. Zahraničné vzťahy," *Pravda*, January 16, 1995.

[11] "Texty demaršov EÚ a USA vláde Slovenskej republiky." *Pravda*, November 9, 1995.

Western partners during the first period was predominantly the minority agenda connected with Slovakia's membership in CSCE (from January 1993 – later OSCE) and its admission to the Council of Europe, the second period saw a shift in the topic of political dialogue to the Western concern about the democratic development in Slovakia. Three political démarches were addressed to the Slovak government – two issued by the European Union (November 24, 1994, October 25, 1995), and a third written by the government of the USA (October 27, 1995). It is necessary to emphasize that no other post-communist central European country applying for membership in Western structures was ever addressed a diplomatic note of this importance. While during the first period it was the (let's say) software of the Slovak democracy that was of concern to the Western partners, in the second period they were preoccupied only with its hardware. The dialogue in the third period (beginning October 1995) resulted in the withdrawal of the Slovak Republic from the group of Central European countries with the best prerequisites for NATO and EU membership.[12]

This outcome followed a certain incomprehension regarding developments not only on the Slovak domestic political scene – which (mainly in the years 1994–1998) had taken a course diverging from practices and norms that are standard for Western democratic countries – but equally at the level of foreign policy. To give an example – the Slovak Republic in a memorandum accompanying its application for membership in the EU voluntarily obliged to coordinate its foreign and security policy with the EU even in the period is preceding its accession.[13] The Slovak understanding of this cooperation is best illustrated by the government's reaction to the temporary suspension of the official recognition of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by the foreign ministers of the EU on January 29, 1996 – the same day that a Slovak government delegation headed by Vladimír Mečiar embarked on its state visit to Belgrade.[14] Many other similar demonstrations of the "coordination" of foreign and security policy with the West can be found during the period in question. Unfortunately, it became a standard feature of Slovak foreign policy in 1994–1998 that its actions contradicted its declared goals and voluntarily adopted obligations. Six years after its birth, Slovakia became an unintelligible and (what is even worse) untrustworthy foreign policy partner.

[12] For more information see A. Duleba, "Democratic consolidation and the conflict over Slovak international alignmnet," op. cit., pp. 209–30.

[13] See "Memorandum vlády k žiadosti SR o členstvo v EÚ," *Trend*, July 12, 1995.

Achieving a never set target: coming closer to Russia

As a result of the démarche period of 1994–1995, the Slovak cabinet formed by the coalition of HZDS–ZRS–SNS realized that unless they changed the style and content of their domestic policy, the prospects of Slovak integration into Western structures would be minimal if any. The government found itself in a quandary. On the one hand, any change of domestic policy would mean admitting a failure in domestic policy. On the other hand, absent any such change, Slovakia would – in contrast to its closest neighbors, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary – remain an isolated and unstable country with a deteriorated international position. The coalition decided in favor of its own power objectives rather than long term national interests, and began persuading not only themselves, but also the future electorate, that, in fact, Slovakia has no need of Euro–Atlantic integration, and that the Western model of transformation is not suitable for Slovak developmental needs.

Somewhere between 1994 and 1995 the myth of the Slovak way was born, in order to represent an alternative to the reforms being undertaken in the post-communist world.

The priorities of Slovakia's foreign policy as declared in its governmental program were publicly questioned for the first time in October 1995 by two of the coalition parties' leaders. The chairman of the Slovak National Party (SNS), Ján Slota, and the chairman of the Union of the Workers of Slovakia (ZRS), Ján Ľupták, in two different, but successive interviews for the Russian press agency ITAR–TASS, argued that "Slovakia should not enter various military blocks but preserve its neutrality;"[15] and, "The majority of common Slovaks do not miss NATO, the EU or the IMF (International Monetary Fund) at all."[16] During his state visit to Moscow, Vladimír Mečiar, the leader of the strongest coalition party and then prime minister, expressed his opinion in these words: "NATO enlargement is included in the government program and the government has so far not changed this program." (When repeating this sentence he left out the "so far"

[14] *Pravda*, January 30, 1996.
[15] *Sme*, October 4, 1995.
[16] *Pravda*, October 21, 1995.

part – comment of the reporting journalist.) Furthermore, he combined his idea of European security with the creation of a continental security system which would include Russia as well. "One possibility in the future is that *NATO will transform itself into an all-Europe organization* including both member and cooperating countries. It would be an historic mistake to divide Europe in two" [italics added].[17]

However, pan-continental foreign policy speculations alone emulating the Russian view on European safety architecture would not have been enough to satisfactorily explain this parting with NATO and the EU.[18] Slovak domestic policy issues were mostly to blame for the failure of the dialogue with the West. The Russian political scene responded very sensitively to these communication problems, and resolved to defend and support Slovakia in this dialogue, as the words of the then ambassador to Slovakia, Sergey Yastrzhembsky, demonstrate: "It is a new kind of bolshevism the Western countries adopt when they say: follow us. There is only one way to democracy, and we know it."[19] In April 1996 a more extensive article on Slovakia was published by the Russian daily Izvestija, in which the Russian ambassador defended Slovakia with these words:

> The West does not understand the specific needs of a young state; they do not consider the history of the Slovak people, or the Slovak way of thinking, their mentality. Even their dissatisfaction with the autonomous line of the Slovak government is perceivable... The Slovaks are told to look at how the Czechs, the Poles, the Hungarians do it. Why don't you do the same, they ask. Because it is a different country, and they want to do it their way.[20]

In other words, the way Slovaks behave is not anti-democratic, only different, and Slovakia as a sovereign state has a right to act as it wishes, it is

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[17] *Pravda*, November 2, 1995.

[18] For more information on how Slovak foreign policy adopted Russian ideas on global safety issues in post-bilateral Europe, mainly in connection with the planned enlargement of NATO Eastwards, see author's study *Slepý pragmatizmus slovenskej východnej politiky*, op. cit.; on the problematic of economic relations, see "Slovensko-ruské hospodárske vzťahy – viac otázok ako odpovedí (obchodné problémy, vízie, suroviny a záujmy)," *Mezinárodní vztahy* Vol. 32, No. 2, 1997, pp. 31–50; on the issue of military cooperation and the de-blocking of Russian debt, see "Slovak-Russian cooperation in the military and military-industrial spheres, or where trade ends and politics begins," *Perspectives*, No. 9, Winter 97/98, pp. 23–44.

[19] *Wall Street Journal*, January 11, 1996.

[20] For information on *Izvestija* report on Slovakia see *Pravda*, April 23, 1996.

only the "Bolshevik West" that denies it this right. Somewhere between 1994 and 1995 the myth of the Slovak way was born, in order to represent an alternative to the reforms being undertaken in the post-communist world.

On receiving an honorary doctorate at the Karić Brothers University in Belgrade, Vladimír Mečiar gave a lecture on the Slovak model of economic transformation, in which he (among other things) stated:

> Everybody should be allowed to choose his own way; we want to avoid dogmatism. In this transition period, the role of the state is not diminishing; it is only its function that changes... You can support the transformation process from outside, but you cannot impose it from outside.[21]

In February 1996 an extensive interview with the Slovak prime minister was published in the exclusive Russian magazine V.I.P. (about and for elites), in which Mečiar, among other things, stated the following:

> There is no doubt that there are certain circles in the West that are critically oriented towards my person, towards our movement [*HZDS* – Movement for Democratic Slovakia – author], and even towards our country... We have not embarked on the building of the traditional structure of Western countries at the political level. Our party is formed on pragmatic, not ideological principles... This is different from Western parties... this is how we see our country's perspective: expect as little as possible from outside, and rather make use of our domestic resources... Not everybody can understand this and not everybody likes this... We are not looking for the 'third way,' we are looking for our own way. Only those who like to think in schemes can wonder: Why is it so different from the way we have it in the West? Yes, it is different! But if it is different and good... does that mean it is bad?[22]

The Slovak Prime Minister was apparently totally confident that to strip a deputy of his mandate against his publicly proclaimed will, to internationally humiliate the president, to concentrate all power in the hands of his party, to marginalize politics and control the role of the opposition, and to politically misuse privatization and the Slovak secret service, is in reality not wrong, only different.

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[21] *Národná obroda*, February 8, 1996.

[22] "V. Mečiar for V.I.P.: If it is different (than in the West) and good – is it bad?," *Pravda*, February 15, 1996.

The so-called Slovak way diverted Slovakia from Western integration structures and brought it closer to the transformation world of the former Soviet republics – or, if you like, the democracy and political system of the post-Soviet Eurasian way. The Slovak prime minister received a preeminent political backing from the president of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin during his visit to Moscow in May 1998. Only a few months ahead of the Slovak parliamentary elections in September 1998, the Russian president openly admitted at a joint press conference that it was in the interest of Moscow that Mečiar and his governments remain in power. "We want, really, really want you to win these elections... Moscow is pleased with the fact that you truly strive for your security, and friendship with Russia... We are pleased with these achievements."[23] Subsequently, Yeltsin explained why he wished Mečiar to win the Slovak parliamentary elections: "I consider you as a guarantee of Slovak–Russian relations."[24] The dependency of Mečiar's government on Russia grew as quickly as its independence from the West.

The thwarted referendum of 1997 and the unification of Slovak opposition

With the date of the NATO Madrid Summit drawing closer, Mečiar's cabinet felt more than ever the need to strip themselves of responsibility for their failed foreign policy and for Slovakia's being left out of the first round of invited countries. In February 1997, the National Council approved a referendum being held with three questions: 1. Are you in favor of Slovakia's entry into NATO? 2. Are you for placing nuclear weapons on the territory of Slovakia? 3. Are you for locating foreign military bases on the territory of Slovakia? According to many observers, and representatives of the opposition, these questions were deliberately framed in such a way that the outcome of the referendum would be negative.[25] In compliance with the Slovak constitution, the president had to determine the date of the referendum within 30 days, and it had to take place within 90 days, of the date the parliament decided on it. It was clear that the referendum had to take place prior to the July Summit of NATO.

[23] *Sme*, May 29, 1998.

[24] *Slovenská republika*, May 29, 1998.

[25] The first echoes concerning the intention of a referendum appeared in October 1996. See *Sme*, October 24, 1996. For an overview of evaluations and opinions, see "Slovensko a NATO," *Sme*, February 7, 1997.

The NATO referendum and expected withdrawal of Slovakia from among the candidates to begin accession talks was only one of two reasons compelling the opposition to commence an active political campaign at the beginning of 1997 – the second being the approaching end of President Michal Kováč's term in March 1998. According to the then Slovak constitution, if the president cannot be elected by a two thirds majority of the parliament, his responsibilities are passed on to the cabinet and the prime minister. This threat of a further concentration of power in the hands of Vladimír Mečiar compelled the Slovak opposition to take action. The Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Democratic Union (DÚ), Democratic Party (DS), Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS), and Slovak Green Party (SSZ), together with the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK), initiated a petition campaign for a referendum concerning the direct election of the president. The petition was successful: already at the beginning of March 1997 the petition committee presented its list of a sufficient number of signatures to proclaim a referendum. Following the decision of the parliament in February 1997 and the successful petition campaign of the opposition, President Kováč declared that the referendum would take place on May 23–24, 1997. The referendum was to contain four questions – three on Slovak membership in NATO, and one on direct presidential election.[26]

In spite of the legitimacy of the president's action, which was later upheld by a decision of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic (issued May 21, 1998), the Minister of Interior Gustav Krajči (HZDS), charged with organizing the referendum, ordered the ballots to be printed with only the three questions on NATO membership, leaving out the forth on presidential election. As a result, the opposition urged citizens to boycott the invalid referendum. The outcome of the referendum was summarized by the central referendum committee as follows: "The total number of legitimate voters that took part in the referendum is zero... The total number of citizens voting for and the total number of citizens voting against cannot be determined because no one was presented with valid ballot papers." According to the central referendum committee, the minister of interior acted against the law and most likely thwarted the referendum by failing to provide for the distribution of valid ballot papers.[27]

[26] For an extensive analysis of the happenings and political background regarding the Slovak referendum of 1997, see G. Mesežnikov, M. Bútora, eds, *Slovenské referendum '97: zrod, priebeh, dôsledky*, Studies and opinions, Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs 1997.

[27] *Národná obroda*, May 26, 1997; G. Mesežnikov, M. Bútora, M., 1997, op. cit.

The thwarted referendum of 1997 had two crucial impacts on domestic policy: 1. Mečiar's government failed to receive the desired public excuse for the failures of its foreign policy, and 2. The joint activities connected with the petition and referendum campaigns, as well as the disregard of law on the part of the government coalition, brought the Slovak opposition closer together. On July 3, 1997, five Slovak political parties signed an agreement and founded an electoral coalition under the name Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK), which was – following a newly passed amendment to the election law – transformed into a political party on July 14, 1998.[28] The Party of the Democratic Left (SDĽ) drew consequences from the behavior of the government coalition and excluded any possibility of future cooperation with HZDS led by Vladimír Mečiar by publishing the document, "The main premises of the post-election coalition of SDĽ with democratic forces." In it, the party pledged cooperation only with those forces that strove to consolidate democracy, observed the rule of law, worked towards the goal of integration into Western structures, sought full control of the secret services and punishment for the misuse of power, etc.[29]

In fact, HZDS with its chairman Vladimír Mečiar had already lost the parliamentary elections of 1998 back in May 1997, by thwarting the referendum.

In fact, HZDS with its chairman Vladimír Mečiar had already lost the parliamentary elections of 1998 back in May 1997, by thwarting the referendum – which unified the Slovak opposition and left them with no future coalition partner. Although it won a tiny plurality of 0.6 over SDK in the elections, it was unable to form a government as it had lost all its potential partners. The opposition thus won the elections, and the four-party coalition government of SDK–SDĽ–SMK–SOP gained the constitutional majority. It was a precedent in modern political history that a government gained a constitutional majority in the parliament. Mečiar's so-called third government of 1994–1998 left Slovakia with a "heavy political burden," mainly in foreign, but also in domestic policy.

[28] *Sme*, July 4, 1997. For the text of the agreement on the formation of SDK, see *Sme*, June 30, 1997.

[29] For the proclamation of SDĽ chairman Jozef Migaš that he excluded any future collaboration with an HZDS led by Mečiar, see *Národná obroda*, May 26, 1997. For the text of the SDĽ document "Základné princípy...," see *Sme*, June 12, 1997.

Six watershed years (1998–2004): a diplomatic offensive and accomplished integration

Slovakia's foreign policy achievements of the first year of its independent existence had now been squandered. At the end of 1998, its position on the international field was, in many important respects, far worse than back in 1993. First and foremost, Slovakia had failed to keep pace with its closest neighbors – the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary – in terms of integration into the structures of the Western world. Following the first wave of NATO enlargement in 1999, Slovakia had to face a comparatively worse international security position than its closest neighbors. (A similar scenario was to be repeated with the approaching expansion of the European Union in the first half of the next decade, when Slovakia had to cope with a comparatively worse economic situation than its neighboring states). The cabinet formed as a result of the 1998 elections did not need to amend the declared priorities of foreign policy, but – unlike its predecessor – it had to act according to them.

Post-election expectations and the Slovak diplomatic offensive

Both NATO and the EU justified their decision to withdraw Slovakia from the candidate group starting accession talks mainly on the basis of its failure to meet their political criteria. The Slovak opposition and government coalition assumed that if they won the elections, restored the rule of law, and respected democratic principles of government, Slovakia would be restored to the first group of candidates. This was the message brought home from both official and private visits abroad by representatives of the opposition even before the elections. Furthermore, this was the main argument of these opposition parties in their election campaigns. The statements of various NATO, EU and Western representatives directed towards Slovak politicians only strengthened this belief. Following years of incomprehension involving Mečiar's government, the election results were indeed embraced both by Western partners and by neighboring countries in central Europe.[30]

These were the factors that triggered a massive diplomatic offensive in the first month of the newly formed government chaired by Mikuláš Dzurinda

[30] For a review, see for example *Trend*, September 30, 1998.

– on a scale previously unseen in the history of Slovak diplomacy. The new cabinet had no time to waste in sending positive signals abroad. The Summit in Vienna was scheduled to be held in a month's time, and a NATO Summit was to be held in Washington in six months. Slovak diplomacy set an ambitious goal and strove for the impossible – to make up the ground that Mečiar's government had lost in the preceding years.

Immediately after the formation of the new government, the chairmen of the four coalition parties addressed a letter to the secretary general of NATO and the head of the European Council, declaring their willingness to do everything to return Slovakia to the integration process from which it had dropped out because of the previous government.[31] The "democracy deficit" removed, their expectations were enormous. The government delegation undertook as many as ten state visits in only the first month of its existence, six of them led by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda personally (!). He visited Brussels twice in order to negotiate with high ranking representatives of NATO and the EU, and went twice to Vienna to talk to Austria's chancellor Viktor Klima and President Thomas Klestil. He attended the EU Summit in Vienna, and went to Warsaw where he met Poland's highest representatives and to Zagreb to meet the prime ministers of the Central European Initiative (SEI) countries. In that same month, Czech President Václav Havel came on an unofficial visit to Slovakia, followed by Czech Prime Minister Miloš Zeman, British Minister for the Armed Forces Douglas Henderson, and the foreign minister of Hungary János Martonyi. This would never have happened had Mečiar not stepped down from power. The new Slovak prime minister explained the purpose of this diplomatic offensive:

> We do feel the need for it. Now that the door is open and the echo abroad very strong, we have to sow our seeds. Once the seeds are sown, it is enough to come only from time to time to do some digging or spading... It would be a sin to waste such an opportunity. Therefore, I feel that dedicating that month solely to the foreign policy offensive was good and well chosen... This offensive will culminate with my participation in the European Summit in Vienna. I hope to visit the USA at the beginning of next year and to welcome the prime ministers of the V4 countries in Bratislava. After that, it will be time to say: We have sown enough, let us focus on our domestic issues.[32]

[31] For the text of the letter, see *Sme*, October 29, 1998.
[32] *Práca*, December 8, 1998.

NATO

The first official state visit of the new Slovak Prime Minister at the beginning of November 1998 – only a week after assuming his new role that is – led him to Brussels. He came again on November 27, to continue his negotiations with NATO secretary general Javier Solana. Together with Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan and Defence Minister Pavol Kanis, he attended a meeting of the NATO Council (at the ambassadors of member states level) dedicated to an individual dialogue with the Slovak Republic, and met with the Secretary General of the Western European Union (ZEÚ) José Cutileiro. The stance the Slovak delegation took at the NATO negotiations was best summarized by the Slovak prime minister, following the debate with Javier Solana: "Back in 1994, the Slovak Republic was on the same track as the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. Therefore, we would like to use the term finalizing the first wave of expansion, rather than referring to a second wave of NATO expansion" (italics added).[33] This reasoning, based on the "incompleteness of the first wave of NATO enlargement without Slovakia" or (if you like) "the completion of the first wave by the inclusion of Slovakia," was at the core of the new Slovak diplomacy in its negotiations with the Alliance.[34]

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It was also in Brussels that the Slovak prime minister made an appeal for NATO's embarking on a new round of intensive dialogue with the Slovak Republic in advance of the Washington Summit, and proposed the participation of Slovak troops at the NATO led peacekeeping mission SFOR (Stabilization Force) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must not forget that SDĽ, following one of the coalition debates and with the aim of supporting the Slovak diplomatic offensive, withdrew their insistence on a referendum challenging NATO membership as listed in their election campaign program.[35] The Slovak delegation to Brussels even had the support of the latest opinion polling, according to which 48

[33] *Sme*, November 28, 1998

[34] See e.g. the argumentation of Ján Figeľ, the State Secretary of the Slovak Foreign Ministry in *Národná obroda*, November 16, 1998.

[35] *Trend*, November 4, 1998.

per cent of the adult population[36] approved of Slovakia's entry into NATO. Furthermore, the preparedness of the Slovak army was among the best of the NATO candidate countries – a fact emphasized by the British Minister for Armed Forces Douglas Henderson during his visit to Bratislava following the September elections.[37]

The NATO representatives gave no reply to the argument concerning the incompleteness of the first wave of enlargement without Slovakia. On the other hand, they unanimously welcomed the political changes occurring in Slovakia, and the efforts of the new government to consolidate democracy, and gave their assurance of a continuing "open door" policy. The second round of negotiations with Javier Solana completed, the words of Mikuláš Dzurinda seemed more down to earth than before:

> We cannot expect an invitation too soon – that is, for example, during the Alliance's Washington Summit in April [of 1999 – author]. However, we will knock at the door with all our strength. Slovakia is aware of the fact that the next three to four months are its chance to prove it has a stable and democratic government. It will be a success if, in the final declaration, the Slovak Republic is seen as one of the most serious candidates.[38]

This quotation illustrates the gist, content and outcome of the talks with Javier Solana on the prospects of Slovakia's membership in NATO. In any case, it was not going to happen in April 1999. Nonetheless, Javier Solana expressed his belief that a positive reaction from NATO could be expected if Slovakia maintained its current pace of reforms.[39]

At its Washington Summit in 1999, NATO included Slovakia on its list of candidate countries. The summit approved the Membership Action Plan (MAP), intended to enhance the preparedness of candidate countries to join the Alliance, and at the same time a practical tool for implementing the Alliance's obligation to expand further, thus confirming their open door policy.[40] Slovakia received an invitation to start accession talks with NATO

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[36] Opinion research of FOCUS agency on November 3–10, 1998 see *Národná obroda*, December 1, 1998.

[37] *Práca*, November 20, 1998.

[38] *Sme*, November 28, 1998; *Národná obroda*, November 30, 1998.

[39] *Hospodárske noviny*, November 30, 1998.

[40] Documents of the NATO Washington Summit in April 1999 are available on NATO's website: http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/1999/9904-wsh/9904-wsh.htm (accessed on November 1, 2012).

at the Prague Summit in November 2002.[41] The negotiations began in December 2002 and Slovakia signed the protocol of accession in March 2003. The ratification process, together with the delivery of the protocols to the depositary of the North Atlantic Treaty (i.e. of the government of the USA), was concluded a year later – in March 2004. The accession ceremony to welcome the seven new members of NATO was conducted on April 2, 2004 at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Slovakia attended the next Summit in July 2004 in Istanbul as a full member of the Alliance.[42]

The adoption of the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic at the National Council on March 27, 2001 represented an important domestic policy landmark in the NATO accession process. It was approved by an overwhelming parliamentary majority, among them the opposition deputies of HZDS led by Vladimír Mečiar. Article 59 of this new security strategy states: "The Slovak Republic seeks to attain full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the optimal alternative for obtaining effective security guarantees."[43] The adoption of the security strategy in March 2001 shows the political consensus, in the post-Mečiar period, that Slovak NATO membership was a priority of Slovak foreign policy.

The adoption of the security strategy in March 2001 shows the political consensus, in the post-Mečiar period, that Slovak NATO membership was a priority of Slovak foreign policy.

Both before and after the Washington NATO Summit in April 1999, the Slovak diplomatic offensive continued to argue for the special position of the Slovak Republic, and that without it the first wave of NATO enlargement would be incomplete. Slovakia was a firm advocate of the finalization of the first

[41] Documents of the NATO Prague Summit in November 2002 are available on NATO's website: http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0211-prague/index.htm (accessed on November 1, 2012).

[42] For an overview of significant events preceding Slovakia's entry into NATO see the Slovak Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic website: http://www.mzv.sk/sk/zahranicna__politika/slovensko_v_nato-cesta_slovenska_do_nato (accessed on November 1, 2012).

[43] *Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic* adopted by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on March 27, 2001. Available online: http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/SlovakiaSecurity2001.pdf (accessed on March 27, 2001).

wave, regardless of how the situation around the second wave would evolve. Time has proven this diplomatic strategy based on the incompleteness of the first wave to be both correct and effective.

European Union

As in the case of NATO, the Slovak Republic set an equally ambitious goal regarding admission to the EU. In the days following the 1998 parliamentary elections, the politicians of the new coalition maintained the hope that the European Commission (EC) would revise its evaluation report for Slovakia, even before the Vienna EU Council in December 1998, in order that Slovakia could begin accession negotiations within the first candidate group. However, on November 4, 1998 the EC approved the original evaluation report with no amendments. The only thing the European Commission advised reconsidering was Latvia's preparedness to launch accession negotiations at the end of 1999. With regard to Slovakia (and Lithuania), negotiations were to start within a "reasonable time frame."[44] You could feel the disappointment in Slovakia following the EC report. The chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Slovak National Council (NR SR), Peter Weiss, described it in his statement:

> At the 1997 Luxembourg EU Council we were told that all countries would be evaluated on an individual and flexible basis. The two thirds of Slovak citizens who voted against the impending isolation of Slovakia represent a significant progress towards democracy... We did our best to satisfy the political criteria that the EU defined; now it's the EU's turn to send us a positive signal.[45]

The day after the EC report became public, a Slovak delegation arrived in Brussels only to have the highest representatives of the EC repeat their decision. Following his discussion with the Slovak prime minister, the head of the Commission Jacques Santer argued that "in order to move Slovakia into the group of front runners for integration and to measure its progress and the consolidation of its changes, the European Commission needs a reasonable time frame."[46] Yet the Slovak prime minister did not leave Brussels empty

[44] *Sme*, November 5, 1998.
[45] *Pravda*, December 9, 1998.
[46] *Trend*, November 11, 1998.

handed. The European Commission proposed the establishment of a special EC–Slovakia working group composed of experts that would continuously evaluate Slovakia's progress in preparation for accession negotiations. The EC–Slovakia working group was co-chaired by the Deputy Director of the Commission President's Cabinet, Francois Lamoureux, and the State Secretary of Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ján Figeľ.[47] Slovak diplomacy had to amend its expectations following the November visit to Brussels: its next objective was to receive a new evaluation report for Slovakia in the first half of 1999, in order that Slovakia could be transferred to the first group of candidates at the end of the German presidency, at the Cologne European Council, in June 1999.

On December 3, 1998 – that is, a week before the Vienna Council commenced – the European Parliament adopted a resolution advising the European Council to reevaluate the Slovak situation and to pass a new evaluation report for Slovakia. It was the SDĽ lobby, supported by the vice-chair of the Party of European Socialists and European Parliament Rapporteur for the Accession of Slovakia to the EU, Jan Marinus Wiersma,[48] who mostly contributed to this resolution. Wiersma had been demanding that the EU reconsider its attitude towards the Slovak Republic ever since the September elections. Unfortunately, the resolutions of European Parliament are only advisory in nature, as was proven at the Vienna EU Council. Prior to the summit, the chair of the EC–Slovakia working group, Francois Lamoureux, had argued that "it is not in Slovakia's interest to receive a new evaluation report in the spring of 1999. Such a report could record only the good will of the new cabinet, but hardly any concrete changes."[49] The Vienna EU Council concluded that new evaluation reports, as well as any possible transfers of further candidates into the first group, will be discussed at its Helsinki Summit at the end of the following year.[50]

Thus Slovak diplomatic expectations had to be further amended – and this time considerably. This can be felt in the declaration of Slovak Prime Minister Dzurinda concerning the outcomes of both the Vienna EU Council and the Slovak diplomatic offensive during the month following the elections: "Our expectations were higher than our possibilities. We still have a lot of work to do

[47] Ibid.

[48] See interview with Peter Weiss for *Pravda* daily, December 9, 1998. For Wiersma's explanation of his opinion, see e.g. *Sme*, October 30, 1998.

[49] *Trend*, December 9, 1998.

[50] *Hospodárske noviny*, December 14, 1998.

in order to catch up with the others and be on the same footing a year from now."[51] By "the others," the Slovak PM referred to those countries that had entered accession negotiations for EU membership on November 10, 1998.

The Helsinki European Council held in December 1999 approved all countries of the second group (including Slovakia) for entering accession negotiations. The accession conference that launched these negotiations between the EU and the Slovak Republic took place in February 2000 in Brussels. As early as June 2001, Slovakia managed to catch up with the Czech Republic, concluding an equal number of negotiation chapters. A year later, in October 2002, following a positive assessment of Slovakia's accession negotiations, the EC officially recommended admitting Slovakia as a full member of the EU in 2004. On November 20, 2002 a resolution on EU enlargement was adopted by a large majority in the European Parliament. The resolution urged all EU members attending the Copenhagen Summit to set as the latest date for this EU enlargement May 1, 2004. At the Copenhagen Council, the leaders of the EU member states decided to conclude accession negotiations with ten of the candidate countries, Slovakia among them. The European Parliament approved the accession of the Slovak Republic and nine other countries into the EU (521 EP deputies voted in favor of Slovak accession, and 21 against, with 25 abstaining). The Council of the European Union approved the accession of the Slovak Republic on April 14, 2002. This decision opened the road leading to the signing of the Treaty of Accession. The ceremonial signing of the Accession Treaty by ten new member states followed on April 16, 2003, in Athens. In Slovakia, a referendum on joining the European Union was held on May 16 and 17, 2003. Although its final turnout of 52.15 per cent was the lowest of all candidate countries, in the end 92.46 per cent of the voters approved of Slovak EU membership. On May 1, 2004, Slovakia became a full member state of the EU.[52]

With EU and NATO membership, the objectives of Slovak foreign policy as had been declared since 1993 were fully met. The accession year 2004 marked the conclusion of Slovakia's internal transformation towards

[51] Ibid.

[52] For more on accession negotiations between Slovakia and the EU, see J. Figeľ, M. Adamiš, *Slovensko na ceste do Európskej únie. Kapitoly a súvislosti*, Bratislava: Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Center for European Policy, 2003. Chronology of Slovakia's EU accession process is available on the Slovak Government Office website: http://www.euroinfo.gov.sk/chronologia-vstupu-sr-do-eu/ (accessed on November 1, 2012).

democracy, following the fall of the communist regime at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s and the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Slovak foreign policy in 1998–2004 was, as in the years preceding (1993–1998), a reflection of its domestic policy. In other words, membership in NATO and the EU was only one side of the coin, the other side being the reforms adopted by Dzurinda's first and second cabinet that led to greater stability among the key democratic institutions of the country, and triggered economic growth. Slovakia's success story is an inspiration to other post-communist countries trying to follow its example. The experience gained during the NATO and EU accession process, and from the reforms of 1998–2006, is an important export article of Slovak development assistance, and, at the same time, a highly valued contribution of the Slovak Republic to the policy of the EU and NATO concerning the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

The accession year 2004 marked the conclusion of Slovakia's internal transformation towards democracy.

The post-accession period of Slovak foreign policy: 2004 – today

Membership in the EU and NATO brought not only major challenges but also new opportunities for Slovak foreign policy (depending on how one looks at it).[53] The post-accession framework of this foreign policy has been determined by new factors, to which Slovak governments have tried to adjust since 2004, trying to answer simultaneously the many new questions that have arisen. This process is common to all new member states of the EU and NATO, and is not yet finished by a long shot.

[53] It needs to be remarked that in the post-accession years Slovakia successfully concluded its EU integration process. Fico's cabinet (2006–2007) successfully met the required criteria and Slovakia entered the Schengen area in December 2007 and adopted the euro – the single EU currency – in January 2009. Slovakia was the first V4 country to fulfill the requirements of Euro adoption.

Change of foreign policy paradigm

First and foremost, since 2004 NATO and EU membership has changed from being a foreign policy goal to being a foreign policy tool of Slovakia. The main challenge to Slovak diplomacy in the post-accession period is to learn how to use this tool in order to advocate for the interests of both Slovakia and its citizens. NATO and EU membership has made it easier for Slovak diplomats to achieve their goals regarding nonmember countries in Brussels than in the capital of this country. (This applies mainly to the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, which were declared to be the post-accession priority of Slovak diplomacy).[54] However, they have still not gotten into the habit of achieving their goals in this way. Seven years after Slovakia's accession to NATO and the EU, Tomáš Valášek, foreign and security policy analyst, affirmed: "We knew we wanted to join the European Union and NATO, but we had no idea what we wanted to achieve there."[55] Slovak foreign policy still lacks a concept of what it wants the EU and NATO to become, and what it wants to use Slovak membership in these organizations for. This is all the more true today, when both NATO and the EU face many institutional changes owing to the global financial and economic crisis of 2009. The outcomes of these changes – and consequently, the inevitable new shape of both the EU and NATO – are still unknown.

At any rate, the fact is that neither Slovakia nor the other new member states have really become EU agenda setters since their entry in 2004. According to a study published by the Department of Political Science of Comenius University, the new member states have rarely voted against a disputed measure. In more than 90 per cent of the qualified majority voting in the European Council in the examined period of 2004–2009, they supported the majority opinion. There are, however, some exceptions proving the rule, when Slovakia or other new member states did oppose the EU majority. To give an example: Poland and Lithuania opposed the launch of the new post-

[54] Relations with Ukraine and with the countries of the Western Balkans were publicly defined as a priority of Slovak foreign policy in the post-accession period by the Slovak Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, at the evaluation conference of Slovak foreign policy in March 2004. See "Vystúpenie predsedu vlády Slovenskej republiky Mikuláša Dzurindu," in P. Brezáni, ed., *Yearbook of the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic 2003*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2004, pp. 11–7.

[55] T. Valášek, "Naša zahraničná politika po novom," *Sme*, June 17, 2010. See also T. Valášek, M. Nič, B. Jarábik, J. Bátora, K. Hirman, J. Kobzová, *Bruselenie valašiek*, Bratislava: Kalligram, 2010.

PCA agreement negotiations between the EU and Russia in 2008. Slovakia – together with four other EU member states – has still not recognized Kosovo's independence, and was the only country of the Eurozone to refuse the bilateral loan supporting Greece.[56] Yet this study of the department of political science nonetheless shows that the concerns of old member states that the decision making process would become more difficult following EU enlargement were unfounded.

The new member states are largely passive participants in the EU decision making process rather than active agenda and policy setters. An exception to this rule is the Eastern Partnership that was formed following an initiative of Poland (and Sweden), and also (at least in part) the EU nuclear energy policy, in that Slovakia and the Czech Republic are host to the European Nuclear Energy Forum, offering a platform for discussion on the future of nuclear energy in the EU and suggestions for its future development.[57] This is woefully little. In other words, after almost nine years of membership in Euro–Atlantic structures, the principal objective of Slovak foreign policy is still to define a strategy of how to make use of this membership. Although we are full members of NATO and the EU, we still lack not only a vision of what we want EU and NATO to become, but also the ability to actively contribute to the policies of both organizations, to offer solutions to key problems they are facing, and to win their support in enforcing these solutions. This leads us to the conclusion that in order to find good "national solutions" to the challenges it currently faces, Slovakia has no other choice but to look for all-European solutions that are good for NATO and the EU.

In order to find good "national solutions" to the challenges it currently faces, Slovakia has no other choice but to look for all-European solutions that are good for NATO and the EU.

[56] See e.g. "EU calls Slovakia's decision 'breach of solidarity' in euro area," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, August 12, 2010. Available online: http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-08-12/eu-calls-slovakia-decision-breach-of-solidarity-in-euro-area.html (accessed on August 12, 2010). The research involved all new member states (except Malta and Cyprus).

[57] "Eastern EU members struggle to make voices heard," *EurActiv.com*, June 2, 2010. Available online: http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eastern-eu-members-struggle-make-their-voice-heard-news-494801 (accessed on June 2, 2010).

Post-accession priorities

In 2002–2004 – that is, during the time in which it was obvious that its pre-accession priorities would be fulfilled and Slovakia would join NATO and the EU – a nationwide debate on the post-accession priorities of Slovak foreign policy took place. A summary of this debate and its conclusions are to be found in the 2004 publication of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, *Zahraničná politika Slovenska po vstupe do NATO a EÚ* [*The foreign policy of Slovakia after accession to NATO and the EU*].[58]

The participants of this debate came to the conclusion that Slovakia's post-accession priorities should be presented in terms of the concept of Slovak international responsibility, which all relevant agents on the domestic political scene as well as the Slovak public could identify with. They dismissed a definition of Slovak post-accession priorities in terms of "national and state interests" as outdated, because the ability of Slovakia to assume its share of responsibility for international stability and prosperity was regarded as the key characteristic of Slovak post-accession foreign policy. These experts concluded that all Slovak key national interests in the sphere of international relations were fulfilled by its accession to NATO and the EU. Being now a member of Euro–Atlantic structures, Slovakia's principal goal is to learn how to make use of them as instruments of its foreign and – in the case of the EU – even domestic policy. Although both NATO and the EU impose obligations on their new members, they simultaneously generate many opportunities allowing member states to interpret their own contributions to common policies.

The main mission of NATO and the EU in international relations is to fulfill their responsibility for both regional and global stability and prosperity, through the export of the common models and rules of the Union and the Alliance to less stable and less prosperous parts of the world. Slovakia thus had to face the challenge of defining the extent of its own responsibility in the common policies of NATO and the EU in order to be able to take over some share of their responsibility. In other words, following the accession it soon became clear that Slovakia had to find its own place within NATO and the EU, and at the same time to define its own national responsibility within NATO and the EU in a way that would enable it to pursue its national interests. The

[58] A. Duleba, P. Lukáč, eds, *Zahraničná politika Slovenska po vstupe do NATO a EÚ. Východiská a stratégie*, op. cit.

boundaries of this responsibility had to be clear, both in terms of content and geography, and acceptable both to the majority of domestic political actors and to the public. Once identified, this responsibility would then represent the post-accession concept of Slovak foreign policy.

The first major issues Slovak foreign policy had to face in its post-accession period – the Western Balkans and Slovakia's greatest Eastern neighbor, Ukraine – were identified easily enough. Both satisfied two important conditions: 1. These areas were of great interest to NATO and the EU, and 2. Slovakia had its own interests in these regions. In short, in their relations with Ukraine and the countries of the Western Balkans, NATO and the EU could become a tool of Slovak foreign policy and – vice versa – Slovakia could take some NATO and EU responsibility onto its shoulders. There are not many issues or areas where both of these conditions obtain. Yet, exactly these issues and areas are the key to a successful outline of the post-accession priorities of the Slovak Republic. As already mentioned, the first to publicly declare that relations with Ukraine and the Western Balkans were a post-entry priority of Slovak foreign policy was the then Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Mikuláš Dzurinda, in March 2004.[59]

To sustain and enhance regional cooperation within the Visegrad Four became another strategic priority of Slovak interest after its entry into NATO and the EU.[60] Joined together with the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, Slovakia is able have a greater impact within the EU and NATO. Furthermore, the interests of the V4 countries with respect to Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans are very similar. The regional framework of the V4 further multiplies the ability of every single V4 country to enforce its interests within EU and NATO, including its interests in the key neighboring regions of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. The Slovak Republic strongly supported the Kroměříž Declaration (May 12, 2004), which identified the main priorities of regional cooperation in the EU within the new context of NATO and EU membership: to strengthen regional identity and cooperation,

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[59] See "Vystúpenie predsedu vlády Slovenskej republiky Mikuláša Dzurindu," op. cit.

[60] See P. Lukáč, T. Strážay, "Regionálna zodpovednosť Slovenska" in A. Duleba, P. Lukáč, eds, *Zahraničná politika Slovenska po vstupe do NATO a EÚ. Východiská a stratégie*, op. cit.

to coordinate policies within the EU and NATO, and to jointly contribute to the creation of NATO and EU policy towards the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe.[61]

Implementation of priorities

Slovak diplomacy earned international recognition as it widely contributed to the resolving of the situation in the Western Balkans. What won international respect was not the above mentioned polemical stance towards Kosovo, but a series of diplomatic interventions: 1. The Bratislava Process, being an important contribution of the Slovak Republic to the birth of the democratic coalition of Serbian parties capable of forming a new government after the downfall of Slobodan Miloševič's regime in 1999; 2. The successful diplomatic mission of Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan in his capacity as the UN secretary general's special envoy for the Balkans in the first postwar years 1999–2001; 3. The successful performance of Miroslav Lajčák, both as the personal representative of the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Javier Solana, and as the EU's supervisor of the Montenegrin independence referendum in March 2006, which resulted in the peaceful separation of Montenegro and Serbia; 4. The internationally highly respected influence of Miroslav Lajčák as the High Representative and EU's special representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007–2009; 5. The favorable stance of the Slovak cabinet, under the leadership of Mikuláš Dzurinda, towards the EU's intention to open accession negotiations with Croatia in 2004; 6. The inclusion of Serbia among the countries helped by the Slovak official development assistance program since its launch in 2004; etc.[62] The achievements of Slovak diplomacy in the Western Balkans in 1999–2009 comprise the most prominent chapter of Slovak foreign policy to date (including its post-accession period).

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[61] "Declaration of prime ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation of the Visegrad Countries after their accession to the European Union." Available online: http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=940&articleID=3939&ctag=articlelist&iid=1 (accessed on November 1, 2012).

[62] For more on Slovak foreign policy with respect to the countries of the Western Balkans, see the work of former Slovak ambassador in Belgrade and later Sarajevo, M. Mojžita, *Belehrad. Poznámky 1995–2001*. Bratislava: Dilema, 2003; M. Mojžita, *Sarajevo. Čakanie na lastovičky*. Bratislava: Kalligram, 2010.

However, we cannot say the same about the second post-accession priority of Slovak foreign policy – Ukraine and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). True, the Slovak embassy in Kiev assumed the role of NATO's contact embassy in the Ukraine in 2007–2009. Yet if we had to evaluate the impact of this activity in terms of the growing support of the Ukrainian public for the country's entry into NATO during this period, there is not much to evaluate. Slovakia did propose a bilateral program to help Ukraine with the implementation of action plan EU–Ukraine in 2005, which the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov described as the best Ukraine had ever received from an EU member.[63] Nevertheless, Slovak policy towards the Ukraine and Eastern Europe on the whole lacked both a long term strategy and – in particular – continuity.

Both Slovak cabinets chaired by Dzurinda (1998–2006) did their best – more or less successfully – to foster the convergence of Ukraine and NATO/EU (a strategic priority of the Slovak Republic). However, the actions of Fico's cabinet in 2006–2010 (mainly following the gas crisis of 2009) brought these efforts almost back to square one. The then prime minister of the Slovak Republic voiced his support for Russia in the Ukraine–Russia gas dispute, as he – unilaterally and with no supporting evidence – blamed Ukraine for the cutoff of gas supplies to Slovakia in January 2009. Moreover, he threatened to respond with a reevaluation of Slovak support for the Ukraine's EU aspirations.[64] If relations with Ukraine had been not only a declared but also a "deeply rooted" priority of Slovak foreign policy, no Slovak prime minister would ever have issued such a threat.

Belarus appeared on the Slovak foreign policy map only in 2004, as one of the recipient countries of Slovak Official Development Assistance (ODA), which supported the projects of Slovak nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that promote civil society. Moldova appeared on the map only two years ago, and the countries of the Southern Caucasus are still not visible enough on it.[65]

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[63] H. Tretteckyj, "V Jevropu – razom iz Slovaččynoju," *Deň*, February 18, 2006.

[64] For a more extensive analysis, see author's study A. Duleba, "Slovakia's relations with its Eastern neighbors," in P. Brezáni, ed., *Yearbook of Slovakia's foreign policy 2008*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2009, pp. 103–22.

[65] For an overview analysis of Slovak engagement in the Eastern Partnership – common EU policy with respect to six Eastern European countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldavia and Ukraine), see R. Murray, A. Duleba, "Slovakia," in A. Duleba, V. Bilčík, eds, *Taking stock of the Eastern Partnership in Ukraine, Moldova, Visegrad Four, and the EU*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2011.

Extended agenda and responsibility

The accession to NATO and the EU added a new dimension to Slovak global involvement. International issues and world regions that were outside of Slovakia's focus before then have become part of its firsthand foreign policy. The scale of a country's global international involvement can be measured by its readiness to contribute to the solving of international crises, and to provide development assistance. As for the Slovak Republic, both of these domains reached a qualitatively new level in the post-accession period.

Since 1993, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (OS) have participated in 41 operations of international crisis management, 18 of which are still in progress (22 operations were completed – data of the Defense Ministry of the Slovak Republic as of August 2010). The longest mission involving Slovak participation (active since 1998) is the UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Operation) in the Golan Heights. In 2001, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic joined the UN mission UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus), whose objective is to maintain the status quo in the buffer zone between the Greek and Turkish parts of the divided island. It is, on the whole, one of Slovakia's largest peacekeeping missions abroad, with 196 members of its armed forces stationed there. Slovak contingents took over command of one of the four sectors of the buffer zone in June 2001. Simultaneously, the Slovak ambassador in Nicosia has mediated and organized the bi-communal dialogue meetings that – for a while – represented the only framework for regular dialogue between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish parts of divided Cyprus. The meetings are held at the Ledra Palace hotel, in the buffer zone. The concept of bi-communal dialogue in Cyprus dates back to 1989, and was first initiated by the former Czechoslovak Ambassador (of Slovak descent) Emil Keblúšek. Since 1993, the Slovak ambassadors in Nicosia have been in charge of it. The contribution of Slovak policy to the resolving of the Cyprian conflict is of immense international influence, and ranks among the extraordinary agendas of Slovak foreign policy.[66]

The Slovak Armed Forces have participated in the NATO ISAF mission (International Security Assistance Force) in Afghanistan since June 2004. In July 2010, the manpower of the Slovak contingent in this mission was increased to 300 soldiers, following the end of Slovak participation in operation

[66] See "Bikomunitný dialóg na Cypre," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Available online: http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf?Open (accessed on December 1, 2012).

Iraqi freedom. Between 2002 and 2010, a 140 member contingent was based in Kosovo, within the NATO KFOR mission (The Kosovo Force). Since December 2002 Slovak soldiers have been engaged in the activities of NATO headquarters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia has a 35 member guard squad stationed at the military deployment EU ALTHEA (European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina), and 4 soldiers stationed at the headquarters of this mission in Sarajevo. In all, 676 members of the Slovak armed forces are deployed at various missions abroad.[67]

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An important chapter in Slovak foreign policy was opened with the event of Slovakia's nonpermanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 2006–2007. Among Slovakia's priorities were reforms in the security sector, and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. During Slovakia's membership, the UNSC adopted four resolutions, issued two presidential declarations, and held three debates (on the Middle East, on Security Sector Reform, and on the international regime of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction). The successful nonpermanent membership of Slovakia in the Security Council resulted in Slovakia being elected vice president of the executive board of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council.[68]

Slovakia was the first of the V4 countries to launch its Official Development Assistance program (ODA) in 2004. In the years 2004–2009 almost 100 million euros (95.5 million) were set apart for projects within the ODA.[69]

[67] Data valid on August 19, 2010, Source: Defense Ministry of the Slovak Republic. Available online: http://www.mosr.sk/313/operacie-medzinarodneho-krizoveho-manazmentu.php?mnu=171 (accessed on August 19, 2010).

[68] See P. Burian, "Pôsobenie Slovenskej republiky v Bezpečnostnej rade OSN (2006–2007)," in P. Brezáni, ed., *Ročenka zahraničnej politiky Slovenskej republiky 2007*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava, 2008, pp. 27–38.

[69] See Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation website, part: "ODA v číslach." Available online; http://new.slovakaid.sk/?cat=10 (accessed on November 1, 2012).

Most of this financial support was directed to ODA recipient countries: Serbia, Montenegro, and the 16 ODA priority countries. In 2009, a new medium term strategy for the Slovak ODA was adopted, which reduced the number of priority countries to 12 and defined new ODA recipient countries: Afghanistan, Kenya and Serbia.[70] Development assistance became a new tool of Slovak foreign policy in the post-accession period. The ODA, along with successful diplomacy (both official and public) and transformation know-how are the key elements of the "soft power" concept of the Slovak Republic in the post-accession period. Their implementation after 2004 demonstrated that Slovakia has all the prerequisites necessary to strengthen its international position, and to contribute significantly to international stability, security and development.

Post-accession debate and the ongoing search for consensus

A broad political consensus – based on the concurrence of all relevant political actors on the domestic scene – concerning the priorities of a country's foreign policy, the content of its national interests, and its international responsibility, is a necessary precondition for the effective execution of its foreign policy and the achieving of its objectives. In Slovakia, as in other democratic countries, the foreign policy programs of all domestic political parties differ, in that they ascribe differing significance to certain foreign policy issues or cross border relations. The following are those topics that recur at the center of foreign policy debate in post-accession Slovakia: bilateral relations with Hungary, relations with Russia, the EU decision to commence accession negotiations with Turkey, and the international status of Kosovo.

The debate on relations with Hungary, as opposed to other foreign policy issues, has had an enormous impact on the Slovak domestic political scene, and is the subject of many political fights. Although Slovakia and Hungary

[70] Priority countries of Slovak ODA for 2004–2008: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Moldavia, Mongolia, Sudan, Tadzhikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. The following countries were set as priority countries for the period 2009–2013: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan. See V. Benč, P. Brezáni, "The development assistance of the Slovak Republic in 2008," in P. Brezáni, ed., *Yearbook of Slovakia's foreign policy 2008*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2009, pp. 143–64.

share the same interests within NATO, EU and Visegrad cooperation,[71] their bilateral relations are burdened by misunderstandings regarding the position of the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Republic, and by the relations of its political representatives with the Hungarian cabinet in Budapest. The Slovak side refuses to accept that a legislative decision passed by the Hungarian parliament or adopted by its government should be implemented within Slovak territory without prior agreement between the two governments. All of the major conflicts within Slovak–Hungarian relations have been connected with Hungary's taking of measures having extraterritorial effects – i.e. measures that have involved the territory or inhabitants of the Slovak Republic – without the prior agreement of the Slovak government: 1. The establishment of the Hungarian permanent conference (1999); 2. The passage of the so-called "status law" of the Hungarian Republic (2002); 3. The founding of the forum of Hungarian representatives of the Carpathian Basin, with the participation of deputies of the Slovak National Council from the party of the Hungarian coalition (SMK) (2004), which later became an institution of the Hungarian parliament (in 2008); and the latest issue, 4. The passing of the law on Hungarian dual citizenship (2010).[72]

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Different political parties express differing views on this subject (the most radical being the SNS), but across the political spectrum the opinion prevails (with the exception of SMK) that any unilateral measure taken by the Hungarian Republic that creates an institutional relation between Hungary and Slovak

[71] The representatives of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs evaluate positively the cooperation with Hungary and their Hungarian partners in the field of foreign policy (including the cooperation of Slovakia and Hungary on the issues of Eastern Europe, Western Balkans, etc.). Source: personal conversations of the author of this paper.

[72] On Slovak-Hungarian relations, see the work of Rudolf Chmel, the former ambassador of Czechoslovakia in Budapest (1990–1992), Slovak Minister of Culture (2002–2005), and the former Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights and National Minorities (2010–2012), e.g. R. Chmel, "Slovak – Hungarian dialogue: the need for a new beginning," *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Vol. XV, No. 3–4/2006, pp. 3–14.

citizens with no prior interstate agreement is inadmissible. Any compromise on this subject would amount to a resignation of Slovak sovereignty; therefore it is highly improbable there will be any change in Slovakia's position.

Relations with Russia have been another significant issue of foreign-political discourse in Slovakia since 1993. In the post-accession period, this discourse lost the internal charge it had in the 1990s (mainly during Mečiar's cabinet of 1994–1998). Following the withdrawal of the Slovak Republic from the first round of EU and NATO enlargement during the second half of 1990s, Mečiar's government tried to present relations with Russia as an alternative to Euro-Atlantic integration for Slovak foreign policy. When Dzurinda's cabinet assumed power in 1998, a standardization and de-politicization of Slovak–Russian relations followed.[73] It was the government of Robert Fico (2006–2010) that contributed to yet another politicization of these relations. In his public affirmations, Fico often identified with the standpoints of Russian diplomacy in relation to crucial international happenings (the discourse on the stationing of US missile defense in central Europe, the assessment of the reasons for the Russian–Georgian war in August 2008, etc.). However, the opinions presented by the Slovak prime minister often differed from those publicly voiced at international forums by Slovak Foreign Minister Ján Kubiš, and – in the case of US missile defense – also by President Ivan Gašparovič. As a result, Slovak foreign policy often appeared inconsistent and nontransparent.[74]

A dividing line can be drawn between the various Slovak parliamentary parties with regard to their positions on relations with Russia.

A dividing line can be drawn between the various Slovak parliamentary parties with regard to their positions on relations with Russia. The two parties – Smer–SD and the SNS – maintain a dual "allied policy within EU and NATO and good relations with Russia" stance, while the parties that formed the cabinet of Iveta Radičová after the parliamentary elections of June 2010 subordinate "good relations with Russia" to the allied policy within the EU and NATO (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union–Democratic Party

[73] See A. Duleba, V. Bilčík, J. Klavec, M. Korba, "Vplyv zahraničnopolitických a bezpečnostných faktorov na politický režim," in S. Szomolányi, ed., *Spoločnosť a politika na Slovensku. Cesty k stabilite 1989–2004*, Bratislava: Comenius University, 2005, pp. 309–37.

[74] See A. Duleba, Slovakia´s relations with its Eastern neighbors in 2008, op. cit. 103–22.

(SDKÚ–DS), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), and Most–Híd). There is, however, one exception: an issue concerning which all of Slovak foreign policy – including major government and opposition parliamentary parties (except the unclear positions of Most-Híd and Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OľaNO)[75] – are in accord with Russia and oppose the majority opinion within the EU and NATO: the issue of Kosovo's international status.

The Slovak Republic does not recognize the independence of Kosovo enacted in February 2008. Slovakia did not change its position even after the International Court of Justice (on July 22, 2010) determined that the declaration of independence was not in violation of international law. In its reaction to the court's decision, the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued:

> The position of the Slovak Republic arises from the declaration of the National Council of March 28, 2007. It is based on Slovakia's recognition of the territorial integrity of a state as the fundamental principle of international law that sets the basis for the construction and functioning of the international community.[76]

Similarly to the case of Kosovo, the Slovak Republic also refused to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The position of Slovakia on the recognition of Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhazia may have its faults, but it certainly does not lack consistency.

A much discussed subject of Slovak post-accession foreign policy was the attitude of Slovakia as an EU member towards the EU decision as to whether or not to open accession talks with Turkey in 2005. While most Slovak political parties (in the electoral term 2002–2006) remained noncommittal, the Slovak National Party (SNS)[77] resolutely opposed the launch of EU accession negotiations with Turkey. The KDH expressed a similarly negative

[75] The political party Most-Híd (Bridge) was founded by former members of the party of Hungarian coalition (SMK). SMK was the only parliamentary party to support the declaration of Kosovo's independence in February 2008. Most-Híd became a parliamentary party in July 2010; its leaders, however, have submitted no official standpoint towards Kosovo at the time of writing of this article. Foreign policy standpoints of the party OľaNO (in parliament since April 2012) are unclear.

[76] "MZV SR k poradnému posudku o nezávislosti Kosova," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, July 22, 2010. Available online: http://www.mzv.sk/App/WCM/main.nsf?Open (accessed on July 22, 2010).

[77] "SNS je zásadne proti vstupu Turecka do EÚ," *SITA*, October 21, 2004.

attitude: instead of full membership, Turkey should be offered a "privileged partnership."[78] Only the (at that time) opposition left wing party Direction–Social democracy (Smer–SD), followed by the government right wing SDKÚ, voiced its support for accession negotiations with Turkey. The final position of the Slovak Republic towards the launch of accession negotiations with Turkey was favorable but "open ended" – that is, not necessarily leading to accession.[79]

In place of a conclusion

The main challenge to Slovak foreign policy in its post-accession period remains the ongoing struggle to find an answer to the question: "What kind of EU and NATO do we want to have?" Slovakia lacks not only a strategy for its performance within the EU and NATO, but also a strategy of how to make use of its membership in these organizations in order to achieve its foreign policy goals. In the twentieth year of its existence, Slovakia must look for solutions to the eurozone crises, and determine what its impact will be on the future structure and functioning of EU institutions. Any changes to the EU will fundamentally influence both the international milieu and the internal conditions of Slovakia in the coming years.

The main challenge to Slovak foreign policy in its post-accession period remains the ongoing struggle to find an answer to the question: "What kind of EU and NATO do we want to have?"

The current and future performance of Slovak diplomacy will emerge from Slovakia's ability to clearly define its post-accession foreign policy priorities and to achieve significant results, mainly in the area of the Western Balkans. The Eastern policy of the Slovak Republic

[78] "KDH: Turecku treba ponúknuť iba vzťah privilegovaného partnerstva," Christian Democratic Movement, November 4, 2009. Available online: http://staryweb.kdh.sk/article.php?659 (accessed on November 4, 2009).

[79] For more on the Turkey discourse in Slovakia see L. Najšlová, "Talking Turkey in Slovakia: In search of the proper cure for an uncertain diagnosis," in *Finding common grounds. Rediscovering the common narrative of Turkey and Europe*, Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2009, pp. 91 – 102.

still lacks a long term strategy and – as the gas crisis of January 2009 and the subsequent development of Slovak–Ukrainian relations made clear – long term continuity. The development of regional cooperation within the V4, Slovakia's performance as the nonpermanent member of the UNSC (2006–2007), Slovak participation in peacekeeping missions, and the launch of ODA in 2004, rank among the major achievements of Slovak foreign policy in its post-accession period. The bilateral relationship with Hungary still remains an open chapter of Slovak foreign policy.

In spite of the many questions left open, the story of independent Slovakia and its foreign policy over the last 20 years is a success story. Slovak foreign policy finally overcame (although with many difficulties) it teething problems, successfully finalized its integration into the EU and NATO, and has the capacity to face the challenges that the current international development presents.

Power and progress: international politics in transition
By Jack Snyder, Abington, UK: Routlegde, 2012, 316 p. ISBN: 978-0-415-57573-7

When it comes to explaining how international politics works, the international relations scholarship has been, for a long time, divided between the two classic schools of thought. On one side of the spectrum, the realist approach to international relations argues that for the understanding of world politics, one needs to understand that states are the main actors in the international arena. By nature international arena is anarchic, thus in order to secure their survival, states rely on the concept of self-help. On the other side of the spectrum, the theory of liberalism challenges the underlying assumptions of realism and claims that the effects of anarchy on international relations can be mitigated by new patterns of state interaction. Domestic and international institutions can serve as the protectors of values such as liberty, justice and tolerance upon which a new world order can be founded. This clash of opinions has not only divided the international relations scholarship, but it has also introduced an ongoing debate about the role of power and progress in understanding the logic behind the states' behavior in international affairs.

Not all scholars agree with the opposing assumptions of these classic theories. As Stephen M. Walt points out "[n]o single approach can capture all the complexity of contemporary world politics. Therefore, we are better off with a diverse array of competing ideas rather than a single theoretical orthodoxy."[1] This line of thought is a leading argument in Jack Snyder's book *Power and progress: international politics in transition*. Through the three sections of his book, Snyder emphasizes that in order to understand the current world order, one needs to "integrate the insights of the realist logic of struggle for domination and security – the logic of power – with the liberal logic of political development and change – the logic of progress." (p. 1) Based upon this argument, Snyder's book offers a comprehensive assessment of political developments in, what he describes as, the "hybrid international system," an anarchic system caught between both strong and modern democratic states, and states that are currently going through the modernization and democratization processes. Hence, it is not surprising that the assessment starts with a compilation of essays that address the consequences of anarchical settings, and only then moves to the consequences of the democratic

[1] S.M. Walt, "International relations: one world, many theories," *Foreign Policy* Vol. 110, Spring 1998, p. 30.

transition and the promotion of a liberal world order. In the end, the book leads to the conclusion that in order to understand, explain and predict the developments in contemporary hybrid international politics, one needs to take into consideration the "power politics within and between the states." (p. 2)

Although Snyder underlines the importance of looking within the state power structure for the assessment of international politics, he does not undermine the explanatory value of the international system's essential feature, which is its anarchical nature. According to Snyder, Kenneth Waltz is right in arguing that anarchy determines the behavior of states. Alongside anarchy, Waltz claims, the behavior of states is also determined by the polarity of the international system, which in most cases leads states to form balancing alliances in order to secure their survival in the face of threats, which emerge from international anarchy. However, calculations about the behavior of states made on these assumptions do not necessarily lead to concrete foreign policy predictions. In order to reach such predictions, Snyder argues, Waltz's theory needs to be supplemented by "a variable from Jervis's theory of the security dilemma: the variable of whether offence or defense is perceived to have the advantage." (p. 38) In other words, whether states perceive their advantages as offensive or defensive will have an effect on their foreign policy behavior. The dimension of the states' perception laid foundations for the argument that the analysis of the international politics cannot any longer perceive states as billiard balls. For Snyder, the nature of a state's internal political and economic order influences not just its foreign policy behavior, but also the overall stability of the international system.

By outlining the internal sources that affect the assessment of the international developments in the first part of his book, Snyder develops the argument on the role of the state's political and economic organization in shaping the world order. The second and third part of the book address the consequences of the transition to a democratic liberal world order, and in a way, it could be claimed that the presented ideas are well connected with Michael Doyle's democratic peace theory. Similar to Doyle's argument that the institutional structure of democratic states prevents them from solving their disputes through war conflicts,[2] Snyder points out that in fact the lack of that kind of strong institutional structure within states that are undergoing the phase of democratization, leads them to an aggressive and war prone behavior. In post-autocratic transitional states "political institutions are unable to resolve or suppress the conflicts of interest stemming from growing demands for political participation, thereby creating various

[2] M.W. Doyle, "Liberal internationalism: peace, war and democracy," *Portal LABMUNDO*, June 22, 2004. Available online: http://www.labmundo.org/disciplinas/DOYLE_liberal_internationalism_peace_war_and_democracy.pdf (accessed on May 13, 2012).

dynamics that encourage belligerence abroad." (p. 127) Drawing on this argument, Snyder rightfully concludes that before embracing the mission of spreading and supporting democratization, and thus increasing the possibility of global peace, the international community should first place their efforts on building a strong institutional structure. This would make democracy in transitional countries work, and just offer them support for the mass electoral politics.

The value of a solid internal political structure for successful democratization is reinforced by a case study analysis of the transition processes in post-colonial countries. Snyder uses Britain's departure from its former colonies to illustrate the successes and failures that "democracy-promotion empires still confront today." (p. 225) However, considering the topic and the timeframe of the book, other case studies could have been used more effectively. The selection of essays that address the democratic transition in Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation at the beginning of the 90s, do not reference appropriately the results of the democratic transition to present-day Russia, and could have been omitted. Nevertheless, the main shortcoming of Snyder's book is the lack of a coherent structure. The book consists of a compilation of essays that are divided into three sections in order to address three different topics. However, the division of the essays does not always follow the presented structural or topical logic.

Although the overall structure and selection of essays in Snyder's book could have been better, the contribution of *Power and progress: international politics in transition* to the international relations scholarship is unquestionable. The book offers a well-developed toolkit for understanding, analyzing and predicting both the international and domestic political developments in the contemporary "hybrid" world order.

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the capacity of the High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina from July 2007 to March 2009. Between 2010 and 2012 he served as the Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia in the European External Action Service.

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