

## THE RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

The Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association originated in September 1995 as an integral part of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. Its main aims are:

- to provide high quality, independent and unpartisan analyses of the key international problems affecting the Slovakia Republic, and so to create a platform for the expert discussion of foreign policy.
- to stimulate wider public interest in world events, deeper understanding of the importance of foreign policy and its connection with domestic policy.
- to create a favourable environment for the growth of a new generation of Slovak experts in the field of foreign policy and international relations.
- to cooperate with similar institutions abroad, on research projects concerning common interests.

## THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

The Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) was founded in May 1993 as an open non-partisan discussion forum for international questions. Its main aim is to provide space for the open exchange of views on foreign policy. The SFPA is a civil association open to all interested people, who agree with its basic aims. It organizes lectures for its members by significant participants in recent events, regular weekly discussions about foreign policy, conferences, seminars and discussion round tables on topical subjects. The society plays an important role in deepening Slovakia's relations with other countries.

## THE COMMITTEE OF THE SFPA

Dominik Bartosiewicz, Pavol Demeš, Pavol Erben, Ján Figel', Milan Ftáčnik, Ivan Hubač, Rudolf Chmel, Ladislav Kováč, Eduard Kukan, Kálmán Petöcz, Magda Vášáryová (president)

## THE RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SFPA

Director: Miroslav Wlachovsky

Researchers: Alexander Duleba, Pavol Lukáč, Anton Marcinčin, Ivo Samson, Peter Zemanik

## THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SFPA

Samuel Abrahám, Rudolf Chmel, Peter Kerlik, Dušan Kováč, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Štefan Šebesta, Milan Zemko

## THE RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

Staromestská 6, 811 02 Bratislava; Tel./Fax: 07/531 42 85,  
tel: 07/531 88 69, e-mail: sfpa.rcba@ba.telecom.sk

ALEXANDER DULEBA-PAVOL LUKÁČ-MIROSLAV WLACHOVSKÝ

# Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic Starting points, present situation and prospects

RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION (RC SFPA)

Bratislava 1998



A 99 - 00966



SLOVAK  
FOREIGN  
POLICY  
ASSOCIATION

Alexander Duleba – Pavol Lukáč – Miroslav Wlachovský:  
Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic. Starting Points,  
Present Situation and Prospects.

© Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association –  
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bratislava 1998.  
© Translation: Martin Styan

The views given in the publications of the Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy association are the personal views of the authors and may not correspond to the views of personnel of the SFPA, its advisory bodies and Board of directors.

ISBN 80-967745-4-9

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
<b>Chapter I. Slovakia in a changing Europe and a changing world .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Basic description of the Slovak Republic and its position on the international scene .....	9
2. Conditions and characteristics of the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic .....	11
3. The situation in Central Europe after the end of the Cold War .....	17
4. New international challenges and the national interests of the Slovak Republic .....	20
<b>Chapter II. The most important tasks of the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic .....</b>	<b>23</b>
1. Conceptual and organizational conditions for the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic .....	24
2. Foreign policy and security .....	27
3. Foreign policy and prosperity .....	32
4. Relations with neighbours and Central Europe .....	38
5. Key bilateral relationships of the Slovak Republic .....	49
Conclusion .....	59

## INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is one of the basic aspects of the sovereignty of a state. It consists of the total of stated aims, instruments and approaches by means of which a state pursues its interests abroad. The success of foreign policy depends on various internal and external factors, which include above all: the degree of internal consensus in defining the national interests, traditions and experiences during the planning and implementation of foreign policy, its institutional basis, the level of preparation of human resources, the character of the international environment and others. The aim of our work is analysis of the international position and foreign policy of the Slovak Republic, after five years of the existence of the independent state, and to attempt to outline a possible model for an effective foreign policy for Slovakia for the short and medium term.

Slovakia gained independence in 1993 after the division of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic. She very rapidly gained international recognition and successfully established diplomatic relations with the key countries of the world. Since the origin of the Slovak Republic, a broad internal consensus has prevailed, with regard to the priorities of foreign policy. The Slovak Republic set itself the aim of becoming a partner of the developed democratic countries, and achieving early membership of the decisive institutions and integrating structures of the Western world. In 1997, however, two important decisions were taken – about the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in July, and about the method of enlarging the European Union in December. Slovakia was not found among the leading candidates in either case. Had Slovak foreign policy failed? What factors influenced its failure?

Slovakia lacks a tradition of statehood, and was only an administered territory for a long time. The Slovak Republic of 1939-1945 can also be regarded a non-sovereign, satellite state, which originated from the will or rather the condescension of Nazi Germany. A few days after the birth of the former Slovak State, a German-Slovak defence treaty was signed, binding the Slovak government "to carry out its policy in harmony with the German government and organize its forces in close harmony with the German armed forces". By the origin of an independent republic in 1939, Slovakia gained the external attributes of foreign policy, for example the appropriate ministry, diplomatic representation abroad, reception of diplomats or ambassadors from countries which recognized the new state. The war-time republic had a foreign service, but it did not have its own conception of foreign policy. It was only an executor and instrument of German foreign policy.

Slovak politicians compensate for the absence of the traditions of a sovereign state with the myth of a thousand year struggle for an independent Slovakia. This myth cannot be supported with historical facts. Although the division

of Czechoslovakia and the origin of her successor states happened in accordance with the law and so legally, it was not done legitimately, because it was not supported by the will of the citizens in a referendum. Even a few months after the division, public opinion showed that the majority of the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic supported preservation of the federal state with the Czech Republic. It was not a matter of grief over the former federation, but of the fact that at first many citizens had a problem identifying with the new state. The origin of the Slovak Republic in 1993, was not only not "long expected" by the population, but was not even prepared from the side of its initiators. The Slovak Republic has the external features of a state, it is recognized by international law, but it still does not behave in a normal way. The initiators of the independent Slovak Republic did not have an independent vision or idea for it, and in many cases only copied the foreign policy aims and programme of the federation. Just as the population (a critical quantity) has still not internalized the reasons for creating an independent state, it has not grasped why Slovakia is endeavouring to join NATO and the European Union. A systematic, targeted education of the population is lacking. The political leadership of the country lacks an idea of its direction. The wider public still has little interest in these questions, it does not understand the influence of foreign policy on its everyday life, and so foreign policy could originate as a stage set. Something is outwardly declared, which is in conflict with domestic political practice and frequently does not represent the interests of the state, but only of some political or economic interest groups.

The starting points for the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic are directly connected with the idea of the state, because they require a clear answer to the question of who we are, and where we want to belong. After formulating answers to these questions, it is possible to proceed to a definition of state interests and derive a foreign policy from them. The Slovak foreign policy failure of the period 1993-1997 was caused by an inability to give a clear answer to these two questions. Although the Slovak Republic declared its adherence to Western civilization, and presented an effort to enter the Western European and trans-Atlantic political, economic and security structures as quickly as possible, it did not support these aims with sufficient actions. The declaration was not changed into an internal conviction.

Conviction arises from consideration, arguments and discussions. The Slovak Foreign Policy Association arose from the need to create a forum for such discussion of foreign policy. Since 1993, we have organized a large number of meetings, with the aim of gaining a clearer idea of international relations, the creation and functioning of foreign policy, and in addition the historical roots and determinants of Slovak foreign policy. In 1997, a series of expert seminars on the key foreign policy relationships of the Slovak Republic were held in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, with the participation of experts from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. We devoted our attention to the questions of European integration and security, relations with the neigh-

bouring countries and with the key great powers, the economic aspects of foreign policy and foreign policy as a part of public politics. The discussions at these seminars, and the ideas we derived from them form the basis of the work we are presenting to you. We sent the first manuscript of this work for assessment by six experts – Ján Figel, Pavol Hamžik, Rudolf Chmel, Veronika Lombardini, Štefan Šebesta and Peter Weiss – who wrote assessments for us and participated in a special seminar, at which, we, as the authors, defended our ideas. After including the conclusions of the seminar, we significantly modified and supplemented various parts. We hope that our publication will inspire readers to think about our foreign policy, and that it will promote discussion. Obviously our highest ambition is that some of the approaches proposed by us, will appear in the actual foreign policy of the Slovak Republic.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Bratislava office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, which enabled us to carry out this project, all the participants in last year's internal seminars of the Research Centre of the SFPa, the expert assessors and all the friends who helped us write it with their advice, encouragement or who were only patient at the time when that was necessary.

Alexander Duleba,  
Pavol Lukáč,  
Miroslav Wlachovský

## CHAPTER I.

## 1. BASIC DESCRIPTION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND ITS POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

The Slovak Republic as a sovereign state, recognized by the international community, originated on 1st January 1993, as a result of the division of the Czechoslovak federation. The SR became one of the two equal successors of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic, and inherited the basic bilateral and multilateral treaty documents of its predecessor.

Thus, Slovakia became a new actor on the international scene and a new geo-political factor in Central Europe. If we look at the basic geographical indicators (see table), we find that in area and population, Slovakia is one of the smaller European states. A small country does not have great power potential, so it must apply a more careful and well thought out strategy.

### Basic parameters of the Slovak Republic:

Area:	49,036 km <sup>2</sup>
Population:	5,371,100
Population density:	109 persons per km <sup>2</sup>

Total length of the state frontiers:	1611.5 km
with Hungary	630.9 km
with Poland	508.2 km
with the Czech Republic	261.3 km
with Austria	115.3 km
with Ukraine	95.8 km

Nationalities:	85.70% Slovaks
	10.62% Magyars or Hungarians
	1.57% Romans
	1.08% Czechs, Moravians, Silesians
	0.10% Germans
	0.58% Rusyns and Ukrainians
	0.06% Poles
	0.03% Russians
	0.26% others

The nature of the position of a small state in the international political environment is characterized by various factors. Experts agree on these characteristic features of small states:

- small physical strength
- relatively weak international position

- regionally limited interests
- narrow internal market
- small domestic economic resources, the structure of which to a large extent depends on the external market and prosperity

These stable and continual factors already show that an important part of political strategy is precisely the incorporation and firm anchoring of a small state in the international community, in which it can better promote its state and national interests. **Since in today's conditions of international economic globalization, any economic autarchy is unimaginationable, the political elite must pursue the route of integration into the international economic system, precisely in the interest of economic cooperation and participation in international trade.**

**This applies just as much in connection with the factor of the small physical strength of small states, and the need for external and internal security, by means of integration into functioning security groupings, with which the state shares the same interests and cultural-political values.**

The SR is one of the various states, which arose after the break up of the Soviet Empire. The disintegration of multi-national states has caused a significant change in the political map of Central and Eastern Europe. The inconsistency of the Versailles settlement was shown even more openly, and the model of small states (called "Kleinstaaterei" in German historical terminology) was deepened further. At the beginning of the 1870s, there were not quite twenty sovereign states in Europe, there are now almost forty, that is their number has more than doubled. This situation - and not only analysts, but also politicians should be aware of this - cannot exist for long, just as it never could in European history. The period of disintegration will inevitably be replaced by integration into larger units, which will on the eve of the 21st century be described as communities of common culture. In this sense, the European Union is the institutional embodiment of Western European culture and civilization, based on Latin Christendom, European humanism and the ideas of modern democracy and freedom. Obviously, this model is not without its faults, and it is undergoing reform of its individual structures, which should enable it to function effectively even after more countries join it.

So far no other alternative to integration into the EU is more appropriate and more adequate for Slovak conditions. **As we already emphasized, a small state cannot effectively and normally exist in the isolated conditions of some sort of utopian political, security and economic autarchy. A small state gets into a dependent position, precisely when its dependence is one-sided and uni-polar, or when it falls out of the global and regional system of the world economy. States which depend on various other entities, have multi-polar dependence and are part of the global and regional network of the world economy, have a wider space for promotion and assertion of their own interests.**

## 2. CONDITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

When assessing the process of the origin and construction of Slovak foreign policy in the period 1993-1997, we must constantly bear in mind, the fact that Slovakia, in contrast to her immediate neighbours (with the exception of Ukraine), has no long-term tradition of her own statehood, and therefore also her own foreign policy, which is an essential attribute of an independent state. Slovakia had to confront three main challenges simultaneously, when laying the foundations of her foreign policy: to achieve international diplomatic recognition as a state, to build up the institutional basis for foreign policy, and to formulate its programme.

The fact that Slovakia declared herself to be the successor of the Czechoslovak Federation, rather than of the Slovak Republic of 1939-1945, was very important for the relatively rapid process of international diplomatic recognition of the new state. The civilized method of the division of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in the course of 1992 also had a significant effect in this direction. The diplomatic note, which the government of the Slovak Republic sent to the governments of the other countries of the world in December 1992, and the declaration of the National Council of the Slovak Republic unambiguously declared a will to accept all the existing principles regulating international relations, to contribute to the process of disarmament, strengthen its own democratic political system and ensure the application of human rights and the rights of national minorities. Above all, thanks to these factors, the SR was recognized as a sovereign state by the governments of 99 states of the world, by 1st May 1993. From the first day of her existence (1st January 1993) Slovakia became a state participating in the CSCE (later the OSCE). On 19th January 1993, the SR was accepted as a member of the UN, and on 30th June 1993 she became a member state of the Council of Europe. A further important step was achieved on 4th October 1993, when the European Agreement about association with the European communities was signed.

The Slovak Republic achieved broad international recognition and gained membership in the most important international organizations. She relatively rapidly achieved the same international status and position as her immediate neighbours with a much longer tradition of foreign policy - the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary.

However, Slovakia did not avoid various faults deriving from an unprofiled political scene, from the inexperience of a newly created state administration, and an inadequate institutional basis for the politics of the new state. All these factors influenced the actual implementation of foreign policy.

While in the surrounding countries, the basic aim of the political elites (in the

cases of Hungary and Poland democratic changes of elite reflecting the results of elections, were successfully achieved) was formulated in the foreign policy terms of achieving the fastest possible integration with the developed West; the Slovak elite concentrated especially on building up its own political and economic power, often in conflict with the principles of the Western integration processes. Integration into the European and trans-Atlantic political, economic and security structures was declared a government priority, but this declaration was not fulfilled in practical politics. In fact practical politics were often in direct conflict with it. Insufficient political will, lack of understanding of the overall character and importance of the foreign policy of a state are the factors most characteristic of the foreign policy of the SR. This was shown in the construction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign service, including the lack of human resources or their incomplete and inconsistent use, and in the general position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the structure of the central organs of the state administration. **From the origin of the Slovak Republic and its independent foreign policy, it was not possible to identify the centre, method or people who formulate the basic lines and plan the practical steps of Slovak foreign policy, and what is their real political strength to implement it.** It was clearly not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where six ministers alternated during the years 1993 to 1997. Among other things, this made it difficult for foreign partners to know, who to talk to, about the long-term foreign policy interests of the SR. The weak position of the minister of foreign affairs in the government and the frequent changes of minister affected the work of the ministry and the general coordination of foreign policy with the work of other ministries (e.g. the ministries of the economy, defence, education, culture etc.) and with the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the SR originated on the basis of the Ministry of International Relations of the SR, which was established in 1990, still in the conditions of the federation. From 1990 to 1992, its activity was mostly directed towards developing the cultural contacts of Slovakia and representing her interests in the development of cooperation with the regions, but not with the governments of other states. Apart from this, its activity was coordinated with the federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. On 1st January 1993, the Ministry of International Relations of the SR from the time of the federation was transformed into a central organ of the state administration – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the SR – which was entrusted with responsibility for carrying out the foreign policy of the independent state.

The principle of division of the property of the federation in the proportion 2:1 between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, also concerned property abroad. Thanks to this, the SR was able to open its representative offices in 53 states of the world and 4 permanent missions to international organizations, from as early as 1st January 1993.

Many of the able Slovak diplomats, who represented the Czecho-Slovak Federal Republic in important posts, were not addressed by the new Slovak po-

litical elite. On the contrary, as loyal Czechoslovak diplomats, they were not accepted as "real" representatives of the newly formed Slovak Republic. This pseudo-argument points to the already mentioned lack of understanding of the basic character of foreign policy and the fact that a well qualified diplomat is not reducible to an ordinary instrument carrying out the policy of the centre. Education, experience, preceding career and network of personal contacts give every diplomat a special individual value. This additional value should be used as much as possible in a high quality foreign policy. In the years 1993-1997, Slovak foreign policy could not use many such diplomats. On the contrary, directly or by means of an atmosphere supporting mediocrity and bureaucraticness at the expense of personality and initiative, the Slovak foreign service lost various well qualified diplomats.

The shortage of human resources is still one of the main problems of Slovak foreign policy. The preparation of qualified people, as well as the building up of a stable system for their preparation, requires several decades, and independent Slovakia does not have this time. With the passage of time, the lack of human resources for Slovak foreign policy appeared and is still appearing ever more strongly. Not only the selection and preparation of people, has a share in this, but also the lack of a firm system directing the functioning of the foreign service.

Another characteristic feature, which marked the implementation of the foreign policy of the SR is the weakness and instability of newly constructed state institutions as such. This problem concerns all the newly formed states in the post-communist world, which do not have traditions of statehood (in this area Slovenia is an exception which proves the rule). In such countries, institutions have still not acquired natural authority for the performance of state functions. The societies are not sufficiently structured, and the system of rules of political behaviour is very fragile. Group interests are often stronger than state institutions, which lack a tradition and a widely respected role in society. Figuratively speaking, "nothing is sacred" and after coming to power, anyone can change what he considers necessary according to his momentary needs, including the state and its institutions. A typical feature of such new, post-communist states is an undeveloped system of political parties, and the existence of so-called non-standard parties, which are more pragmatic groupings for the winning of political power than defined political entities with clearly stated political programmes in the areas of domestic and foreign policy.

As experience shows – especially in the years 1994-1998 – these factors significantly influenced the carrying on of Slovak foreign policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the SR did not become the dominant centre determining the aims and implementation of Slovak foreign policy. On the contrary, it often only followed other domestic actors (lobbies close to the government) and pursuit of their particular foreign policy interests. Domestic actors or interest groups used the ministry to pursue their own economic interests abroad. This is one of the main causes of the uncleanness and unpredictability of Slovak foreign

policy over the last three years, especially if we take into account the unambiguously declared pro-Western integration aims of the SR and the growing lack of understanding with Western partners. On the other hand, awareness of these factors makes it easier to understand the content and character of Slovakia's eastern policy, especially concerning relations with the Russian Federation.

We can state that the SR did not achieve an adequate approach to constructing the institutional basis of its foreign policy. It was able to construct the formal structures, but it was not sufficiently able to staff them with high quality personnel and create the internal conditions for the independent role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in carrying on the foreign policy of the state. **The undoubted foreign policy success, which Slovakia achieved in the first year of her independent existence, can, therefore, be attributed more to the favourable international effect of the civilized and peaceful division of Czechoslovakia, than to the merits of Slovak foreign policy as such.** After the disappearance of this effect, Slovakia began to lose her international position. However, the cause was especially the loss of political trustworthiness, which began with the night sitting of members of parliament for the government coalition from the third to fourth November 1994, at which the members of parliament for the opposition parties were denied proportional representation in parliamentary committees, and special investigation commissions were established, also without the participation of opposition members of parliament.

Another basic task for the foreign policy of the SR after the origin of the independent state was to formulate its programme. The programme documents of all Slovak governments since 1993 have stated the priority of establishing above average relations with the integration structures of the Western world (NATO, the EU and the WEU), with the aim of achieving full membership of them. The programme of the Slovak government from January 1995 assumed the development not only of economic, but also of political and security cooperation with the European and trans-Atlantic structures. This unambiguous pro-Western orientation was the natural and direct result of the political changes around 1989-1990 in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It became a symbol of the defeat of the totalitarian communist regimes, and expressed the will to fully integrate into the structures of the developed democratic world, "to which" - as the programme declaration of the Slovak government says - "historic traditions and natural relations bind us". However, after five years of the existence of independent Slovakia, it is possible to state that the results of the government's policy, not only do not correspond to the stated priorities, but are in direct conflict with them.

From the beginning, the Slovak Republic had an intensive political dialogue with the European Union and NATO, in the framework of her integration efforts. With the worsening domestic political situation and lack of respect for the warnings of the Western partners, the quality of this dialogue worsened. After November 1994, the fears of the West about the actual state of democracy in the Slovak Republic became the main subject of dialogue. In the course of one ye-

ar, the Slovak government received three diplomatic demarches, two from the EU (24th November 1994 and 25th October 1995) and one from the government of the USA (27th October 1995). Failure to respect friendly warnings and its own obligations and inability to move from words to deeds significantly reduced the trustworthiness of Slovakia on the international scene.

It was not only a matter of "misunderstanding" concerning Slovakia's internal political development, which - especially in the years 1994-1997 - took a direction different to that assumed by the standard approaches and norms of the developed democratic countries. It also involved misunderstandings of a highly foreign political character. For example, in the memorandum attached to the application to join the EU, submitted on 27th June 1995, the SR voluntarily committed itself to coordinate its foreign and security policy with the EU, already in the period before entry. However, the Slovak government demonstrated how it sees this coordination, for example, on 29th January 1996, when a government delegation from the SR, headed by the prime minister began an official visit to Belgrade, on the same day that the EU foreign ministers provisionally postponed official recognition of the Yugoslav Federal Republic. It would be possible to mention various similar examples of (non-) coordination of foreign and security policy with the Western partners during the past period.

On her origin, Slovakia was able to determine the priorities of her foreign policy. However as in the case of constructing the institutional basis, she failed to realize the stated programme. Slovakia wasted her foreign policy success from the first year of her independent existence. At the end of 1998, her international position in a whole series of important parameters is much worse than in 1993. In particular, Slovakia was not able to keep up with her immediate neighbours - the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary - in the area of integration into the structures of the developed Western world. In the case of enlargement of NATO in 1999, it is already certain that Slovakia will be placed in a situation, where her international security position will be comparatively worse than the position of her immediate neighbours. Compared to her three neighbours, the Slovak republic is also losing pace in the area of economic cooperation. While the Czech Republic was accepted into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1995, and Hungary and Poland followed in 1996; Slovakia did not become a member by the middle of 1998. If the Slovak republic does not enter the European Union at approximately the same time as her three neighbours, which are expected to join about 2005, the economic differences will increase in a dramatic way.

**In 1997, the first stage of an independent Slovak foreign policy ended with the result of the key decisions of NATO and the EU about their strategy for eastward enlargement. The Slovak Republic failed in this stage. A qualitatively new stage is beginning, which again requires reevaluation of the processes occurring in present-day Europe, definition of the national interests of the SR and determination of the means to fulfill them.** It is not necessary to change the declared priorities of the foreign policy of the SR,



but it is necessary to evaluate why the SR was not able to achieve these priorities in the years 1993-1997, and what is the result of this for Slovak foreign policy in the coming years. It is also necessary to attempt to evaluate the situation in which the SR will not be able to integrate into the Western structures in the foreseeable future. With what international appeal and method can it be confronted, so that Slovakia will not finally lose her chance of integration?

### 3. THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The first half of the nineties brought a number of revolutionary changes. Not only the fall of the communist system in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, but the unification of Germany and the disintegration of multi-national, federal states completely changed the map of Europe and distribution of political forces. Nobody, either in West or East, expected such a rapid sequence of events and people on both sides of the Iron Curtain were not prepared for it. The period of the Cold War ended. The threat of global confrontation, sharpened by the arms race, between the two nuclear superpowers – the USA and the Soviet Union, had culminated in the seventies and eighties, but now it vanished. The former communist states held free elections and started on the path of political and economic transformation. Europe experienced euphoria over the victory of the ideals of democracy, the rule of law and the free market.

The shady side of these years was the war in former Yugoslavia and the conflicts in post-soviet territory. Czecho-Slovakia was the only multi-national state, which was able to divide in a civilized and peaceful way in this period. The Czech Republic and Slovakia received wide international recognition for this.

In the course of several years it became clear that not all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are equally prepared to implement reforms. In some countries, the process of reforms began to meet with strengthening resistance, and anti-reform political forces began to mobilize. It was shown that Russia is not able to progress in transformation to the extent that it can become a part of Western Europe, fully compatible in values and interests, in the foreseeable future.

The West confronted the unequal course of reform in the post-communist countries. The main question its representatives had to answer was – how to contribute to the stabilization of Central and Eastern Europe, and to support the reform process in the interest of strengthening the security of the whole of Europe. After Yanayev's attempted coup d'état in the USSR, and the subsequent break up of this eastern empire, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe began to loudly express their interest in entering the verified Western political, security and economic structures, especially NATO and the European Union.

Eastward enlargement of NATO, the EU and WEU began to be discussed. The most successful post-communist reforming countries would get a chance, and the door would not be closed to any of them. In the middle of 1993, a political decision about enlargement of the EU was taken at the Copenhagen summit. In January 1994, NATO adopted the programme Partnership for Peace. The EU and NATO defined the main conditions for membership by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The years 1994-1997 were taken up mainly by consideration of the strategy of eastward enlargement of NATO and the EU. In 1997

this process culminated, with NATO and the EU finally deciding to accept into their ranks the first and most successfully transforming countries of Central and Eastern Europe. By signing the Founding Act with NATO in May 1997, Russia de iure accepted the process of new member countries joining NATO. This marked the end of the second important stage in seeking a new form of security and economic architecture for Europe after the end of the bipolar conflict.

In the post-war period, the West and the Eastern Bloc represented classic examples of alliances of states, joined not only by common politico-military and economic interests, but also by shared systems of cultural values. Therefore, it was very natural and legitimate that, after the change of the communist regimes around 1989-1990 and the resulting break up of the Eastern Bloc, the former Soviet satellites expressed the wish to become a full part of the developed democratic world and its structures (NATO, the EU and WEU). The opposite approach of not doing so, would be entirely in conflict with the natural logic of their internal and general international development.

Not only the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe showed a will to integrate into the common European economic and political structure after the end of the bipolar conflict, but also the neutral countries – Austria, Sweden and Finland. In the new international conditions, their neutrality lost its political and economic justification and sense. From 1st January 1995, the European “12” widened to the European “15”. It was not only the end of the limited economic approach of these countries to the dominant European market in the framework of the EU, but actual the real end of their military-political neutrality. For example, Norway is not a member of the EU, but it is a member of NATO. Switzerland – the classic example of a European neutral country, with a tradition going back long before the bipolar conflict – joined the NATO project Partnership for Peace at the end of 1996. Ireland is not a member of NATO, but she is a member of the EU, so that the provisions of the Treaty of Maastricht of the European Union also apply to her.

In harmony with the Treaty of Maastricht about the European Union from 7th February 1992 (it came into force on 1st November 1993), all the member countries of the EU committed themselves to coordinate their foreign and security policy. At the same time, the majority of member states of the EU are militarily and politically organized, not only in the Western European Union, but also in NATO. In the longer term, the neutral countries of Europe will have to coordinate their security policy with the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, which are also member countries of the EU.

The “alliance question” has not acquired the classic form of the period before the Second World War – on which side, how and against who to seek allies? – for any of the democratic countries in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. **The present form of this question for the post-communist countries has a highly “internal” character – how to quickly and successfully build a stable democratic system and free market economy, which will enable the earliest possible integration into the political, economic and security**

**structures of a stable and developed world? After the break up of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the threat of global conflict in the world was significantly reduced, and internal factors in the development of the transforming countries became more important for European security.**

NATO, by means of the programme Partnership for Peace, and the EU, by means of the European association agreements, created an adequate and equal framework for application of the will expressed by each of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to achieve full membership.

The programme Partnership for Peace was adopted at the NATO summit in Brussels in January 1994. The framework document about the accession of Slovakia to the programme was signed on 9th February 1994 in the headquarters of NATO at Brussels by the Slovak prime minister, Vladimír Mečiar. The criteria for gaining full membership of NATO by new countries were first specified in detail in the official expert analysis by NATO “Study on NATO Enlargement” from September 1995. The condition for membership is full acceptance of the basic principles contained in the Washington founding treaty: implementation and defence of democracy, individual freedom, the rule of law, settled and stable relations with neighbours.

The Czechoslovak Federal Republic, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia concluded European association agreements with the European Communities. After the division of Czechoslovakia, both successor states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, signed separate agreements with the European communities on 4th October 1993, and these came into force on 1st February 1995. A decision about enlargement of the European communities to include post-communist countries was accepted at the EU summit in Copenhagen in June 1993, and further details were added at the Essen summit in December 1994. Five basic conditions for EU enlargement were stated, the first four of them concerning associated countries, which showed an interest in full membership: 1. political stability, stability of democratic institutions, recognition of human rights and the rights of minorities; 2. a functioning market economy; 3. ability to stand up to competitive pressures inside the Union (policy of economic competition); 4. ability to undertake all the duties and aims resulting from membership (political, economic and monetary union). The fifth condition concerns the Union: ability to deal with enlargement and carry out institutional reform.

This “individualized” framework deliberately limits the possibility of “strategic speculations” and military-political considerations according to examples “from and before” the period of the Cold War. This makes internal policy almost the supreme subject of basic foreign policy importance for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. **Perhaps never before in history, was the foreign orientation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe the subject of their own free choice, and never did it depend so much on the content and style of their internal politics, as is the case today.** After the Yalta and Potsdam conferences and during the bi-polar conflict, questions of much greater importance than the character and content of the internal politics of the Central and Eastern European countries, were in play – the maintenance of global stability and world peace.

#### 4. NEW INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES AND THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

NATO and the EU fulfilled and still fulfill a stabilizing and integrative role in Europe. The extension of these structures to new countries in Central and Eastern Europe means enlargement of the zone of stability and prosperity in Europe. Russia has problems with transformation and rejects the enlargement of the Western structures – especially NATO – as a threat to her national security. It is entirely understandable that a game for national interests in Europe with individual European powers would suit Russia much better. Renewal of the great power game in present-day Europe would mean a gradual, but certain journey back to the warlike European past. One of the main reasons for the origin of NATO and the EU was precisely elimination of the great power game in Europe, and prevention of the possibilities for the outbreak of war. In the event of the disintegration of the integration structures of the Western world, small countries would again become mere playthings in the geo-political game of the great powers. Russia would regain her historic place in the game, but for the small countries of Central and Eastern Europe, this would be the worst thing that could happen to them in the near future. One of the greatest threats to the future of the small states of Europe, including Slovakia, would be any erosion of the Western integration structures and reduction of the presence of the USA on the continent. The highest national interest of the SR is that this does not happen.

Since the "bloody autumn" of 1993, Russia has chosen the route of a strong and authoritarian system (internally – a strong presidential regime, and externally – renewal of centralist positions in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States). The failure of almost five years of attempts to organize the post-Soviet space, by means of the CIS, on the basis of equal relations, according to the model of the EU, means its deepening destabilization, a growing confrontation of national interests in the post-Soviet space and a threat to the developed world. Russia would never represent such a threat for the developed world, if she were not the source of an alternative policy (internal and foreign) in Europe, and this especially concerns the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Where relations with the USA are concerned, it is already entirely clear that Russia and the USA are getting into a confrontation of interests in strategic regions of the world (the Near East, Iran, Iraq, India, China and elsewhere).

The importance to the trans-Atlantic community of the existence of the post-Soviet states, especially Ukraine and above all since the end of 1993, has dramatically increased, because of their significance for maintaining the post-bipolar status quo in Europe. The decisive factor for the change of position of the

Western countries was not only the fact that Ukraine ratified the Lisbon Protocol of 1992 and agreed to give up her nuclear weapons to Russia, but also the internal political development in Russia, which accelerated in autumn 1993. From the autumn of 1993, the centre of gravity of a further stage of international development began to move towards the east. The transitional period of this shift was completed de facto in 1997, and will be completed de iure in 1999, when the first post-communist countries – the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary – become official members of NATO. After the first wave of expansion of the Western structures, the position of Ukraine will be more important, because her independent existence will guarantee the fixing of the results of the new international situation. The existence of an independent Ukraine is a confirmation of the new security situation in Europe.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who substantially contributed to a change in American policy towards the post-Soviet space, is responsible for the idea that "with the return of Ukraine to union with Russia, the latter will automatically become an empire again". Even in the times of the deep Bush pro-Gorbachev and later also Clinton Russian-centrist orientation, he supported the idea which the official ruling elite of the USA also began to appropriate after autumn 1993. Ukraine weakens Russia in the direction of Europe, it more or less isolates Russia from Europe and enables the transitional stage of the formation and strengthening of the new Atlantic community. Kazakhstan plays a similar role in the direction of Central Asia. The independent existence of Ukraine and Kazakhstan fixes the new global status quo in the world after the end of the Cold War and the first post-bipolar stage in the development of post-communist Europe (1989/90-1997). On the other side, Russia is undertaking deliberate steps, aiming at the gradual economic, and also political-military reintegration of the post-Soviet space. Her policy towards Bielorus is a good example.

In spite of the fact that the process of integration of Russia and Bielorus in the framework of creating a union (a treaty was signed in April 1996) is advancing slowly, especially in the political and economic areas, very real progress has occurred in the area of military cooperation. On 2nd April 1997, the Supreme Council for the Community of the Russian Federation and Bielorus approved "General principles for building up the armed forces of Bielorus and the Russian Federation and use of the military infra-structure". Unification of legislation, implementation of joint programmes for building up their armies, creation of a system of joint command and other measures were agreed. Work is in progress on working out a joint military doctrine, joint air defence, and joint monitoring of air space. Russian representatives do not hide the fact that the creation of a military-political union with Bielorus, which may be gradually joined by other post-Soviet states, is motivated precisely by the eastward expansion of NATO.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Golts, A.: Nash Otvet Atlantistam. Itogi 13. 5. 1997. For analysis of Future developments sec: Rummyantsev, O. G.: Palnejshaya integratsiya Belorussiy i Rossii: nekotoryye pravovye aspekty.

After the entry of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to NATO, Central Europe in its present form will cease to exist. As a result of the Russian - Bielorrussian alliance, the Baltic states are acquiring a definitively "Scandinavian" direction for their further development. Thus, Slovakia will probably find herself in a new geo-political space, together with Rumania, Bulgaria and Ukraine. Thus, a "new Central Europe" could arise.

Rumania, Bulgaria and Slovakia (in contrast to the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary) are still providing no guarantees that non-standard political forces, which could again dismantle the democratic system, will not again come to power. Probably the doors to the Western groupings will be closed to them, at least as long as basic changes do not occur in the post-Soviet space. However these changes must have a common global denominator - Russia will cease to be the source of an alternative policy in relation to the trans-Atlantic community, at least in Europe. These realities will determine the new stage in the development of the international situation in next few years - the period of its duration and the central content of international relations. The whole complex of risks connected with this development is the greatest threat to the national interests of the Slovak Republic.

## CHAPTER II.

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

### **1. CONCEPTUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS FOR THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

The success of the foreign policy of a state depends on various factors: the external environment, the international situation, also the domestic political and economic situation and the resources, which the state can use to pursue its interests in the international field.

The internal resources for foreign policy include the system of institutions providing the education and preparation of personnel for the foreign service. When building up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions, which play a role in foreign policy, the Slovak Republic constantly struggled with a lack of qualified personnel. The diplomats who began their professional careers in socialist Czechoslovakia were mostly graduates of the State Institute for International relations (Gossudarstvennyy institut mezhnunarodnykh otnoshenii - GIMO) in Moscow. In their work, or already during their study, they were exposed to pressure from the Czechoslovak and Soviet special services, which forced them to cooperate. Therefore, after November 1989, some of them were practically unusable for work in the foreign service of the new democratic state, and they had to leave the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The positions of ambassador in key countries were filled by personalities from other areas, who lacked formal education and diplomatic practice, but were trustworthy for the governments in Prague and in the countries to which they were sent. Czechoslovakia was offered help with educating diplomats by democratic countries, and a number of them had the opportunity to study in Vienna, London or other cities. However, this help was not enough to provide a regular flow of graduates in the required number, and so it was necessary to establish a special educational facility. In Bratislava, the Institute of International Relations was established in the Faculty of Law of Comenius University, to provide postgraduate study and preparation of personnel for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions in the area of foreign policy. Later full time study of international relations for the degree of master, started in Banská Bystrica, at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of Matej Bel University. The government and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should support the institutions aimed at preparation of personnel for the foreign service, with material, information and finance. Students should have periods of study and experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the office of the

President of the SR, the National Council of the SR or in the foreign departments of other ministries. The government should assign money to grants for exceptionally able students to study international relations and diplomacy in the countries of the European Union and in the USA. After expressing interest in these grants, students should be selected on the basis of a competition, in which students would be selected by an independent commission, composed, for example, of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, university teachers and representatives of the countries and institutions where the students would study. The government should assign resources to these grants after agreement with the EU or the USA. In relation to the nature of the SR as a small state, as we described in the introductory chapter, it is clear that the SR cannot present itself on the international scene with power or quantity, but only by means of quality. Therefore, the education of future diplomats should be one of the priorities and a clear strategy should be worked out in this area.

Another factor closely connected with the quality of foreign policy is the creation of an academic and intellectual background for it. Apart from the classic department of analyses and planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which prepares material for the everyday formulation of foreign policy, and short-term and medium-term analyses, it is essential that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or of Defence have centres with a high degree of freedom of thought and autonomy, which would prepare medium and long-term analyses in the area of international relations and security. These would be only partly financed directly from the state budget, and the rest of their resources would be found by means of grant competitions, in which they would engage in free competition with non-governmental organizations. They could include several institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, but also expert institutes functioning in the framework of civic associations, such as the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, the Centre for European Politics, the Institute for Public Affairs and others. A high quality grant policy would secure a partial shift of financial resources from the state, and the state would indirectly support the development of civil society, while gaining high quality and independent analyses from various sources.

People working in these educational and academic institutions, as well as people associated in independent civil associations on the basis of interest in the area of international relations and foreign policy, publicists and politicians form a sort of community. The foreign policy oriented community of a country plays an irreplaceable role and bears an immense responsibility. It is, therefore, necessary for it to be hardened by constant exchange of views, so that it can passionately discuss the most correct explanation and the most optimal solutions, but also passionately support common convictions about the national interests. If Slovakia wants to hold her own in international competition, she must use the best which the country has, with the support of the whole of society.

As the European integration processes show, an important element is open discussion, informing, but especially involving the public in the process of integration. A government, which places membership of the European Union

among its priority aims, must firstly provide a high quality information campaign, especially by means of the public service media. In this area, the citizens of Slovakia have already felt a deficit for several years.

However, a "communication strategy" with the aim of sufficiently informing the public about what the government is doing to achieve its correct aim, is certainly not enough. The public itself must be involved in the process of European integration – and not only in relation to the fact that – in the event that the complex negotiations end in success – it will decide about Slovakia's entry to the European Union, in a referendum. Dealing with the problems of integration, even just to understand and define them, not only requires action by a government organ, but effective communication between the government and the mediating bodies of civil society, to which must be assigned academic institutions and universities, as well as non-governmental organizations. Social questions, the problem of national minorities or local, legal and political culture require an active policy from the government, which can succeed only if a system of return links between the government and civil society is created.

The process of integration in countries, which are interested in becoming members of the European Union also includes the process of "Europeanization" of the state administration. It is necessary to structure and fill posts in ministries, so that they will be compatible with their partners in the corresponding departments in other member states. Another domestic problem, which significantly influences foreign policy, is the fact that up to now, a high quality act about independent state service has not been passed. This not only enabled political parties to become the main actors in formulating the policy of the state, but also gave them the opportunity to penetrate deeply into the state administration. The performance and expertise of various organs of the state administration is negatively marked by the fact that the state administration, including the staffing of the ministries, is not consistently directed by criteria of expertise and impartiality. As Slovakia comes closer to the European Union, the activity of the ministries will begin to be internationalized. The inexperience and sometimes open party bias of various ministerial and other state officials will become an international problem for the Slovak Republic.

## 2. FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY

### Anchoring the Slovak Republic in the European security system

After the break up of the bipolar world, the countries of Central Europe had several theoretical possibilities to solve their security situation. Slovakia formed, together with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the so-called Visegrád Group, which had four basic security possibilities.

**1. The North Atlantic Option.** The majority of the political elites in these four countries think in terms of this option and do not see any real alternative to it. There are several reasons for this. Trans-Atlantic cooperation forms the core of European security, and Europe would not have been able to resist Soviet aggression without American help. In its almost fifty years of existence, the North Atlantic Alliance became the most successful alliance in history. NATO is the only security organization, which, thanks to article 5 of the Treaty of Washington, provides firm guarantees of security in the event of being attacked. The advantages, for the countries of the Visegrád Group including Slovakia, of accession to the Treaty of Washington, and therefore gaining membership of the North Atlantic Alliance, can be divided into security-political and military-political.

#### a) Security-political

1. The acceptance of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into NATO as the only effective international organization with an integrated military structure will raise the overall level of security in Central Europe. Entry to NATO will give these countries more possibility to decide about European security, and therefore about their own destiny. After decades, it will enable them to become subjects of international relations, rather than their object.
2. The enlargement of NATO is the culmination of the multilateral integration of the Federal Republic of Germany into the Euro-Atlantic structures, and so shift the relations of this country with her eastern neighbours from a framework of mostly bilateral relations to a multilateral framework, which is much more advantageous for the smaller countries.
3. Gaining the security guarantees flowing from article 5 of the Treaty of Washington, would mean that these countries would move from the present so-called grey zone (formed by countries, which do not have international guarantees of security comparable to the guarantees of membership in NATO) to a community of shared and defended values.

b) Military-political

1. Joining NATO would significantly accelerate the process of modernization of the Army of the SR, and from the long-term point of view also substantially reduce the financial burden (alliance security policy is always cheaper than independent defence).
2. After entry to NATO, the budget of the Ministry of Defence will not be discussed in the National Council of the SR only as an internal problem, but also as a question of the share of the SR in the cost of alliance defence, security and stability. It can be expected that an understanding, on the priorities for modernization of the army, will be reached between the Ministry of Defence and the Committee for Defence and Security of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, as happens in the countries of NATO.
3. Inclusion in the NATO system for armaments and acquisitions cooperation will also create conditions for the real construction and use of the national defence industrial base, and reduction of costs for the construction, training and operation of the Army of the SR.

**II. The Western European option** gave priority to the rapid integration of the Visegrád countries into the European Union and Western European Union, over integration into NATO. The advantage of this option lies in the fact that it is more acceptable to public opinion in the Visegrád countries. A second advantage is that this option (EU, WEU) brings a wider and more comprehensive range of security solutions for the region, and as well as the political-military instruments, brings stabilizing economic integration, which will play a decisive role in future. The weakness of this conception, is that in the case of the WEU, it prompts the Visegrád countries to join a security organization, which does not have its own military capacity enabling it to provide security guarantees. This results from the history of the organization, its relations to NATO and the European Union. Entry to the European Union and the WEU would not provide security guarantees during the period of transition. Europeans are thinking of transforming the WEU into a security organization forming part of the European Union. The WEU is based on the so-called Modified Brussels Treaty, article 5 of which formulates firm security guarantees even more strictly than article 5 of the Treaty of Washington of NATO. This clause and the overlapping membership of countries in NATO and the WEU created a strong link between them. However, various WEU countries, led by Great Britain, gave the green light to the development of this organization, only when it was clear that it did not threaten the quality of the trans-Atlantic alliance. The relatively complex structure of the organization is also a result of this. Only states which are members of both NATO and the EU are full members of the WEU, the European members of NATO which are not members of the EU have the status of observers, members of the EU which are not members of NATO have the status of associate members, while Central and Eastern European countries which signed association agreements with the EU have the status of asso-

ciate partners. **None of the representatives of the Western European Union can imagine that a state could become a full member without being also a member of NATO and the European Union.** However, the complex system of categories of membership gives the WEU a special importance, because it creates a forum at which 28 European states can discuss questions of European security and propose their solution. The mutual relations between the three organizations of NATO, the EU and the WEU, confirm that the countries of the democratic West are using a combination of these organizations – the so-called concept of interlocking institutions. **Gaining membership of the EU, WEU and NATO, means steps towards achieving maximum security, rather than alternatives. From the point of view of security, membership of the EU is not an alternative to membership of NATO, but a complementary element, which strengthens its.**

**III. The option of neutrality** was popular in Czechoslovakia and Hungary before the break up of the USSR. However, with the end of the traditional antagonism between the two super-powers, the concept of neutrality lost its meaning. The models of post-war neutrality (Finland, Austria) were a product of the bipolar international order, which ended in the years 1989-1991. When considering the possibility of neutrality, it is also necessary to consider its financial cost, which the economies of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in their present state, cannot afford. In their case, the adoption of this conception would actually mean abandonment of defence of the country. In recent years, the conception of neutrality has been doubted as ineffective and too expensive, by such classic neutral countries as Austria and Sweden. Three neutral countries have become members of the European Union, and so it is no longer possible to speak of their political neutrality. In all three countries, a lively discussion of neutrality is going on. Neutrality also assumes that some states will be willing to guarantee this neutrality. At present, such potential guarantors do not exist. If the Slovak Republic has long-term plans to remain outside political-military defensive groupings, it must adapt the character of its army to this plan, keep the conscription system for the army and significantly increase spending on defence. It is also necessary to be aware that from the beginning, the Army of the SR had to struggle with financial problems, the amount of defence spending as a percentage of GDP has fallen from year to year, and in 1998 fell below 2% for the first time.

**IV. The Central European option** contains a number of theoretical and practical problems. The main reason for the impracticality of this option is the insufficient defensive and security potential for defending the region, even in the event of close cooperation between these countries. In addition, the rationalization of the region is accompanied by the limited thinking and provincialism of the political elites, their inability to think and act in European dimensions. The Visegrád cooperation also failed for these reasons. This cooperation

functioned best during the liquidation of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from the region. The expected entry of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to NATO in 1999 also puts an end to theoretical consideration of this option.

The neighbours of Slovakia – Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic – concentrated on fulfillment of the first – North Atlantic – option, because it was the most advantageous and accessible from the point of view of security. Especially Poland was the eastern motor of the extension of the alliance. Thanks to the failure of her ruling political elite, Slovakia did not use her chance, and in Madrid, in July last year, she was not included in the first wave of expansion of the alliance. The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians are also the hottest candidates for the first wave of enlargement of the European Union, which, from the point of view of the security of these countries, creates a complementary base to membership of the Atlantic Alliance. After the military-political guarantees of security, these countries will also gain economic guarantees of security.

**The optimal solution of the security situation of the states of Central Europe, including Slovakia, is a combination of the trans-Atlantic and Western European options. The strengthening of Europe, in the fields of defence and security, the Europeanization of NATO, while retaining strong US involvement in the security of the old continent, is in the interests of the Slovak Republic. The primary security interests of the SR also include the continuation and intensification of the process of European integration and the active participation of the SR in it. Slovakia must make, also thanks to the fact that she wasted one offered chance, a redoubled effort, and convince her Western partners and neighbours that she is compatible with them in values, and will be a gain for the alliance and European security.**

In relation to NATO, Slovakia must first of all make a real and sincere effort to fulfill the democratization demands, continue with intensive individual dialogue, participate in the programme Partnership for Peace, and continue the transformation of the Army of the SR. The government must create conditions for the origin of a democratic intelligence service, the activity of which will be supervised by an organ appointed by the National Council of the SR, giving equal representation to government and opposition representatives. Such an information service must create trust among neighbours and Western partners, the members of NATO and the European Union. A new political elite must intensify dialogue with key countries of the alliance, especially the United States of America, but also with the neighbouring future members of the Alliance – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. There should be an effort to achieve coordination with the candidates for the second wave of enlargement of the alliance – Slovenia and Rumania, and to observe the discussion about neutrality or membership of NATO in neighbouring Austria. Entry to NATO and the European Union must be the absolute priority in the foreign policy of the SR. The government and the parliamenta-

ry parties must subordinate all their foreign and domestic activities to this priority.

After the Second World War, the medium sized and small states of Europe belonged more to the consumers than to the creators of international stability and security. The great powers were the guarantors and creators of security. This rule applied in both the opposing blocs. At the end of the 20th century, the content of foreign and security has substantially changed. This reality confronts precisely those post-communist countries, which have the greatest chance to become members of NATO in the first wave. A similar challenge to make her own contribution to the security and stability of the region awaits Slovakia. Apart from the declared will to become a member of NATO and the EU, Slovak foreign policy has to offer its partners an idea of its own international responsibility.



### 3. FOREIGN POLICY AND PROSPERITY

Apart from providing security for its citizens, one of the reasons for the existence of a state is to create dignified living conditions, to secure a rising standard of living and prosperity. At the end of the twentieth century, precisely this dimension is gaining greater importance. This is not only connected with the decreased threat to security, but especially with the increasing globalization and interconnectedness of national economies. Changes in economic policy and technology have the result that economies, which were distant from each other, because of high transport costs and artificial financial and trade barriers, are now connected by a constantly growing network of economic interactions. The economies of individual states are becoming ever more integrated, with the help of trade, finance, production and a growing network of treaties and institutions. The growing network of treaties connects states by means of multilateral (global) commitments, regional and bilateral commitments.

In the globalizing world, competition is constantly increasing. This not only involves competition in the areas of the economy and trade, but also in research, technological progress and culture. Foreign policy must take into account that competition exists in many forms. **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the role of coordinating and ensuring multilateral discussions. In particular, it should ensure that the defence of Slovak interests and positions is homogeneous and internally consistent. The mission of the foreign service is to identify impulses and threats, which appear in world dimensions, to secure priorities and contribute to building up useful alliances.**

The role of diplomacy is also to help Slovak companies to seek new markets. Slovakia produces several times more than her small market can absorb, in other words she has a strongly pro-export oriented economy. At home, the state must create the legal and institutional framework for economic development and a pro-export policy, while abroad it must create the political and economic space for the application of Slovak interests. The role of the government, and in its framework, especially of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is to secure coordination between the individual departments in their approach to foreign countries, and to secure united state representation. The state must create space for the legitimate interests of private persons and companies, but also take care to avoid a mixing of state and private interests, which creates a natural environment for corruption. The interests of companies should be represented abroad by professional and interest associations (e.g. the Slovak Commercial and Industrial Chamber), for which the state must create an adequate legislative framework. Interdepartmental coordination should also occur between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Economy over the question of the trade and economic departments of representative offices, which should again be organi-

zationally placed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to preserve unified state representation and avoid losing natural supervision of it. The trade and economic departments should provide an information service especially to small and medium sized businesses. It would be very responsible to approach the determination of priority territories and the commodity structure from the point of view of Slovak exports, and adapt the construction of trade and economic departments to this. The development of tourism and services, and in connection with this, the general promotion of the country, is an unexploited area, which needs to be emphasized. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should participate in a pro-export policy, especially by strengthening the advocacy and propagation of the economic and investment potential of the SR, which should be a natural part of the agenda of all diplomatic personnel.

### The OECD

From the point of view of Slovak economic interests, gaining membership of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a key task for the SR. The OECD originated in 1961, by the transformation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which associated European countries, concentrating on reconstruction of their economies after the Second World War. The OEEC administered the American aid to the European countries in the framework of the Marshall Plan. By the beginning of the sixties, the renewal of war damaged economies was complete, but the individual countries were aware of the growing interdependence of individual national economies, and an organization arose with the task of coordinating the cooperation between countries and creating favourable international conditions for economic development. The aim of this organization is to achieve the highest possible rate of sustainable economic growth and employment, to support the economic and social well-being of the member countries by means of coordination of their policies, as well as to stimulate and harmonize the efforts of their members to aid the developing countries. At present, this organization has 29 members, including Slovakia's neighbours - Austria (1961), the Czech Republic (1995), Poland and Hungary (1996). The OECD includes all the members of the European Union, and so this organization can also be seen as a sort of waiting room for entry to the EU.

OECD membership guarantees a stable economic environment for a given country, which is also shown by the fact that the greatest volume of world investment flows to countries of the OECD. The conditions for membership are achievement of full convertibility of currencies, compatibility with the legislation of the OECD, conclusion of a treaty about privileges and immunities for the OECD and maintenance of democratic principles in direction of the state and economy. The Slovak Republic submitted an application for full membership of this organization on 28th February 1994. In spite of various high quality eco-

nomic indicators for the years 1994-1998, Slovakia did not become a member of the OECD, thanks to non-fulfilment of the conditions about the maintenance of democratic principles in running the state and economy. The delay for Slovakia, compared to her comparable neighbours, was caused not only by some flagrant violations of the principles of parliamentary democracy, but also by non-transparent privatization, and some inappropriate legal norms, which have a direct influence on the economic environment in the SR, and are regarded as anti-market, for example the Revitalization Act or the Act on Bankruptcy and Settlements. The slowing down of the process of accepting the SR was also caused by insufficient coordination of the interested departments, insufficient support in the highest places, and weak communication with the Secretariat of the OECD. It is necessary to correct these things quickly.

## European Integration

Membership of the European Union is the main strategic aim of the Slovak Republic. Integration with the European Union means improved development of the economy, modernization of the economy and legal system, and reduction of the differences in the level of development between the SR and the countries of the European Union. In the overall balance of positive and negatives aspects of entering the European Union, the positive aspects prevail. Paradoxically, even in the case of a negative development in Europe, it is better for the SR to be a member of the European Union. The alternative to entering the Union is falling behind the main development in Europe. The history of Europe, both recent and earlier, shows that the difference in level of civilization widens between the community of countries participating in economic, political and security cooperation, and those outside the main current.

Among her neighbouring countries, Slovakia has one of the most open economies (proportion of exports to GDP). **At present the commercial exchange of the SR with countries, which will most probably form the future European Union by 2005, reaches a level of more than 80%. Maintenance of preferential relations means being part of the same structures. Entry to the EU will also strengthen the dynamic of mutual trade (e.g. the trade of the countries of EFTA grew by 20-30% after their entry to the EU). Entry to the European Union has a positive effect on increasing the direct investment necessary to restructure the Slovak economy and raise its ability to compete.** Finally, membership of the EU enables drawing of finance from the structural funds of the Union, which will mean significant resources for the new member countries. The proposed new financial framework for the EU, for the years 2000-2006, assumes transfers amounting to 38 billion ECU for new member countries (that is the sum assigned to countries which enter the Union up to 2006, assuming that they become members in 2002-2003). In this case, it is possible to estimate the annual contribution to the SR from structural funds,

if the SR is in the first wave of entering countries, at 0.5-0.8 billion ECU, which represents 20-30 billion Sk (note: these figures are rough estimates, in relation to a number of unknown factors – the actual date of entry, the number of countries, the method of dividing resources). However, sums of money, which would significantly help the development of the country, especially in infrastructure projects, are clearly involved.

The Slovak government created a coordinated institutional framework to solve the questions of European integration, and more specifically fulfilment of the European agreement. The Government Council for Integration of the SR into the EU functions on the ministerial level, and is headed by a deputy prime minister. Its representatives are the minister of foreign affairs and the deputy prime minister responsible for approximation of legislation. Every Slovak ministry established a department, to which it entrusts all matters connected with the EU, and representatives of which participate in meetings of the Council, according to the questions of European integration being discussed. A joint Committee of the National Council of the SR and the European Parliament was also created on the basis of the agreement. The Committee of the National Council of the SR for European Integration was established in 1996.

The Slovak Republic submitted an official application for membership of the European Union on 27th June 1995, and on 17th June 1997, the Council of Ministers decided to apply the approach according to an article of the Treaty of Maastricht on the European Union, which anchors consultation with the European Commission. In this framework, the Commission worked out an assessment of the application of the SR for membership of the European Union. The Slovak application was assessed at the same time as the applications of nine other associated states. The assessment was worked out on the basis of the conclusions of the European Council, reached in June 1993 at its session in Copenhagen (the so-called Copenhagen criteria):

"The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which want this, will become members of the Union. Entry to the Union will happen immediately these countries are prepared to accept the obligations of membership, on the basis of fulfilment of the economic and political conditions. The criteria for gaining membership are:

- that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for the protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy, and ability to stand up to competitive pressure and market forces in the framework of the Union;
- ability to accept responsibilities connected with membership, including acceptance of the aims of creating political, economic and monetary union;

It is in the interests of both the Union and the candidate countries, to thoroughly consider the ability of the Union to absorb new member countries, whi-

le also maintaining the necessary rate of European integration".

According to the evaluation of the European Commission from July 1997: "As a result of the instability of her institutions, their lack of roots in political life, and the inadequate functioning of her democracy, Slovakia does not satisfactorily fulfill the political conditions set by the European Council in Copenhagen. This situation is still more regrettable, because Slovakia could fulfill the economic criteria in the medium-term, and is firmly resolved to accept the *acquis*, especially those which concern the internal market, although further progress is still necessary to guarantee effective application of the *acquis*." In the majority of criteria, the Slovak Republic is comparable to the other associated countries, but unfortunately, in the view of the representatives of the Union, she is the only one which did not fulfil the political criteria in 1997. According to the view of the Commission: "the conditions in which the Slovak Parliament carries out its entrusted role, are not in harmony with the normal rules of a functioning democracy. The rights of the opposition are not fully respected, especially where membership of parliamentary committees is concerned. Not one representative of the opposition holds the position of chairman of a permanent parliamentary committee, although up to September 1994 they did. Respect for the mandates of members of parliament and the rules governing the activity of Parliament is not always guaranteed."

Slovakia is a small country in Central Europe and her importance for the Union is limited. It would be a mistake to create the illusion that the question of Slovakia is of key importance for the politicians of the Union. Slovakia, represented by the government of premier Mečiar from 1994-1998, was perceived as a problem country, the leadership of which is not fully capable of bilateral dialogue. After the thwarted referendum and the refusal to respect the decision of the Constitutional Court on the case of Gauleider, dialogue on the level of the joint committee of the National Council of the SR and the European Parliament was also paralysed. Lack of respect for democratic rules and failure to respect such a sacred thing as the mandate of a member of parliament, led various members of the European parliament to propose enlargement according to the formula  $10 + 1 - 1$ , without Slovakia, by which she would become a warning, solitary example. This variant was not accepted at the Luxembourg summit in December 1997.

The Luxembourg summit decided that the accession process will begin with all 11 candidate countries at the same time. Actual discussion about accession to the EU finally began with a group of only 5+1. The Luxembourg summit brought the integration process into a further phase. The actual process of enlargement is composed of various levels - actual talks in the framework of bilateral inter-governmental conferences about entry to the EU with the first group of countries, strengthening of the preparation of all the candidates by means of a pre-entry strategy (the main elements are individual partnerships for entry and the PHARE aid programme). The widest circle is formed by the European Conference, the aim of which is to strengthen cooperation between the

present members and the associated countries (including Turkey). This is not immediately connected with preparation for entry to the Union.

A greater element of flexibility and openness to further candidate countries, than in previous enlargements, was also introduced into the whole accession process. Every year the European Commission will produce an evaluation of the progress of all the candidate countries, especially on the basis of fulfillment of Partnership for Entry. In this framework, other countries can get the green light from the Commission, and the Council of EU can also decide to add further candidate countries to the negotiation process. It is generally assumed that the present round of enlargement will be demanding and lengthy. The reasons are especially: the weak preparedness of all the candidate countries, and the processes occurring inside the Union - the creation of economic and monetary union, the need to solve the institutional questions of the EU, even before the first enlargement, reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, changes in structural policy. It is realistically possible to suppose that the first new members will be accepted into the EU around 2003-2005. It follows from this, that Slovakia, at present in the slower group, has a good chance, with her own initiative, to get into the first group of candidate countries.

The primary task for the Slovak Republic is to revive the confidence of her partners in her democratic character, and in the democratic functioning of her institutions. It is essential to amend the Constitution of the SR, especially the parts which define the responsibilities of the organs of the state administration. It is also essential to introduce various measures in the legislative area, one of which should be the acceptance of an act on state service, which should clearly define the rights and duties of state employees. It would facilitate the fight against corruption. Legislative measures to strengthen the independence of the courts, an act on the use of minority languages and others should be passed. The necessity of decentralization and increasing the responsibilities of local government are also indirectly connected with the effort of the SR to join the European Union. Within the state, decentralization has immense democratizing importance, and increases the opportunity of the citizen to directly influence public affairs. In foreign policy, it improves the possibilities of cross-frontier cooperation, and joining regions on the peripheries of states to form Euro-regions.

Good quality relations with neighbours are a condition of entry to the lucrative European political clubs - the European Union, the Western European Union and NATO as well. Slovakia is a neighbour of one of the present member states of the Union - Austria, and of three of the leading candidate countries - the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, as well as with Ukraine. In the framework of her integration efforts, Slovakia must develop and active differentiated policy towards each neighbour, and attempt together with them, to formulate the interests of the Central European region in relation to the European Union, and in the future, let us hope, within it.

#### 4. RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURS AND CENTRAL EUROPE

Central Europe as a separate political entity, disappeared from the map of Europe, with the coming of the Cold War. As the German conservative historian and political scientist Michael Stürmer laconically put it: "Central Europe was reduced to the frontier line between East and West". After the end of the Cold War, we experienced a rebirth of Central Europe and its return to history. The unsuccessful attempts to install a cooperative framework between the Central European countries – the so-called Visegrád Three, later Four – have been replaced by an individualist policy by the individual countries, beginning with the position of the Czech republic, at that time represented by the government of Vaclav Klaus.

In many ways, the present situation shows that detachment from Central Europe (which was also a significant motivating element for the Czech political elite at the time of the division of the Czechoslovak Federation) is not so simple, and that apart from their geographical position, Central European countries are connected by a similar political culture and similar problems with the political transition. Therefore, the incorporation of the first three countries into the Western community of democratic states will not mean the automatic "Westernization" of these countries, although it will obviously be accelerated. The factors in the development of the countries within the NATO security zone, and the countries which remain outside it, will continue to have much in common.

However, a characteristic feature of these processes may be an artificial division of the originally compact, although very differentiated Central European region. This will be accompanied by certain changes in communication links, which will gradually adapt to the new geo-political realities. For Slovakia, this will mean partial turning away from use of her communications network, although this effect will not be clearly perceptible in the short-term. The task for the Slovak political elite will be to convince Western partners of the openness of the Slovak possibilities in all fields of communication – commercial, road, special military transports and others. Let us mention only the extraordinarily positive reaction of the representatives of NATO, when they asked the Slovak government about the possibility of the transit of military material and contingents at the time of the operations on the territory of former Yugoslavia, when this request was promptly granted within 24 hours! This should be a sort of model for the future behaviour of the SR: to put it simply, behave as cooperatively in this area, as if we were already part of the NATO area. On the one hand, such an approach by Slovakia will alleviate the difficult position of the countries of NATO, which will not be territorially joined because of the geographical isolation of Hungary, and on the other hand, will show the real importance of

the territory of Slovakia as a communications and strategic link between the Western European region and the area of the Danube Basin.

The new form of the Central European region will also cause a special situation in that sensitive area of the security of Central Europe: the question of the Hungarian minority. The acceptance of Hungary into NATO, and the non-acceptance of Slovakia and Rumania, countries with large Hungarian minorities on their territories, will place this problem on the level of a problem between the political and military grouping of NATO and countries not organized in any military grouping (but participating, for example, in the programme Partnership for Peace). In this respect any risks and escalations are unacceptable for the leadership of NATO itself, which has no interest in getting involved in regional tensions. A positive result is a restraining effect on the Hungarian political elite, which even according to the constitution is oriented towards concern for their minorities beyond the frontiers. As an illustrative example, we will mention the strong criticism by Western representatives of the participation of Hungarian government representatives at the conference "Hungary and the Hungarians beyond the frontiers". This approach was repeated in the declaration of premier Gyula Horn, that the entry of Hungary to NATO will enable Hungary to deal with the minority question more resolutely, since her weight will be greater after joining the Alliance. The reverse is true, Hungary will have to adapt more to the strategic and unified plans of the Alliance, which will not be willing to tolerate a risky policy of nourishing minority problems. This also obliges Slovakia, that she will not order her minority policy with the possibility of any potential escalation, which would have to be solved other than by the classic means of diplomacy. If Slovakia removes such suspicions, her entry to NATO will be easier.

The acceptance of the three above mentioned countries and the non-acceptance of Slovakia (equally of Slovenia and Rumania) "combed" Central Europe into two, to put it euphemistically. In connection with this fact, West Central Europe and East Central Europe have begun to be mentioned, with Slovakia becoming a sort of western projection of East Central Europe, which has or should have its centre of gravity in a "Central Europeanized" Ukraine. The argument that historical and socio-cultural development also corresponds to this division is also gradually becoming part of the logic of this interpretation. However, a big risk, which the Slovak political elite should immediately uncover and reject, is encoded in this interpretation. The risk lies in the petrification of such a state for a longer time, that is, that East Central Europe with Ukraine at its head needs a longer time for democratization and transition to a market economy, and only then, can it become part of the Western political, economic and military groupings. Behind this interpretation is the hidden need of Western countries (or some of their politicians) to delay a further round of acceptance, and so satisfy the Russian political elite (such considerations also include the need for the existence of buffer zone and not a direct frontier between Russia and NATO or the EU, as long as Russia will not accept this situation). However, such a development is not acceptable to Slovakia for several reasons. Slovakia

is historically part of Western civilization, and is firmly anchored in Central Europe. Therefore, it is necessary that Slovakia, along side her neighbours and other natural Central European countries (e.g. Slovenia, Rumania, but also Croatia) should belong to the Central European part of an integrated Europe. Here, Slovak politicians should learn from the German example of the division of their country, when the West German politicians did not accept this situation and obstinately insisted on the existence of one Germany, and that its state of division was an anomaly. Such a division of ONE Central Europe (not two: East and West) is only a temporary anomalous state, and this anomaly can be resolved only by reintegration.

However, such a position does not contradict good cooperation with Ukraine, the importance of which will constantly increase. There is also an opportunity in the natural regionalization of Slovakia. The eastern part of Slovakia is much closer to Ukraine. Revival of the idea of a Carpathian Euroregion could be extraordinarily successful for Slovakia. In comparison with the Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian and Rumanian parts, the Slovak part of this region is by far the most developed, and so Slovakia could become the natural leader of this area. There is no reason for archaized fears of irredentism or the disintegration of Slovak territory. **We must also take into consideration that at the beginning of the next century, the axis of European security will consist of France – Germany – Poland – Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Slovakia, situated on the edge of this axis, must be prepared for this situation.**

Therefore, the priority for the medium to long-term foreign policy strategy of the Slovak Republic, must be intensification of Central European cooperation. Slovakia must be an active and cooperative partner in her immediate neighbourhood, on a bilateral and multi-lateral basis.

## Relations between Slovakia and the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is one of the key foreign policy partners of Slovakia, and in many areas their mutual relationship is specific. This is a result of many years of coexistence in the framework of a common state, linguistic closeness, and mutual connections in various spheres. Developments in the years 1993-1997 brought a marked mutual distancing. In spite of the fact that the two countries declared practically identical foreign policy priorities, their practical fulfillment or non-fulfillment led to divergent processes. At the same time, in relation to their degree of mutual integration, and after their model division of the common state, the two countries could also be a model of entry into the integration structures.

While up to the end of 1992 there was a fully integrated single Czechoslovak market and unified economy, from the 1st January 1993 two national economies came into existence, and this necessarily started the disintegration of

their unified market. The treaty on creating a customs union, the agreement on monetary union and a common labour market aimed to preserve as much as possible of the former economic integration of Czechoslovakia, to limit the inevitable costs of division and moderate the unavoidable decline in mutual trade. However the monetary union was maintained for only a few weeks, and on 8th February the monetary separation was carried out. Establishment of a customs union, made it easier for the two states to succeed to the bilateral and multi-lateral agreements and treaties, by which the Czecho-Slovak Federation was bound. In most cases it was a matter of automatic succession. The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), signed at the end of 1992, became an important part of the treaty system of the commercial policy of the two republics. Slovakia maintains a dominant position in the foreign trade of the Czech Republic with the CEFTA states. The rising trend of the trade of the Czech Republic with these states is continuing. Today, the Czech Republic is the most important commercial partner of Slovakia, in 1996 absorbing 31% of Slovak exports and producing 24.5% of Slovakia's imports. However, the customs union met with various problems, and did not function in the sense of a classic customs union, such as Benelux, because there was no common commercial policy towards third countries. **If the Czech Republic becomes a member of the European Union before Slovakia, it would clearly be the greatest challenge for the regime of mutual trade between the two countries.** According to the development up to now, and according to the Luxembourg summit of the EU, this scenario appears to be very probable. If this situation actually happens, it will mean that thanks to the common trade policy, the Czech republic will be forced to renounce the customs union treaty. On the basis of the European Agreement between the EU and the SR, a zone of free trade will be created by 2001, but this will not secure consistent liberalization of trade in agricultural products, as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU. On entry to the EU, the Czech Republic will have to accept this policy, so that a reduced liberalization of mutual trade would affect agricultural products. **The regulation of trade with the SR, and the whole complex of relations between the two countries, in so far as they are now arranged differently to relations with other countries, will, perhaps, represent one of the most problematic points in the negotiations of the Czech Republic about the conditions for entering the European Union.** However, to agree, although for a transitional period, certain special arrangements in the area of commercial policy, will be difficult to achieve, in relation to the single internal market of the European Union.

The scenario for mutual relations between the two countries, not only in the economic, but also in the political, military and security areas, will develop from the position of the Slovak Republic towards the process of its own integration into the Western structures and the associated realization, especially of internal political changes. From this point of view, it is possible to outline three possible basic scenarios for the development of mutual relations.

<sup>2</sup> Brzezinski, Z.: The Grand Chessboard. BasicBooks, New York 1997, p. 85.

In the optimum scenario, Slovakia will accept the reservation of the European Union and other partners and will take strong measures to secure the functioning of the rule of law, and will regain the confidence of her partners. In this case, the divergence of the two societies will stop and the differences, which are still not great, will again vanish. Such a change will not only increase the integration chances of Slovakia, but also significantly improve the prospects of her partners from the so-called Visegrád Group in talks with the European Union. In the neutral scenario, according to which the SR accepts only some of the recommendations and continues the dangerous auction between East and West, the divergence of the two countries will be slower, but will not stop. According to the pessimistic variant, the ruling political elite will continue with its behaviour up to now, and will ignore the recommendations of partners. In this case, Slovakia and her inhabitants will be forced to put up with the growing isolation of the country. This scenario will mean, the initially slow, but later rapid deterioration of the economic situation, imposition of an electronic curtain (the Schengen Agreements) around 94% of her frontiers and strong internal political tension within the country.

A responsible political elite must concentrate on the maximum possible fulfillment of the optimal scenario. Czech - Slovak relations have immense potential for the future, if both sides can overcome the trauma of the division of the common state, and harmonize their pace during integration into the European Union. This potential is not only in the economic sphere, but also in the areas of culture and education.

## Relations between Slovakia and Hungary

From various points of view, relations between the Slovak Republic and neighbouring Hungary are among Slovakia's key foreign policy relationships. The Slovaks and Magyars or Hungarians have lived together in the area of the Danubian Basin for more than a thousand years. This is reflected in their cultural connections and common history, different interpretations of which not only unite, but also divide. After the break up of the Czecho-Slovak Federation, Slovak-Hungarian relations acquired a new dimension, and undoubtedly became the most problematic and most sensitive of all Slovakia's relations with her neighbours. The frontier between Slovakia and Hungary is not only the longest frontier of both states, but of all Slovakia's frontiers, the most moved in history. Another factor influencing mutual relations is the numerous Magyar or Hungarian minority (about 10% of the population of the SR) living along the frontier. Since the second half of the eighties, mutual relations have also been complicated by questions connected with construction of the Gabčíkovo - Nagymaros water works.

In the nineties, Slovak and Hungarian foreign policy have declared the same strategic aim - gradual incorporation into the security system of Western Europe and integration into the Western European political and economic

structures. This common strategic aim to a large extent muffled the mutual tension, and undoubtedly had great influence on the signing of the Slovak-Hungarian treaty in the Matignon Palace in Paris on 31st March 1995. However, the effect of the international recognition of the willingness of Slovakia and Hungary to settle their relations was significantly reduced by the delay to the ratification of the treaty by the National Council of the Slovak Republic (in March 1996, a year after the treaty was signed), by the adoption of a special interpretative supplement, and by the lack of political will to fulfill the letter of the treaty with concrete actions. On the other hand, the Hungarian elite demonstrated to the West its wish for good neighbourly relations, not only with Slovakia but also with Rumania. Hungary, especially after the Madrid summit of the heads of member states of NATO, and the Luxembourg summit of the member states of the EU, does not need to concentrate on her image abroad, and so will not have to concentrate so much on new concessions to her northern neighbour. **It is necessary to say that, from the point of view of the internal political situation, position on the international scene and the general perceptions of the inhabitants, the problem of Slovak - Hungarian relations differs in importance in the two states. In Slovakia, the Hungarian phenomenon is felt much more strongly, than the Slovak phenomenon in Hungary. For these reasons, the Slovak side in particular, should not only work out a comprehensive long-term strategy for mutual relations, but should also initiate a rapprochement.** The Slovak-Hungarian relationship is a textbook example of the complex character of foreign policy, the need for its coordination and connection with internal policy.

Solution of the problem of Slovak-Hungarian relations, and therefore the problem of relations between Bratislava and Budapest derives to a large extent from the relations between the Slovaks and Magyars or Hungarians in Slovakia, that is the relationship between the Slovak majority and Hungarian minority in Slovakia. This relationship is one of Slovakia's main internal political problems. This problem will continue as long as adequate communication does not exist between the Hungarian political elite representing the votes of the ethnic Hungarians who are citizens of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak political elite, and as long as the fears of the Slovak political elite or misuse of the fears of ethnic Slovaks prevents full participation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia in political power and stops it taking a share in the political and moral responsibility for the development of the Slovak Republic. **If an equal Slovak - Hungarian dialogue and cooperation in the framework of the Slovak Republic is absent, a significant improvement in relations between Slovakia and Hungary cannot be expected. The connection with internal Slovak politics, and the fact that these questions concern the areas of education, culture and the social sphere, gives the question of Slovak - Hungarian coexistence and good relations a complex character, and requires a strategy with a horizon far exceeding one electoral period.**

The problem of the coexistence of minority and majority in the Slovak Republic is one of the fundamental questions in the building of the state. An effort to build a centralized national state creates a naturally hostile environment for minorities, not only ethnic, but of any type. A possible cure for this is decentralization and regionalization, building of local democracy, composed of an optimal number of autonomous or self-administering units established on the territorial principle. This is also in harmony with the process of European integration, which places emphasis on the principle of subsidiarity. The creation of so-called Euro-regions and cross-frontier cooperation also forms an important part of the general integration process.

Improvement of relations between the Slovak majority and Hungarian minority in Slovakia is therefore, a *conditio sine qua non* for a transition to a new, higher, quality of bilateral relations between Slovakia and Hungary, but it is only one aspect of the many-layered relationships between the two countries and two societies. Mutual relations have significant security, economic and cultural dimensions. In the area of security, good cooperation exists between the armies of the two states, whether on a bilateral basis or in the framework of the programme Partnership for Peace. Slovakia, which has not given up her ambition to join the North Atlantic Alliance, should continue this cooperation, and develop it in her own interest. Every closer relationship with a country of the Alliance or a future member will bring the SR closer to the West, and create the image of a cooperative partner. Unfortunately, at present both armies are struggling with similar problems, especially shortage of financial resources. In the security area, cooperation is also important between the departments aimed at the struggle against organized crime, the distribution of drugs, illegal migration and other dangerous phenomena. This cooperation also has special importance, because of the simple fact that Slovakia's longest frontier is with Hungary.

In spite of the facts that two neighbouring states are involved and the two nations share a large part of their histories, it is necessary to do a very large amount of work in the area of mutual acquaintance, minimalization of the influence of bad stereotypes and mutual prejudices. This requires a large amount of deliberate good work, with great responsibility lying not only on the political elites, but also on the Slovak and Hungarian intelligentsias. The parts of these groups, which are not held captive by any national errors, must deliberately work on building trust and mutual empathy among the ordinary citizens. The duty of the healthy part of the intelligentsia is to paralyse the manipulative effort, with internal-political motives, of the "transfer of population", "revision of Trianon" type. Cultural exchanges, exchanges of students, joint academic projects, support for regional and cross-frontier cooperation, as well as cooperation between non-governmental organizations in the two countries could contribute to this in an appropriate way. **The governments should stimulate this cooperation by creating a joint Slovak-Hungarian fund, which would finance this type of activity.**

## Relations between Slovakia and Poland

Since regaining real independence in 1989, Poland has had clearly defined national interests, and an exemplary foreign policy flowing from them. At the beginning of the nineties, she was able to achieve excellent relations with newly reunited Germany, in spite of the historical problems which burdened the relations between the two nations. At a time, when representatives of the West spoke only with Mikhail Gorbachev, Polish diplomacy also maintained active contacts with Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kravchuk. The result was that Poland was the first country in the world to recognize the independence of Ukraine, and today her relations with Ukraine are regarded as a desirable model. After the break up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Poland was placed on the level of a regional power, and was the main driving force behind the eastward enlargement of NATO and the European Union.

Slovakia has no conflicts with Poland, and a relationship almost unmarked by history. In history, Poland was mainly defined on the east-west axis, and so her southern neighbour (or neighbours) was left aside. However, at present, the Slovak Republic, marked by its internal political problems, is a problematic partner for Poland and the fulfillment of her foreign policy aims. From the Polish point of view, the relationship created in the period 1995-1998 between Slovakia and Russia may be problematic, because it is not clear to a third party, what the cooperation between these two countries is about. From the point of view of European and trans-Atlantic security, Poland plays an important role in the region, and is a key state in the first wave of enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance, to which is added the factor of a relatively strong Polish lobby in the USA. A possible closer relationship between Poland and Slovakia would not only bring the advantage of the weight of Poland on the international scene, but compared to relations with Budapest and Prague, there is a greater chance that such help would be perceived in Slovakia as sincere and unselfish. In return, Slovakia can offer to help Poland with the "Central Europeanization" of Ukraine, and so strengthen stability in the region with her own effort.

Stability will also be strengthened by mutual military cooperation, the foundations which were laid by a treaty in 1993. The two armies cooperate in the questions of the transformation of armies, in questions of scientific and technical cooperation, conversion of the arms industry and implementation of the programme Partnership for Peace. The two ministries of defence gave the green light to cross-frontier cooperation between the Krakow military region and the second corps of the Army of the SR with its headquarters at Prešov. The two military academies also entered into cooperation. The two sides have an interest in cooperation in building up their tele-communications systems, the development of radar equipment and the modernization of their tanks. Slovakia is part of a joint project of regional defence, including the construction of an integrated system of air space control.

Cross-frontier cooperation and the construction of Euro-regions is an impor-

tant element in neighbourly relations. Improvement of cross-frontier cooperation and the opening of a larger number of frontier crossings will strengthen the economy of frontier areas and enable the two nations to get to know each other better on a practical level. On both sides, there are several regions which strongly gravitate towards each other: the areas of Zrywec in Poland and Orava and Kysuce in Slovakia, the Tatry Euro-region, two spa and health resorts with a long tradition of mutual relations – Krynica and Bardejov, and the Carpathian Euro-region, although the Slovak side has not approached this very constructively.

The Slovak Republic has in Poland, a strong partner for its integration efforts in all areas. Slovakia and Poland should share in building regional stability, not only through mutual cooperation, but, let us say, also by a coordinated strategy towards Slovakia's largest neighbour – Ukraine. The Slovak Republic should strengthen the promising and developing cross-frontier cooperation and end the unfortunate situation with Slovak participation in the Carpathian Euro-region. It is also important to cooperate in the areas of education, and culture, where the Poles traditionally have a strong potential and as a result of linguistic closeness, such cooperation is very promising.

## Relations between Slovakia and Austria

In spite of having only a short geographical frontier with Slovakia, Austria plays an extraordinarily important role, and not only in bilateral relations, but also from the wider regional, geo-political and geo-economic points of view in Central Europe. Austria is the only neighbour of the SR, which is a full member of the EU, and it is actually through Austria that we become neighbours of the EU, the political and economic community into which we are trying to integrate. We are also linked with Austria by a common historical and cultural Central European tradition from the time of the existence of the multinational Habsburg Monarchy. This tradition, which has so far unfortunately not been adopted or revitalized by the Slovak political elite, could have great importance for both countries in the area of coming closer and preparing for functioning in the multi-ethnic and multicultural environment of an integrated Europe. In this direction, both countries could use for some degree of exclusivity of mutual relations, the fact that in the whole of Europe no other two countries have their capital cities so geographically close to each other. Cooperation between Bratislava and Vienna could bring real successes not only in the area of culture, but also in the economic and business area, in banking, tourism and other areas. However, for such links to function and for various joint economic projects to develop, very good neighbourly relations are necessary on the political level. So far, they have been hindered by Slovakia's internal political problems with her transition to democracy. At the same time, during the whole period of strained relations between the democratic West and the SR, Austria and her leading politicians were probably the most consensual partners, who had a real interest in a de-

mocratic and stable development in the SR. As in the case of other neighbouring countries, this interest is clearly motivated by interest in her own security and in a stabilized environment, which will not be a threat for her own development. The Slovak political representatives should use this natural motivation and attempt to gain Austrian support for their aims and national interests, so that Austria will not only speak for them in the environment of the EU, but also give significant support. Austria has the most recent experience of entering the EU and of negotiations with the European Commission. The Slovak side should attempt to gain this know-how for all the relevant areas (agriculture, heavy industry, the chemical industry, transfer through the country etc. The member of the European Commission responsible for agriculture is the Austrian politician Fischler). Obviously, during the present development, the Slovak side must be aware that the conditions of entry are continually developing and gradually being modified. The EU is a constantly pulsating and developing political-economic formation. Therefore, the experiences of our neighbours (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) from their talks about entry to the EU, may be much more up to date, and not only from the point of view of developments in the EU, but also because of the greater similarity of internal conditions between Slovakia and these neighbours.

It is very important for Slovakia to carefully observe the internal political discussion between the Austrian political parties about the possibility of joining NATO. It is also necessary to very precisely monitor the views of the Brussels headquarters of NATO on this process. Austria, as the only country which occasionally sent out signals about interest in joining NATO, was not definitively assigned to any group from the point of view of sequence. From the point of view of strategic plans, Slovakia was similarly definitively excluded, at the Madrid summit, from the first group, but was not assigned to the second or third. Therefore, if the situation begins to develop more rapidly with Austria, it could be possible to speak of an intermediate round of entry to NATO, formed by Austria and Slovakia. So far it is only an illusory possibility, which Austrian and Slovak politicians, together with NATO analysts, could discuss. Its advantages for NATO are more than clear, since the geo-strategic map after the first enlargement of NATO by three countries will not be advantageous from the points of view of territorial and communications homogeneity, rather the reverse. However, the addition of Austria and Slovakia to the members of NATO would fill the "holes", so that Central Europe can become a fully integrated and complementary defence community, which will be a pillar of European security.

The Slovak political elite cannot avoid further sensitive areas in bilateral relations with Austria. The most serious problem in this relationship is the opposition of the Austrian politicians to the existence or construction of nuclear energy facilities. An especially delicate problem here is the completion of Mochovce nuclear power station. The Slovak side could accept the compromise of taking the older types out of service after the completion of this nuclear power station. In this area it is necessary to carry on a full dialogue with the Aus-



trian side on both the political and expert levels, and to allow Austrian experts to visit and check the safety measures during the completion of Mochovce. The Slovak side must attempt to persuade the Austrians of the necessity of completing this power station from the point of view of Slovakia's energy needs, but it is also necessary to secure the highest possible level of safety, not only for the sake of neighbouring countries, but especially for the population of Slovakia. If some problems arise in this area, the Slovak side must also reevaluate some preceding commercial contracts and secure, in cooperation with the best international companies, a level of quality that will not arouse any doubts about the quality and safety of this project.

## Relations between Slovakia and Ukraine

Ukraine is the largest neighbour of the Slovak Republic, in both extent of territory and size of population. In spite of the fact that the basic treaty of good neighbourliness and cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia was signed by presidents L. Kravchuk and M. Kovač in Kiev in 1993, the first official visit of the Ukrainian foreign minister A. Zlenko to Bratislava happened only in February 1994, and the first official talks between government delegations headed by the prime ministers occurred only in June 1995 in Kiev – two years after the signing of the basic treaty. Since neighbouring countries are involved, this is at least an unusually long delay. The Slovak approach to her eastern neighbour is also characterized by the fact that since June 1996, the SR has had no diplomatic representation in Kiev on the level of ambassador. In addition, Ukraine remains an unknown country for the majority of the Slovak political public, not to mention the general population. The Slovak mass media have no permanent correspondents in Kiev (this also applies in reverse), and the little information about Ukraine, which reaches Slovakia, mostly comes from Moscow.

**It was typical of the Slovak way of looking at the importance of Ukraine, that, figuratively speaking, its "discovery" happened only in 1995, and then only in connection with her importance for the development of Slovak relations with the Russian Federation.** In the words of the Slovak deputy prime minister Sergej Kozlik, during the first government talks in Kiev in June 1995: "For us Ukraine is the gateway to the Russian market and its permeability must be increased at least ten-fold". Ukraine was evaluated by him as a "gate to something or somebody", not as a partner worthy of attention for her own sake.

There was a positive shift in the Slovak approach to Ukraine only in the second half of 1995. At that time, Slovakia was the only neighbour of Ukraine with stagnating commercial exchange. Although Ukraine's commercial turnover with Hungary, Poland and Russia was constantly increasing, with Slovakia it had been stagnant or sometimes falling for a long time.

If we look at the weak general information base for bilateral relations, the va-

cancy in the post of Slovak ambassador in Kiev since June 1996, the slow growth in commercial exchange, the long-lasting failure to solve Slovak participation in the completion of the Křivý Rog combine at Dolinská, **we can state that the level and quality of Slovak – Ukrainian political relations is still very low.**

At the same time, relations with Ukraine are important to Slovak foreign policy on at least three basic levels – bilateral, Eastern European and Central European. The processes occurring in Ukraine can directly influence the international position of Slovakia and the pursuit of Slovak interests. **Therefore, it is necessary to break through the information barrier and improve the information structure of mutual relations.** The building up of standard bilateral relations must be supported by a sufficiently informed public, so that there will be the minimum space for "secret diplomacy".

Improvement of Slovak-Ukrainian relations assumes, among other things, a change in the position of Slovakia towards the development of cross-frontier cooperation in the framework of the Carpathian Euro-region. So far this is the only project for cross-frontier cooperation, in the framework of which, cooperation can develop between the frontier regions of western Ukraine and those of north-eastern Slovakia. In the framework of stabilizing the situation on their frontiers, Slovakia and Ukraine must also solve the Rusyn question in their mutual interest. The basis for such a solution must be respect for the free choice of ethnic identity by part of the population living on their common frontier. Only this can eliminate the threat of the growth of ethnic tension, and the potentially undesirable possibility of the intervention of third parties.

Slovakia and Ukraine have common interests in Eastern Europe. These interests concern – at least – comparable positions in the transit of energy raw materials from Russia, and hopefully also from the Caspian Sea region. Slovakia and Ukraine should coordinate their approaches to pursuing their interests in this area, in relation to third parties. So far, such coordination has been visibly absent, and this does not contribute to fulfillment of the interests of either side. Coordination of policy with Ukraine in the area of the transit of energy raw materials to the European markets would contribute to a balanced Slovak eastern policy. Development of relations with Ukraine should enable the achievement of this strategic aim of Slovak foreign policy.

If Ukraine successfully continues with the transformation process, and continues the successful development of relations with the Western integration structures (as in the years 1995-1996), in the medium term she will become one of the key countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Regardless of whether Slovakia gains membership of NATO and the EU in the first wave, Ukraine will become one of her most important partners in Central Europe. If Slovakia wants to preserve the possibility of membership of the Western structures, she must show the ability to be not only a consumer of stability and prosperity, but also a partner able to bear regional responsibility, including the development of relations with neighbours. Slovakia will also have to fundamentally reevaluate her existing relations with Ukraine from this point of view.

## 5. BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

### The Federal Republic of Germany

In size of territory, human and economic potential, the Federal Republic of Germany ranks among the greatest European countries. For Slovakia it remains an important fact, that Germany is a regional power, which has traditionally had a significant influence on events in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, and will continue to influence this region in the immediate future.

Germany has extraordinary political and economic influence in the EU. The statement that Germany is the motor of European integration has become almost a euphemistic adage. This fact is important not only for the development of the EU, but also for Germany herself. The idea of European integration is also an answer to the "German question" – how can such a large state exist in the heart of Europe without threatening the peaceful development of the surrounding countries (recalling the tragic European experiences with Germany over the last century). Therefore, the continuing successful development of European integration is also important for the development and position of unified Germany.

After the first wave of enlargement of NATO with three Central European countries and of the EU with five candidates, a new specific situation will be created, with Germany, after decades, losing her risky and traumatizing role on the edge of the Western world, and the role of front-line states passing to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. A weakening of the intensity of Germany's engagement beyond her eastern frontiers is expected in the near future, in connection with this fact, as well as with the internal economic problems as a result of the unification of Germany. In this period, the main priority for the Germans will be solving the problems of the EU, which will appear together with the implementation of internal structural reforms in the Union. When the Western countries decide on a further wave of enlargement will depend on the overall development within the EU, as well as on the results of the addition of new countries to NATO and the EU and the future character of the West's relations with Russia. The Germans, who in the interests of their own security, pressed so vehemently for the first wave of enlargement will not need to repeat such massive pressure on the EU and NATO.

Obviously, the other countries of Central Europe will be the object of German interest. This also concerns the Balkans and the Baltic states, where the Germans also have their commitments. In the previous period, the Germans already presented the view that they have a strong interest in a stable situation in the area of the middle Danube, indirectly indicating their support for Hungary.

The Slovak side must use this argumentation in mutual talks and persuade the Germans that the form of Central Europe after the first enlargement of NATO will not provide comprehensive stability for the countries which are formally in the zone of stability. It is precisely through the excluded countries (Slovakia, Rumania) that the zone of stability could be infiltrated by dangerous instability in their present-day forms – for example, possible escalation of inter-ethnic conflicts, international organized crime, migration of the inhabitants of threatened countries. Slovak politicians and diplomats must strengthen the view of German politicians that their newly created security "cushion" or protective ring – "Sperrgürtel" – of the above mentioned three countries is not an effective security wall for Germany, and that in future potential threats of this type may also negatively affect the German environment. The only answer to these threats is a further enlargement of the security structures further to the east, to which the Germans should contribute, and at the same time provide continual stabilizing political and economic support to the countries which are not included in the security and political-economic structures (NATO, EU).

After not being accepted into the Euro-Atlantic structures, Slovakia finds herself on the edge. The Germans did not cast doubt on the historical and cultural position of Slovakia in Central Europe – quite the reverse – but they did point to Slovakia's problems with the democratic transition, and the dual approach to European integration and flirtation with Russia. The Slovaks also disqualified themselves in the eyes of the Germans. Therefore, it will be important to carry out reforms in the near future, introducing parliamentary democracy and the rule of law in reality, and at the same time, to unambiguously distance ourselves from the non-standard policy towards Russia and the cultivation of special relations with this so far, politically uncrystallized state. Distancing from the previous Slovak policy towards Russia, must be very clearly and repeatedly articulated towards the German side.

The absence of bilateral talks between the Slovak prime minister and the German chancellor is a long-term problem in Slovak-German bilateral relations. **One of the first journeys of the new Slovak prime minister should be to Germany. Apart the new start with democratic reforms and renewed functioning of the rule of law, the Slovak side should prepare the ground for a visit to Bratislava by the German chancellor. Since Germany is the strongest state in the European Union, this would be an expression of support, not only from Germany, but from the European Union.**

Political parties play a significant role in Germany and in the EU. From the point of view of the national interests of the SR, it is important to reach agreement between the parliamentary political parties on foreign policy and approaches to Germany as a key partner. The political parties in Slovakia should maintain and intensify contacts with their parliamentary partners in Germany, inform them about events in Slovakia, and maintain their German partners' interest in Slovak problems. At the same time, however, they must mutually coordinate their strategy and avoid problems, which could cause disputes on the

German side between the ruling coalition and the opposition in some controversial questions. The good preparation of these parties in some questions, could lead to a good inter-party consensus during talks with Slovakia.

The Slovak side should not limit its attention to the federal level of Bonn/Berlin, but should also cooperate with individual Bundesländer. Priority needs to be given to Bundesländer, which already have contacts and some experience with the Slovak Republic. These are especially Baden-Württemberg, Hessen, Brandenburg, Saxony and Bavaria.

The question of compensation for Slovak victims of Nazi persecution cannot be left out of bilateral discussions. This question is more urgent because the age of those waiting for compensation is very high. According to an estimate by the Slovak side, 13,385 people are involved. In these talks, Slovakia must unambiguously insist that she is the legal successor of Czechoslovakia, which was on the side of the victorious Allies in the Second World War. The Slovak political elite must unambiguously reject any suggestions from the German side that Slovakia is in a different historical situation to the Czech side, with which it has been talking about these matters since the conclusion of the Czech-German declaration. Here it is important that the Slovak politicians and diplomats appeal to the "Declaration of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to the Parliaments and Nations of the World" of 3rd December 1992, which unambiguously stated the succession of the Slovak Republic to the Czecho-Slovak Federal Republic and its succession to the bilateral and multilateral treaties concluded by the Czecho-Slovak Federal Republic.

## The United States of America

The United States of America (USA) as a global superpower, leader of NATO and guarantor of European security, is one of the key countries for Slovak foreign policy. At present, the USA is dominant in four decisive areas of global power: in the military area, she is the only country with really global reach, economically she is the locomotive of global growth, although in some ways Japan and Germany are competing, she has technological dominance in decisive areas of innovation, and culturally she has a reach incomparably greater than any other country. The combination of these four aspects create the only global super power. As a result of the wide interests of American foreign policy, Slovakia cannot be expected to form a separate chapter in her foreign policy. In the USA, Slovakia is perceived as one of the post-communist countries and part of the Central European region. Slovakia is perceived from the point of view of the general interests of the USA in Europe.

The fundamental interest of the USA in Europe is prevention of the appearance of a new hostile hegemony or possible hegemony, which could directly threaten the security of the USA, as happened in the cases of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. After being defeated in the Second World War, Germany

carried out internal democratic reforms and integrated herself with other countries in NATO and the European Union, so that she no longer presents such a threat, in spite of the fact that she has a relatively strong position in Europe. Russia is the other potential threat. After the fall of communism and the break up of the Soviet Union, the ability and will of Russia to threaten the USA significantly diminished, although it is impossible to exclude the reemergence of Russia as a potential threat in the future. The question of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and biological in the post-Soviet region, is an important problem for the USA.

**Apart from her basic security interests in Europe, the USA also has a general interest in supporting and widening the community of countries with democratic political systems and free market economies.** After the Second World War, this interest was one of the decisive determinants of US policy towards Western Europe. After the fall of communism, the USA has an important, if not vital, interest in widening this community of states, through support for the transformation of the post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. **The instruments used to fulfill this interest are not primarily military, but the security presence of the USA in Europe is widely perceived as an assisting support for favourable economic and political development – just as the North Atlantic Alliance helped Western Europe to achieve stability and prosperity in the fifties.**

The security presence of the USA in Europe is primarily justified by the security of Europe as such, but it also contributes to the ability of the United States to project force into other regions, especially Africa and the Middle East. The North Atlantic Council has agreed on significant political and institutional changes, which will form the basis for future "out of area" activities in cooperation with European allies.

The United States also has significant economic interests in Western Europe and growing economic interests in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The European Union is the largest trade partner of the USA with 22.8% of exports and 19.7% of imports. Western Europe is also the largest destination for direct foreign investment by the USA. Investment from the USA in Central and Eastern Europe is also growing rapidly, and is a basic element in the global strategies of American companies in the areas of energy, the automobile industry and consumer goods. Apart from direct economic interests, the USA also has great interest in cooperation with European countries in groupings such as the G-7/8, G-10 and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in directing the global economy.

**Slovakia's interest in talks with the USA is especially to gain US support for Slovak membership of NATO and the OECD.** Representatives of the USA, on all levels and in harmony with their general policy towards Europe, have expressed interest in the smooth process of integration of the SR into the European and trans-Atlantic structures, but at the same time, have persistent-

ly pointed to negative factors, which go beyond the framework usual in functioning democracies. They informed the Slovak side about their fears in various ways, the sharpest of them being the demarche to the government of the Slovak Republic in 1995. The Slovak side reacted to these observations and requests by trivializing them or accusing the American side of being insufficiently and one-sidedly informed, and practically did not react to them. The result came at the Madrid summit of NATO in July 1997, when Slovakia not only did not appear in the list of countries invited to join the Alliance, but was not mentioned as a hot candidate for a second round of enlarging the Alliance. Slovakia did not use her chance to become a member of the Alliance together with her neighbours in the region, and did not use the strong pressure on the US Congress from the other future members. Slovakia alone will not be able to apply such concentrated pressure, and will have to wait for the other countries in the region, when they are prepared, and for the decision of the member countries of the Alliance about a second round of enlargement. Slovakia must make the required changes in legislation, remove the controversial acts and proposed legislative measures in the National Council of the SR, and introduce a non-confrontational method of governing (cooperation or at least communication with political opponents, ethnic minorities and others). After making these basic changes, Slovakia must concentrate on intensively influencing the American administration, Congress and public opinion. It is necessary to continue with the so far successful cooperation between the armies of the two states, whether in the wider framework of the programme Partnership for Peace or on a bilateral basis. The Slovak republic also has a natural interest in the development of economic cooperation, and should create favourable conditions for the entry of American capital and investment. This would naturally increase the interest of the USA in the Slovak Republic.

## France

France and the Federal Republic of Germany form the basic axis of the present day European Union. Together with Germany, France most strongly represents the vision of a united Europe, and so is attempting to change the status quo. No decision of the European "Fifteen" can be accepted without French agreement and support. For this reason, France is one of the key bilateral partners of the Slovak Republic.

French interests in Central Europe are not as strong as those of Germany, but are concentrated more on the Mediterranean region and the countries of the Maghreb. In spite of this, France also declares an interest in this region, and supports the enlargement of the European Union, although she places emphasis on the institutional changes which must be made within the Union before its enlargement. Among the Central European candidates for entry to the Union, France especially supports Poland for political and security rea-

sons. The formation of the so-called Weimar Three (France - Germany - Poland) is also a practical expression of this support, which should form the backbone of European security in future. France also supported a wider variant of enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance, especially favouring the entry of strategically important, but economically relatively weak Rumania. Slovakia should have in France, a natural ally and supporter of her entry to the Alliance.

It is especially in the interests of Slovakia to strengthen her economic ties with France, and attract a larger amount of French capital investment to Slovakia. The two countries are developing relatively strong activity in the area of cultural cooperation, but there are also possibilities for improvement here, especially where the presentation of Slovak culture in France is concerned.

## The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The United Kingdom is historically one of the key actors in foreign policy, not only in Europe, but in the world. This is also expressed in the fact that she is one of the five countries with a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. During the twentieth century, British foreign policy has undergone enormous development - from the foreign policy of the greatest colonial power to the foreign policy of a member of the European Union. In the sixties, Great Britain sent most of her exports to former colonies and only 20% to Europe, but today more than half of British exports go to Europe. In spite of this trend, Great Britain remains relatively reserved towards continental, especially Franco-German plans for European integration, and places emphasis on the inter-governmental character of cooperation in the framework of the EU.

In the area of security, Great Britain, together with the United States, supports the widest possible Euro-Atlantic cooperation or partnership. Thanks to this position and her natural international weight, Great Britain is a strong voice in the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance. Great Britain supports widening the Alliance to the states of Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen European security, but also with the idea that these states, especially Poland, will strengthen the trans-Atlantic dimension of cooperation in the area of security. In this case, Britain understands the countries of the Central European region as natural allies for the fulfilment of her ideas about security in Europe. In the area of European integration, she also supports the entry of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe because of the idea that states with relatively recently acquired sovereignty will not easily give it up, and will support the British emphasis on the inter-governmental character of functioning in the framework of the European Union.

Thanks to her membership of important international organizations and international position, Great Britain is one of the key partners for Slovakia in the area of international relations. Slovakia is making an effort to win British support in various international fora. **In the area of bilateral cooperation, British aid is important for Slovakia in the area of privatization (among the members of**

the EU, Great Britain has most experience in this area), deregulation and foreign investment. In spite of the fact that Great Britain has not joined the first phase of European monetary union, London remains one of the most important world financial and business centres, and this should also be reflected in the diplomatic representation of the SR in London and mutual relations on various levels.

The mass exodus of Slovak Romany to Great Britain, where they requested asylum, was a significant problem on bilateral relations between Great Britain and Slovakia in the years 1997-1998. The Slovak Romany, like the Czech Romany, created an extraordinarily complicated situation in the port towns of south-east England. This situation required clear steps from the Slovak side, especially from the side of the government, which did not react adequately to this problem. A further mass exodus could lead to the British side introducing a visa obligation for citizens of the Slovak republic. Any reintroduction of a visa obligation cannot be seen as a short-term phenomenon, and would undoubtedly mean a significant worsening of mutual relations. In this case, it is again possible to point to a close connection between domestic and foreign policy.

## Italy

The potential for Slovak-Italian relations, measured by geographical distance (e.g. Bratislava - Venice) and common interests still remains insufficiently used. Especially the industrial north of Italy represents one of the strongest economic areas in Europe, and closer economic cooperation could be developed with it. Italy has experienced political shocks since 1989, which affected and threatened the speed of Italy in the framework of European integration. The seriousness of the domestic political situation diverted attention from questions of foreign policy. In spite of this, Italy is a significant state in the framework of the European Union, and one which has joined the project of a common European currency. Enlargement of the zone of stability into Central Europe would undoubtedly bring long-term gains for Italy, as for Germany. Therefore she supports enlargement of the European Union to include the associated states. Cooperation with Italy in the framework of the Central European Initiative regional association, is important for Slovakia.

## The Vatican

Relations with the Holy See are especially important for the Slovak Republic, the majority of the population of which professes the Catholic faith, and where the Church traditionally has a strong position. The two visits of Pope John Paul II to Slovakia since 1989, and the frequent visits of Slovak politicians to the Vatican also confirm this. Various successful Slovaks work in

the service of the Vatican, and influence the activity of the Church in Slovakia. The Church plays an important role in the process of spiritual renewal of the Slovak nations and can significantly assist the mental rebirth of society from socialist paternalism to a society of people who understand the importance of freedom and individual responsibility. As a result of traditionally good relations, the Vatican could significantly help Slovakia to place herself on the international scene.

## The Russian Federation

A characteristic feature of Slovak - Russian relations is the vast initial disproportion in the mutual size of the two partners, which is a pre-condition for a de facto unequal partnership. A difference of interest in bilateral relations inevitably flows from this disproportion. Russia is not dependent on Slovak economic production and commercial exchange with Slovakia. On the other side, this certainly cannot be said of the dependence of Slovakia on Russian energy raw materials, especially crude oil, gas and nuclear fuels. Slovakia serves as a strategically important transit country for the supply of Russian crude oil and gas to Western Europe, but she is not the only possible transit route for Russia. Russia represents a huge market, offering almost unlimited opportunities for Slovak business circles. The small Slovak market has practically no importance for Russia. The same applies to comparison of the security parameters of the two partners. Slovakia does not even represent an imaginary military threat to Russia. The reverse cannot be claimed, because Russia has a military potential really able to threaten Slovakia. If in the case of Slovakia, it is possible to assume above all a natural economic interest in the development of mutual relations, in the case of Russia, this interest is insignificant from the point of view of advantages. For Russia, relations with Slovakia have a mainly political-strategic dimension, perceived in a wider, at least Central European context.

**Slovak foreign policy must rid itself of illusions about the model nature of relations with Russia. These relations need to be standardized as classic bilateral relations. The division of the economic aspects of cooperation from the political and security is a pre-condition.** To the pragmatism of these relations, it is necessary to add a real economic dimension, by creating a favourable framework for the business activities of Slovak companies, but certainly not at the expense of the political links of the state, or of the integration policy, towards which these links are rightfully directed. The institutionalization of Slovak - Russian economic relations, pursuing the creation of a free trade zone or customs union, is incompatible with the economic integration of the SR into the EU, and other international ties of the Slovak Republic (WTO, CEFTA, the customs union with the Czech Republic).

**Diversification of supplies of energy raw materials remains a strategic task for Slovakia. Part of the economic lobby, connected with the proces-**

ing and transit of cheap Russian raw materials, profits from the present situation and has no interest in changing it. This short-term advantage is not only placed above everything (not to mention the political and security interests of the state), but also threatens the position of Slovakia in the framework of the economic area of the European Union. It is necessary to make Slovak - Russian economic relations as transparent as possible, and eliminate the situation in which economic interest groups have the possibility to place their own short-term interests above the long-term interests of the state. In this, it is necessary to start from the fact that Slovakia has an over-dimensioned economic potential and needs to export. This is possible only to the solvent market of the EU. The Russian market or the markets of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States are promising for Slovakia in the long-term, but not at present or in the medium-term future.

In the area of security, Slovakia should free herself from dangerous illusions about the possibility of neutrality with the support of Russia. Not only would such neutrality not guarantee the security of the SR, but it is not possible for it to be internationally recognized and respected. The Russian diplomatic signature is most clearly readable in the discussions about neutrality for Slovakia or vagueness of Slovak security policy in questions such as the enlargement of NATO. This problem is the quintessence of Russian political interest in bilateral relations with Slovakia.

When building standard relations with Russia, it is important not to be burdened with the myth of Slavonic community. This is a result of unrealized political expectations in Slovak history, and survives in part of the Slovak intellectual elite. The myth of Slavonic community cannot serve as an argument for a change in the conception of Slovak foreign policy. It is not enough to speak a priori about Slavonic brotherhood and start from it when shaping foreign policy.

Slovak diplomacy should attempt to balance its relations with Moscow and Kiev. A number of unsolved conflicts exist between Ukraine and Russia. These are moving their mutual relations towards at least cool relations. An unambiguous and uncritical preference could backfire on Slovakia, because Ukraine and not Russia is the immediate neighbour of Slovakia. In the unstable eastern region, it is risky to rely on one card, even if it appears to be strong, or to evoke at least unclear feelings in one of the strategic actors of the East (and Ukraine undoubtedly is one).

The Russian Federation is the country with which Slovakia has signed the largest number of bilateral treaties, since gaining independence in 1993, the number of new agreements has reached about 80. To these agreements, it is necessary to add 112 valid agreements from the time of the Czecho-Slovak Federation. All these agreements deserve careful inventarization. It is not necessary to reevaluate all the treaties, only those which hinder and block the achievement of the basic foreign policy aims of the Slovak government in harmony with its still valid programme declaration.

## CONCLUSION

Since its origin, the Slovak Republic has defined the priorities of its foreign policy programme as entry to the Western political, economic and security structures, represented especially by the North Atlantic Alliance, the European Union, the Western European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In comparison with her immediate neighbours, it can be said that Slovakia did not succeed in the years 1994-1998. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are members of the OECD, they were invited to join NATO and they began bilateral intergovernmental conferences about entry to the European Union. The main reason for the SR not being invited to join the same organizations as its neighbours was non-fulfilment of the basic political criteria, that is the domestic political situation. **However, one of the main reasons for the failure of integration efforts in the years 1994-1998 was also undoubtedly lack of understanding of the importance of foreign policy for the existence of the state and fulfillment of its basic interests.**

**The Slovak Republic, as a small country with insufficient domestic raw materials and a strongly export oriented economy, needs to have a strong foreign policy.** The primary condition for this is agreement between the political parties represented in parliament on the question of national interests and the priorities of foreign policy. These interests and priorities must be placed above the domestic political struggle. A strong foreign policy must be **realistic** in evaluation of the possibilities, it must be supported by facts and not subject to illusions - especially that most dangerous illusion - about our own importance. Slovakia is the smallest state among her neighbours, as such a natural effort to find allies and partners is required. Slovakia must take the initiative in proposing and mapping common interests with other countries, her policy must be **active**. The foreign policy of the state must be **integral**, reflect the national interests and concern itself with various areas - politics, the economy, culture and education. For its successful implementation, it is essential that its main actors - the President's Office, the Office of the Government of the SR, the Ministry of Foreign affairs of the SR, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the SR, other institutions of the state administration, such as the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Culture and others, work in harmony with each other, so that foreign policy is **coordinated**. In Slovak foreign policy, strategy must prevail over tactics, the long-term vision and interests of the state (the citizens of the SR) must prevail over the short-term interests of particular groups. The most important aims of the foreign policy of the SR have a **long-term character**. Therefore it is essential to secure their continuity and fulfilment, in spite of changes of the political elite in power.



simply, governments come and go, but the interests of the state and its foreign policy priorities remain.

Compared to the preceding years, it is essential to strengthen the position of the minister of foreign affairs. As a result of the importance of foreign policy for the development of the Slovak Republic, the minister should have the level of deputy prime minister. From the point of view of unified representation of the Slovak Republic, it is not necessary to have a deputy prime minister for European integration with unclear responsibilities. The minister of foreign affairs, strengthened with the position of deputy prime minister, should have two deputy ministers, one of whom should be primarily responsible for the area of European integration. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the SR should also have much greater weight in the shaping of foreign policy. A basic consensus on the questions of foreign policy must arise on the floor of the Slovak parliament. As a result of the importance of foreign policy for the SR, the parliamentary political parties should take care over the high quality selection of members of this committee. Apart from classical supervisory functions, it should also have a substantial say in the appointment of Slovak ambassadors to foreign countries, and its members should actively explain the importance of the foreign policy activities of the SR to the public.

Professionalization is a precondition for a strong and effective foreign policy. This requires well thought out building up and management of its key institutions, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be selected with the help of competitions, on the basis of linguistic knowledge, expertise, preceding careers, and not on the basis of party affiliation or other subjective criteria. A good quality law on independent state service would definitely help in the area of undesirable political influence at ministries and elsewhere in the state administration. The ministry should concern itself with the preparation of new personnel, in cooperation with other ministries, especially that of education. Attention should also be devoted to renewing and widening the knowledge of already accepted personnel. If some of the personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs voluntarily widen their qualifications, this should be appropriately appreciated by the management. It is necessary to have a differentiated approach to the personnel, to prevent routine, bureaucratic habits and the propagation of mediocrity.

It is essential to reevaluate the existing structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the usefulness of the individual departments and divisions. The representative offices of the SR abroad must be constructed and staffed on the basis of the chosen priorities of foreign policy. The key relationships must be strengthened in terms of personnel, finance and material, even at the price of weakening or ending other less important ones. The representative offices in Brussels, Bonn, Washington, the neighbouring countries, Paris, London, Rome and Tokyo, in particular, should be strengthened.

The creation of a wide background, the origin of a foreign policy "community" is an important precondition for a high quality foreign policy. The ministry

should have its own institute for the study of international relations, which should be able to monitor the long-term trends of development of the international scene, and prepare proposals for the medium and long-term strategies of the SR in the area of international politics. A quarterly publication from this institute could serve as a forum for expert discussion. It would help to form the above mentioned community, and give space to experts from various political orientations. However, when taking foreign policy decisions, the politicians should not use only their own internal resources or analyses worked out by the state administration, but should confront these views and ideas with the results of independent institutions. The state should support these institutions with a high quality grant policy.

The priorities of Slovak foreign policy remain the same, since entry to the Western structures and activity in them will enable Slovakia to secure long-term security and prosperity for her citizens. To enter them, Slovakia must show her partners maturity and the ability to undertake obligations and responsibility for stability in the region. The stated priorities should be shown in the actions of the new minister of foreign affairs and prime minister. Their first official journey abroad should be to Germany and Poland. In the preceding years, the fact that Slovakia could not find a strong ally and sponsor among the Western countries, for her entry to the European Union and NATO, had a negative effect on Slovakia's relations with these institutions. In future, Germany could be a natural ally of this type, although after enlargement to the first countries east of her frontiers, and while dealing with the inevitable problems resulting from domestic difficulties and the deepening of European integration, Germany's interest in the remaining countries of Central Europe may weaken. However, Germany remains the motor of integration and economically the strongest state in the Union. From the Slovak point of view, it is also important that Germany is the country with the largest amount of investment in Slovakia. Poland, as a regional power in Central Europe can play an important role in the preparation of Slovakia for entry to NATO, and during the process of democratization. Poland is appropriate for this, not only because of her size and regional importance, but also because the relations between Slovakia and Poland are not burdened by history. In relations with the Czech Republic, it is necessary to slow down and stop the divergence of the two former parts of one state. The strategic priority of Slovakia is to maintain the mutually advantageous customs union, and strengthen cooperation in the framework of the CEFTA. The Czech Republic is a natural partner and possible ally for Slovakia in relation to social, cultural, economic and political connections, as well as from the point of view of security interests. Relations with Hungary and the question of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia are frequently the subject of the questions and fears of the international community addressed to the Slovak Republic. The Slovak Republic should use every opportunity for cooperation with Hungary, support mutual economic connections and cross-frontier cooperation, and initiate a joint long-term strategy, which would enable deeper mutual understanding and the

gradual removal of mutual prejudices. This first of all requires the creation of a domestic political consensus of the decisive political forces in support of such a solution, and implementation by means of specific steps in legislation, education, culture and other areas. At present, Austria is the only state of the European Union, which has a frontier with Slovakia. She is also an important investor and commercial partner. However, for Austria, Slovakia is a new and relatively unknown neighbour in comparison with Hungary and the Czech Republic. The Slovak side must make the maximum effort to bring the political positions of the two countries closer on key questions, and increase the mutual acquaintance of the population. It is extraordinarily important to diminish the Austrian feeling of a threat to the domestic labour market from an influx of cheap labour from Slovakia. The great potential for cooperation is strengthened by the proximity of the capital cities of the two states. Ukraine will play an important role in future from the point of view of European security. Her independence is a guarantee that Russia will not renew her imperial ambitions in Europe. Therefore, any Slovak contribution to Ukraine's stabilization will also be appreciated by Slovakia's Western partners. An active policy towards Ukraine and a search for natural common interests, will partially balance Slovakia's asymmetrical policy towards the Russian Federation.

Relations with the United States of America, which in spite of the Atlantic Ocean remains the strongest "European" power and the only real global super power, have special importance for Slovakia. Gaining the support of the USA is the main condition for the entry of Slovakia to NATO, and will also significantly increase our chance of membership in the OECD and finally also in the European Union. Among the other countries of the European Union (apart from Germany and Austria), it is important for Slovakia, from the political and economic points of view, to have the best possible relations with France, Great Britain and Italy. The medium sized and smaller states of the Union - Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Greece and Ireland - may find agreement with Slovakia in various questions concerning the enlargement and reform of the EU. Slovakia must actively communicate with them and seek partners with a common interest in cooperation. The relationship with Russia is one of the key bilateral relationships of the Slovak Republic. For Slovakia, Russia is practically the exclusive supplier of strategic raw materials, and a potential market. Cooperation with the Russian Federation should be based on mutually advantageous, pragmatic economic relations, which should not, however, put Slovakia into a position of one-sided dependence, eventually growing into political dependence. It is necessary to carefully reevaluate the existing extensive treaty base of mutual relations, in this spirit.

A high quality foreign policy and strengthening of Slovakia's position on the international scene is one of the priorities in building up the state, so it should receive the appropriate political attention. An increased emphasis on foreign policy also derives from the need to overcome the absence of foreign policy thinking in Slovak history up to now. Slovakia had very few political thinkers,

who were able to overcome narrow provincialism and a defensive instinct. Instead, isolationism prevailed in Slovakia, and was frequently directed against the West. The domestic situation was idealized, which led to a false feeling of exclusiveness and self-sufficiency. If modern Slovakia wants to succeed in international competition, and this is her only chance, she must overcome these false ideas, open up to outside influences, and pursue her natural interests in the international field, by means of a professional foreign policy and an informed public.



**RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH CENTER  
OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION:**

**ALEXANDER DULEBA:**

The Blind Pragmatism of Slovak Eastern Policy. Bratislava 1996.

**PAVOL LUKÁČ:**

Súčasná podoba slovensko-nemeckých bilaterálnych vzťahov. (Present State of Slovak-German Bilateral Relations) Štúdie k medzinárodným otázkam A 02. Náčrt vývinu a stavu problematiky. Bratislava 1996 (Available only in Slovak)

**IVO SAMSON:**

Integrácia Slovenska do bezpečnostného systému Západu. (Integration of Slovakia to the Security System of the West) Štúdie k medzinárodným otázkam A 03. Bratislava 1997. (Available only in Slovak)

**IVETA RADIČOVÁ – OLGA GYARFÁŠOVÁ – MIROSLAV WLACHOVSKÝ:**

Obsahová analýza vybranej zahraničnej tlače o diani na Slovensku v roku 1995. (Content Analysis of Selected Foreign Press on Slovakia in 1995) Štúdie k medzinárodným otázkam A 04. Bratislava 1997. (Available only in Slovak)

**ALEXANDER DULEBA (ed.):**

Ukraine, Central Europe, and Slovakia: Interests in and Prospects for Cooperation. International Conference, Bratislava, October 24–25, 1997. In cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Bratislava 1998.

**FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS:**

**ALEXANDER DULEBA:**

From Domination to Partnership. The Perspectives of Russian-Central-East European Relations. (October 1998)

**KAREL HIRMAN:**

The Position of Gazprom in the European Gas Industry and Its Influence on the Russian Foreign Policy. (November 1998)