

BARACK OBAMA'S PRESIDENCY IN VIEW OF FOREIGN POLICY IDEAS AFFECTING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY¹

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Abstract. This article is a continued discussion on pres. Barack Obama's foreign policies approach during his two terms executive control and global security decisions impact. The implications suggest that the approach during this presidency was one of the more ideological stands, when compared to the other past presidencies. One of the final and more important moments of description are an interview and a debate following in *The Atlantic* monthly. The authors suggest that *The Atlantic* editor's approach is the ideological dichotomous correlation between the president Obama's leftist-liberal views and the American establishment's need for "politically correct" ideology that can be used as a tool or ideological shield, both expended in the international somewhat "totalitarian plays", covered by the policy of "good intentions" and well-spoken presidential speeches. Some American mainstream media are part of this correlation. Therefore, the question evolving is two-fold, how good is this for the Europe-Atlantic relations, and how good is this for the world security? The authors, in the continued from part one discussion, reevaluate some aspects of the pres. Obama's normative stand towards security within the international arena. The fundament of the article refers to *The Atlantic* debate, yet the practical cause and effect relation is done critically in respect to the Barack Obama's idealistic assumptions and the American realism in foreign relations, in context of philosophical alignment with pragmatism.

Keywords: international relations, politics, military policies, security agenda, Poland, European Union, United States.

¹ This is the second part of a discussion on President Barack Obama's foreign policies and "doctrinal" views continued from the article published in the National Security Studies no. 10/2016, titled *American and European Security Agenda in View of Barack Obama's Presidency and Considered "Doctrine". Part I.*

Introduction to part II of discussion on prospects of Barack Obama “doctrine”

In the first part of our discussion on possibility of Barack Obama’s doctrine, as presented under the title of: *American and European Security Agenda in View of Barack Obama’s Presidency and Considered “Doctrine”, Part I*², authors have evaluated some of the issues referring to the idea of international relations “doctrine” creation, that can be understood as the “Obama’s Doctrine”. This was actually conceived as dangerously close to subjective or wishful thinking proposition stemming from an ideological perspective presented in April 2016, describing the interviews Of Jeffrey Goldberg with President Obama. Included is also a discussion that preceded and followed it in “The Atlantic” magazine³.

What is problematic with presentation of Barack Obama’s foreign policies in “The Atlantic” magazine, as a “doctrine”, is its very subjective character on part of Presidential answers, and at times uncritical questions and responses by Jeffrey Goldberg – an interviewer. First question that arises in this respect is, how rhetorical are those questions with answers and how “hard decisions” of President Obama implicate a new and better world order? The evaluative frequency, when full spectrum of observation is employed, surpassing the boundary lines of ideology and partisanship, is not a constant in this respect, but rather a havoc of various conflicting opinions, and up to the moment little critical examination or self-criticism on part of Barack Obama, according to his own wording. Therefore, credibility of those answers is not always high. There is a moment when the interviewer, Jeffrey Goldberg shows two sides of Obamas decision making process, in view of a Syrian conflict: “History may record August 30, 2013, as the day Obama prevented the U.S. from entering yet another disastrous Muslim civil war, and the day he removed the threat of a chemical attack on Israel, Turkey, or Jordan. Or it could be remembered as the day he let the Middle East slip from America’s grasp, into the hands of Russia, Iran, and ISIS”⁴. We believe that Obama’s non-involvement policy in the Middle East brought rather the second possibility closer to reality. However, this is not a criticism in general, but rather a criticism of his particular decision.

Overall, the interviews by Jeffrey Goldberg with President Obama, taken at different times and places and combined into a presentation in “The Atlantic” show clearly the presidential decision making process from the presidential point of view. It’s hard to expect in it other than subjective justifications and explanatory form from the particular point of view. This subjective particularity is soaked with

² B. Jagusiak, A. Warchał, *American and European Security Agenda in View of Barack Obama’s Presidency and Considered “Doctrine”. Part I*, “National Security Studies” – no. 10/2016, WAT, Warsaw 2016.

³ Vide: J. Goldberg, *The Obama Doctrine*, „The Atlantic”, April 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>; <https://www.theatlantic.com/press-releases/archive/2016/03/the-obama-doctrine-the-atlantics-exclusive-report-on-presidents-hardest-foreign-policy-decisions/473151/>; <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/03/obama-doctrine-goldberg-disappointment/473172/>; <https://www.theatlantic.com/projects/debating-the-obama-doctrine/>

⁴ J. Goldberg, op. cit.

“good emotions” towards the humane side of politics. It seems that for Barack Obama it is the common men and women of the world a main worry, and not always the American power strategy. He calls himself “the internationalist” and speaks with concerns about social issues, lack of education and democracy in various American “allies” countries. It is through this prism, as we can tell reading “The Atlantic”, he sees the problems of the world security and security of his own country. The only problem remains, is the good intention and a good will, so clearly visible through President’s speeches and interviews, enough to provide peace and education for the people of the world? The Syrian conflict, that Obama helped to fortify by his indecisiveness, proves otherwise.

The evaluation of president’s Obama international relations policies during his presidency was hindered by typical political divide, also common in other various democracies, due to dichotomous ideological stands of many of the American establishment’s leaders. This is also apparent in citizen’s discussion on politics. When we present some of the arguments, we understand that those leaders and various “think tanks”, authors and ideologist, as well as the academic establishments, do not always describe the political process objectively but rather subjectively, pending on their background. Let us remember at the beginning that “subjectively” does not entail “wrong” or “false”, but rather is an observation or an activity from the individual or particular perspective arising on previous, sometimes “right”, and sometimes “wrong” assumptions. On the political level, by classical definition⁵ a level of many natural interactions – social, psychological, and other, those perspectives must clash since the differences human beings represent. The so-called “big politics”, that happens above a simple democratic process of citizens voicing their opinions is not free of those assumptions. However, if the assumptions are not checked against the pragmatic background of political activity, that is the level of utility within any of human involvements, including that of the international relations, the description will become close ended, dogmatic or ideological at best. There is a danger that the “Obama doctrine”, as seen in various description, is very close to being, at least, ideological. This becomes obvious after reading “The Atlantic” magazine approach towards the president’s Obama’s foreign policies, and hence, American international involvement, or lack thereof.

While going over different articles and comments on evaluation of pres. Obamas ideas and some of his international activity, what we noticed was that many descriptions were tainted, of course, by partisanship and strong ideological stances, either liberal or conservative. The same was obvious in various presidential activities. At the same time, the typical American pragmatism in description of his policies played rather a second hand role, in presentation of those to the general public. Moreover, through those ideological stances we have noticed a strong co-relation

⁵ Vide: Aristotle, *Politics*, Batoche Books, Kitchener 1999, <https://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/aristotle/Politics.pdf>; and Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, Kitchener 1999, <https://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/aristotle/Ethics.pdf>

of domestic and international issues (on the ideological platform). However, this rather blurs the picture when the focus is made on the international doctrinal involvement of the 44th American President. Authors of this article understand that the domestic issues and international issues have a different nature and may not always correlate, even if the same leader runs both.

Our aim in this article is to find an “intersubjective” ground, where dichotomy will be visible with “pros” and “cons”, yet will present a possible direction towards the understanding of political process itself, in co-relation to president Obama’s ideas on foreign affairs and American international involvement during his two presidential terms. We understand that the middle way between pragmatic and ideological stands is always possible when it comes to theoretical observation of clashes within the social divide, when we consider that both sides have at stake not only particular interests, but also especially the common security goals for their country. In case of the United States the problem is especially important for global community and leaders of other countries, since the term “the security of the United States” implies currently – the security of Europe, the security of the Middle East, the security of Far East Asia, and in general the security of different global regions.

It is not an uncommon opinion that President Barack Obama left office in January 2017 leaving the U.S. in a “weaker position” than at the beginning of his first term⁶. This refers to American foreign relations and is one of the many opinions we come across in different journals, newspapers, or books. It did seem that while the friendly relations with ideologically equal partners like Germany and some other European allies would promote cohesive international process. The same when applied to some other major world power countries like China and Russia, would not be, on the equality partnership level, forceful enough to exert any real influence on the decisions of other states with world, be it regional, power status. At the same time, some were undermining the “American world order”, and therefore American interests. Some activities were directed straight against the American interests in Syria and Middle East or other regions of the world, including relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia, Eastern and Central Europe.

Especially the European region is of interest to us, since our affiliation and researches on Poland’s national security. In reference to “our” region, subjectively we can state that president Obama left it for German and Russian interest control, where lesser States like Poland and other Central and East Central European countries were in fear of this new tandem of strong European powers focusing on its own interests during president’s Obama term. Perhaps, this change had a lot to do with overturning by Barack Obama the previous pres. G.W. Bush’s (jr.) strategies. We can notice that pres. Obama’s strategy on Europe was rather lightly taken, despite having in his team some important figures of trans-atlantic cooperation, like Richard Holbrook, for example. It has to be remembered, however, that he was

⁶ D. Boyer, “The Washington Times”, Sunday, January 15, 2017, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jan/15/president-obama-foreign-policy-widely-seen-as-fail/>

appointed during Obama's first term as the special adviser on Pakistan and Afghanistan, working with Pres. Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. This can be presented as the proof, that not Europe but Asia became the main concern for foreign policy strategists in Obama's cabinet. It is observed, nonetheless, that the trans-atlantic relations were important, but more as a declaration and less as a practice. Some authors notice: "[w]hile during the entire post-Second World War history trans-atlantic relations were almost exclusively about European security, this is not the case anymore"⁷.

Surely, this was not the case during the first term of Pres. Obama, yet, the "case" changed at the end of his second term, after the free roaming of Russian and German interests in Europe. This would prove to have an adverse effect on NATO and transatlantic relations, but finally the American strategy on Europe was changed towards the end of his second term. The culminating moment of this change was observed during the NATO Summit Warsaw 2016 in one of its declarations – *The Warsaw declaration on Transatlantic Security*⁸. In practice, this at the end of Pres. Obama's term effected in increased American involvement in the European security, for interests of both sides, and particularly for Central and East Central European States, what included American and other NATO ground forces and installations for NATO border countries like Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Perhaps this is a proof that ideology will eventually give a way to pragmatic ways of American national and foreign policies, both in its conservative and more liberal stands. It coincides of course with the realism of international relations theory, but it has its own differences, as described by John Dewey, who uses the concept of democracy, not as a political arrangement but an ethical standard submerged in freedom⁹. Barrack Obama (who also taught at Chicago University) is not far away from Dewey's point of view, but he is far, it seems, from Dewey's other pragmatic rule – empirical efficacy, so common in realism of international theory. According to pragmatism and realism, the observable world is the fundament for knowledge. This implies that our activity is not to be based on presumptions but on experiences and adjustments in face of facts present. In this respect, both schools are anti-metaphysical, whereas, when we read and analyze his speeches and views on the world and politics, the opposite evolves. For J. Dewey, the ideals are true, when growing out of social sphere, for B. Obama, when the social sphere – the democratic society and general public likes the ideals. There also seems to be obvious some resentment towards the past American international politics.

⁷ R. Ondrejcsák, *American Foreign and Security Policy under Barack Obama: change and continuity*, <http://cenaa.org/analysis/american-foreign-and-security-policy-under-barack-obama-change-and-continuity/>

⁸ *The Warsaw declaration on Transatlantic Security, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133168.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁹ Vide: J. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, Part 4: *Conclusion: III: What is Freedom?* https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey_1922/Dewey1922_26.html

And this is what grows to the point of becoming ideological, where in turn becoming a “doctrine” means simply becoming an “ideological doctrine”.

As we will notice, the divide between the “leftist liberal” or simply “liberal” versus “rightist” or “conservatives” (and silent majority) would become obvious during the evolvement of Barack Obama’s presidency and international activities. It should be noted however, that specific mixture of pragmatism and idealism was already “in place” since the times of Bush’s administration, as was noticed by Former Secretary of State James L. Baker, in the Kissinger Lecture at the Library of Congress on Feb. 27, 2007¹⁰. One of the most truthful statements presented by Baker, what was proven by rather weak activity in using hard power by Barack Obama, was following: “If the United States does not exercise power, others will. We simply have too much at stake in the world to walk away from it, even if we could”¹¹. We may point out that it was still far from being ideological, in a sense that the “ideal” was to be used as a tool and quickly exchanged for another one if necessary. With Barack Obama on the other hand, the “ideal” was used as the *modus operandi* during his two terms in office, and became a prerequisite for the “doctrine”. This seems the central focus of his foreign policy and stands in opposition to previous presidencies, even if the “pragmatism” of others did not always work. The expressions of his ideas in this respect, prior to his winning the first election campaign, were known both in the state of Illinois, where his domestic record is outstanding. However, as we notice, domestic and international policies rest on different premises – one of peace, the other of hostility. Towards the end Barack Obama’s presidency, this international hostility was obvious among countries that have different state interests, like Russia or China.

Presidential trips and disclosed normative directives of his presidency

As the US President, Barack Obama made 52 international trips to 58 different countries, and one visit to West Bank, speaking to numerous world leaders. Prior to winning the first election, then the Illinois senator and presidential candidate, Barack Obama surprised everyone with his extensive foreign trips that were supposed to strengthen his bid for presidency by proving his expertise on foreign affairs, as being of not lesser substance than that of the Republican Party’s candidate John McCain. Surely, this effort would have cost him dearly if he did not pass this test while meeting with foreign dignitaries of various countries in the Middle East and Europe (and American troops stationed in some of them): Kuwait, Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and West Bank, Germany, France and Great Britain. The major leaders he attended a meeting with included: President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Prime

¹⁰ D. Urschel, *Pragmatic Foreign Policy, James Baker Offers Annual Kissinger Lecture (February 27, 2007)*, <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0703/baker.html>

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

Minister Nouri al-Maliki of Iraq, King Abdullah II of Jordan, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom, and also the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Conservative opposition leader David Cameron¹².

It must be remembered, that he would lose some important election points if he made a major mistake in any of those countries (he did not), but at the same time it seemed that the countries chosen and chronology of those visits were delicately forethought to diminish the possible mistakes and important media criticism in the US. He went to Middle East, where the potential for the "mistakes" was greater, and then he went to Europe, where in the western part especially the media spoke about the "obamamania"¹³. In countries like Germany¹⁴ or France his popularity was much higher than that of his opponent, and the leaders of those countries embraced him very warmly¹⁵. Of course, he and his campaign staff rightly expected a warm welcome and positive message coming to home voters and electors from Western Europe. As it was proved by gathering of over 200 000 strong crowd in Berlin, his liberal message was much applauded. In the Middle East it was hard to please everyone, however, the message of bringing American troops from Iraq was accepted vigorously both in Europe, the US and the Iraq. Looking at his biography and past statement this message was not made up for the public, but continued his normative outlook on foreign policy. The outlook that may have to be verified in view, whether the communal and larger social values are easily transferable into the sphere of international relations and positively influence the global security spectrum, nonetheless.

When we consider the travels mentioned above, his visit to Berlin stands out. It was a presentation of his potential international activities as seen through his past domestic engagements and political speeches. At the same time, the trip to Berlin made to the "top of charts"¹⁶. Sheer number of people that showed up was larger than in any American city before attended by Obama. As some suggested he was accepted so warmly simply because he was not George Bush. It should be pointed out nonetheless, that he was already a well-known persona with his liberal views that resembled those of other European leaders of the European Union, and of the general public. This seems true especially when it comes to the issues connected

¹² Vide: <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/07/18/obama.trip/index.html?iref=nextin>; <http://www.findingdulcinea.com/news/politics/July-August-08/Presidential-Candidates-Foreign-Travel-Unprecedented.html>; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/19/photos-and-video-from-bar_n_113843.html; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-politics-trip-idUSN2549412020080725>;

¹³ R. Wike, *Obamamania Abroad*, "Pew Research Center", <http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/07/16/obamamania-abroad/>

¹⁴ N. Kulish, J. Zeleny, *Obama, in Berlin, Calls for Renewal of Ties With Allies*, "The New York Times", <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/us/politics/25obama.html>

¹⁵ S. Erlanger, J. Zeleny, *3 Hours in Paris, and Smiles All Around*, "The New York Times", <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/us/26obama.html>

¹⁶ N. Kulish, J. Zeleny, *Obama gets pop star reception in Berlin*, "The New York Times", <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/world/americas/24iht-sub25obamacnd.14772845.html>

with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. His anti-war stand was viewed as a prism of his possible presidential activity. Therefore, many Germans, and many other Europeans clearly took well his message on this and other issues. He came not as the potential President of the disliked world superpower, but as the American who loves his country, yet the citizen of the world, the liberal citizen who believes not in the power of force but the force of freedom for everyone: "I come to Berlin as so many of my countrymen have come before. Tonight, I speak to you not as a candidate for President, but as a citizen – a proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world..."¹⁷. We can add – the underprivileged world, since: "I know that I don't look like the Americans who've previously spoken in this great city. The journey that led me here is improbable. My mother was born in the heartland of America, but my father grew up herding goats in Kenya. His father – my grandfather – was a cook, a domestic servant to the British"¹⁸. He presented himself as the common person of the common people of any race or any nation, and this is why his "individuality" became so popular among the social-democratic minds of the liberal establishment and liberal communities in Europe. He did not forget to remind the gatherers, that the various regional problems, any problems of the world are the common problems for any citizen of the world. This includes of course security and terrorism evils that in the global village spread rapidly and endanger in the same way those living on both sides of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean. Moreover, he did remind that some of those problems were created by the USA: "I know my country has not perfected itself. At times, we've struggled to keep the promise of liberty and equality for all of our people. We've made our share of mistakes, and there are times when our actions around the world have not lived up to our best intentions"¹⁹. The crowd cheered on.

In Berlin, Obama welcomed earlier by Chancellor Angela Merkel with, then Foreign Minister and vice-chancellor, currently President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and of course, Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit, presented a proposition on major shift in American foreign policy normative focus through own personal experience. No longer was it an experience of a white American from the higher or middle class, but an experience of the "ethnic" American citizen with additional "citizenship of the world"²⁰. This was a sign of a focus change from typical conservative and centrist outlook on State affairs, fixed to specific culture and place, to non-stationary position with potentiality to shift viewpoints and values pending on norms placement. In practice, this was taken in understanding that also others will be able to directly voice an opinion on affairs of the only superpower having ability to influence world global affairs. This was not just a liberal presentation, although

¹⁷ B. Obama, *Address to the People of Berlin*, delivered 24 July 2008, Victory Column, Berlin, Germany.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

spoken through ideological perspective of equality and common human goals, but it was an emphasis on the need of more cooperative relations among the allies.

Obama viewed the American allies and other nations as having an equal base to direct own policy in association with collective idea of progress against world disparities, wars and terrorist threats. In other words, the world security is shared, not just enforced by superpower. This in practice, as we can observe later in Barack Obama's foreign activities, implied leaving open different areas for different players, only if the ideology is similar to the agreed upon interpretation and such was the case among the German and American liberal establishment. Surely, this was an interesting idea from the Germany point of view, whose role in regional and world politics would start to grow rapidly.

In general, what is often common in speeches given to great gatherings, there were many empty niceties, that is platonic ideas and appeasement towards the Berliners. There were also in his speech historical additions, and historical discrepancies. One of the misstatements, perhaps to appease the listeners (or because of his superficial knowledge on that matter) gave credit for the fall of the dividing wall between the East and West to Berliners themselves. The credit was given for starting the revolutionary changes in Europe that also encompassed the other parts of the world: "When you, the German people, tore down that wall – a wall that divided East and West; freedom and tyranny; fear and hope – walls came tumbling down around the world. From Kiev to Cape Town, prison camps were closed, and the doors of democracy were opened"²¹. He did not mention that the "walls" came down only after the Polish Solidarity movement brought the changes in Poland first, and then the changes against the communist regimes spread throughout the Europe. The Germans followed, not lead.

Overall, this Obama's speech and other speeches (not much more was said in his next visit to Berlin five years later²²) followed a line of typical liberal emotional statements of universal values. – Of common rights and need for peace, justice for all, opportunity for everyone regardless of ethnicity and domestication, and right to pursue those needs without constraints, however with little details of how those should be brought to life, yet, acceptable from the outset. The idealism of this is apparent. The main normative verbal communiqué growing out of "compassion and equality" for everyone may not in itself be considered as awkward or foul speech. The impulse of such statements is rather sympathetic.

And looking at the past behavior and past statements of Barack Obama – the community leader and organizer, the professor – a senior lecturer in constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School, and Barack Obama the Illinois senator, one should not underestimate his positive idealistic outlook on humanity and on its progressive path for human and civilizational development. As the professor,

²¹ Ibidem.

²² *Barack Obama Brandenburg Gate Address*, delivered 19 June 2013, Pariser Platz, Berlin, Germany, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamabrandenburggate.htm>

he was considered a progressive politician not straying from the criticism of the liberal weakness in erasing the inequalities for the Afro-Americans. He experienced it himself while helping the underprivileged where the democratic establishments “ignore the needs of the poor and abandon the idea that government can play a role in issues of poverty, race discrimination, sex discrimination or environmental protection”²³. While becoming the US president this outlook was up kept. After all, the visible line of his thought is encompassing those values that are typical of American and European liberals at the end of the XX century, especially in reference to the underprivileged and the racial differences.

This was not new at all, and thought process seems very honest. We can notice those values as being continued since the times Barack Obama wrote his 1995 book *Dreams from My Father. A Story of Race and Inheritance*²⁴. Hence, it was acceptable as a true notion of American society by the American voter. Later many of those views that rest on racial differences and ethnic dissimilarities, with non-whites considered the underprivileged, were repeated in his other book published in 2006 – *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*²⁵. Some see his stand anti-ideological²⁶, perhaps so when looked upon from the domestic practice of abolishing the differences through progressive development. There is a different problem, however, when we consider his stand in reference to his “international doctrine”, or views presented in general speeches to foreign public. Those views will not necessarily coincide with knowledge of the foreign public about the American history and racial inequalities that Barack Obama so vividly describes in his books.

What is apparent to us, in his foreign policy in general, is that his normative outlook was extended beyond the boundaries of one country and became a “global issues” when taken abroad by son of a white lower middle class mother and underprivileged African father. This was of course very warmly welcomed in a socio-liberal society of ethnically diverse Germany. Equally, he does not only extend his biography trying to universalize it, he also extends the American solution to those problems. This is of course common for other presidencies as well. Therefore, it became problematic not within the dimensions of a discourse on human rights and sovereignty of the cultures (a discourse dating back to famous proclamation by the king of Persia – builder of the Persian Empire – Cyrus II the Great in VI century BCE at the gates of Babylon). And it didn’t become problematic with a continuous extension, since US became the superpower, of American democracy proposition for other nations. What was particularly exemplified by Barack Obama’s normative stand in his trips abroad was clearly analogical to his previous call to return

²³ J. Kantor, *Teaching Law, Testing Ideas, Obama Stood Slightly Apart*, „New York Times”, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/30/us/politics/30law.html>

²⁴ Vide: B. Obama, *Dreams from My Father. A Story of Race and Inheritance*, Crown Publishers, New York 1995.

²⁵ Vide: B. Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, Crown Publishers, New York, 2006.

²⁶ W. Katz, *The Audacity of Barack Obama*, „Global Studies Journal”, January 7, 2009, <https://gsj.stonybrook.edu/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/i18RE.pdf>

to American constitutional principles within domestic policies, later giving the same proposition for other nations. This was his progressive statements of politics of equality, righteous way of speaking on domestic issue, as practiced in the US. Yet, it became the ideological and doctrinal misuse on the international arena, since not everyone in a world would adhere to those values beyond the Euro-Atlantic dimension of political culture. The practical possibility and outcome of idealistic call for change within the international arena always requires an agreement of many opposing culturally and ideologically international actors, with different world order "visions". Many of which have different political agendas, sometimes on a crash course with that of the United States.

In case of Barack Obama, the national interests aimed at the diminishing internal inequalities, along the partisan and/or against the bi-partisan lines (as this is stressed by Barack Obama the Senator) may not necessarily become a pragmatic course of action but an ideological one when extended abroad. This was also the case with the other American presidents; however, they were using more pragmatic reasoning for their international agenda and were considered perhaps more honest in reference to the typical power goals of the various international agendas of different nation-states. This is because different international actors, having divergent, and often conflicting interests will use the general rule of idealism (also known as propaganda) for their own, but not common advantage.

Perhaps we can end this part of our article with a quotation from Handel in his *Messiah*, repeated by Alan Cassels in a motto to his important book on a similar subject, *Ideology and International Relations in the Modern World*²⁷: "Why do the nations so furiously rage together? And why do the people imagine a vain thing?". What Barack Obama did as a politician is a mirror image of a description done by Cassel on Russian politics after the WWII "Soviet ideology had for seventy years (save for the interlude of the Great Patriotic War) asserted the primacy of universal Marxist-Leninist faith over national feeling"²⁸. This seems a common socio-democratic mistake, when moving the national socio-economic agenda into the international arena.

We do remember, as Cassel notices in the introduction to his above-mentioned book, "the concept of ideology and ideological thinking is a slippery one"²⁹. Nonetheless, the French Revolution began its presence. After that, German Marxist thinking underlined its importance for politics. These perspectives of political ideals later encompassed Europe and many countries of the world with a proposition of "one faith" for all. We are aware that calling Barack Obama's foreign policy doctrine ideological on such premises may fall offside if not additionally qualified by the authors of the article. This qualification rests on the example of Obama's speech

²⁷ A. Cassel, *Ideology and International Relations in the Modern World*, Routledge, London 1996 (this edition: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003).

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 226.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. xii.

given in Berlin, but extends over the US–German relations and can be verified by Obama’s friendship with Angela Merkel’s, specifically ideological, yet subliminal in political practice. Although, the outcomes of Obama’s and Merkel’s policies bring in full view the transparent dilemmas of socio-democratic discourse on mixing the economic inequalities between different social groups and foreign states, that are to be treated as equal regardless of their foul intentions.

For time being the German–American tandem of thinking, extension of national socio-economic policies on the international agenda, created a power vacuum in Europe very quickly in the West filled by the German politics, and in the East by the Russian politics. Yes, also the relation of ideology and a doctrine is slippery one in view of possible definitions growing out of inductive reasoning or manifold historical examples, abundantly presented by Cassel. In case of Obama’s and Merkel’s policies the inductive cases terminating previous deductive universals can be seen through the growing problems with Syria’s war against its own citizens and migration problems with large Muslim diaspora in EU. We could mention other issues but above mentioned stand out and cannot be refuted. The universals that are true within the national political agenda not always, as in this case, equally transfer its normative propositions with positive results on the international arena. It is so, simply because the measures are different, and this is obvious throughout the history of international relations (as also proved by Cassel).

When we conclude this part, we have to notice that endorsement of the universal in its logical or verified state of political presence is appropriate if coinciding with the constitutional values adhered to by the citizens. This normative platform allows for unified activity within a political system. The normative universality can be of different conversions, including ideological, religious, pragmatic, and others. Its utility rests in unison of a nation. The world, however, including the global political sphere, is not unified and if we can think of common denominators underlying its active energy, it would be war and peace. It seems sometimes that it is rather the clash of the universal in a world, not their common understanding, creating unnecessary political disorder. Conversely, the materialization of a universal – one universal – may lead to a totalitarian despotism. This is why it is always better to have a practical doctrine than ideological doctrine resting on the universal. As we see in a discussion on “Obama’s doctrine”, its premises are more ideological than pragmatic on the international level, and this is what makes the world less secure.

From ideology of freedom to “Obama’s doctrine” and its security impact

On a side of our discussion, we should not miss one very important corresponding point: The ideologically inclined doctrine (that often claims not to be one), can be noticed by its obvious universal statement. The universal statement is recognizable by not being particular. Simple as that, with clarification that what

seems “universal” from one perspective, may not be seen as “universal” from a different perspective. Yet, mostly we can agree that there are universal categories recognizable as similar in different nations and cultures. The “universal” does not have to be from the outset ideological or even an “idea”, even if mostly they are, after all human physiology is universal regardless of ethnicity or culture. Philosophically thinking we can ponder whether the “universals” do exist as a given normative scheme perceptible by all human beings. If it does then a common diplomatic or other, psychological, social, etc., behavior will be a mean to solve particular security issues. If it does not, or if its value is of lesser importance than practical or material gains, possibility of international communication between particular actors could be greatly diminished. Of course, not an “ideal” but a “material” can be seen as the “universal”. However, in this case we are discussing an issue of value transfer from “autobiographical” that is psychological and social perspective into the political sphere, as is the case with values adhered to by Barack Obama. Those values may grow from either the social content or personal experience as such, and from the political content of a wider dimension.

We can theorize upon these percepts, since discussion on the above is already classical in its many dimensions. Theories of Isaiah Berlin and others can exemplify this as an for example. View that Barack Obama follows a liberal tradition can be accepted³⁰, and tends to see his universality perception following perhaps along the line of understanding of Isaiah Berlin, who states that human beings in their individual life act by values³¹ and the values are social in context. This is rather a pragmatic view, of course, since Berlin does not point at empirical universal in metaphysical sense but rather he thinks of a human nature in common exhibition of different values acted upon. Those can be categorized on inductive bases, and what is it common value denominator? It is freedom, of course. Nonetheless, at the end this leads to clash of “my freedom” against “your freedom”, meaning that “freedom” will be exploited by whoever is stronger. Hence, there are not fundamental values that we can use on the universal terms, we may add, since the “universalities” are the continuously potential sets that must be measured – verified by action.

Somewhat in similar way, we can interpret what the other authors say on the subject³². At least, that is what the huntingtonian perspective with current obvious contextual value for the world security matters is underlining in his famous hypothesis, even if it was written at the end of the last century³³. Obama does not notice this however in his speeches. Moreover, unless he talks of social abuse of power

³⁰ M.H. de Castro Santo, U.T. Teixeira, *Interests and Values in Obama's foreign Policy: Leading from Behind?*, “Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional”, on-line version ISSN 1983-3121, Rev. bras. polít. int. vol. 58, no. 2 Brasília July/Dec. 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201500207>.

³¹ Vide: I. Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1969.

³² Vide: H. Blokland, *Freedom and Culture in Western Society*, Routledge, London & New York 1997, pp. 13-34.

³³ Vide: S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization?*, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 22-49; at: <http://users.metu.edu.tr/utuba/Huntington.pdf>; and S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1996, at: <https://archive.org/details/SamuelPHuntingtonTheClashOfCiviliz>

by particular ethnicity (white American), and at the same time the global super-power – the United States, he does not notice the cultural clash on the global level. It is not an issue of whether he is right or wrong, but an issue of social and national abuse, and later foreign policy abuse by power of the State (any State, we can add). However, since he experiences that personally with his family, the disadvantages of various social clashes through his meaningful life and positions accomplished, he helps to eradicate it domestically. And he is honest in that respect through his usage of the “universal” tool in domestic politics.

The problem stays however: How do we then transfer it, the “universal tool” without losing its positive and logical quality, into the relativistic and multidimensional world of international politics? Problem being is philosophical, linguistic, and hermeneutical at this point. It is such that “universality” of ideology, if possible, and its adherents usually miss the point that by its virtue, the word “idea” is paradoxical in its form when becoming interpretation of original value. History of ideas shows that it is often being misinterpreted or misread using general and abstract platonic standards, and philosophical ontology, not always applicable to political realm.

“Idea” – the word itself meaning a “universal form” is connected to ancient gr. “eido” – to see, or “idein” – vision, from which the word “idea” grows. It has its practical, non-ontological meaning in proto-indo-european root of “weyd” – meaning: “to see”. Its other meaning form is “to know”, as for example in Sanskrit “veda”. “Idein” in latin will become “viden”, meaning: “seeing”. Therefore, after many centuries (and interpreted through connection to platonic interpretation as an ontological and unchanging “form” – “idea”), we sometimes confuse “what we see” or what we “envision”, with a substantial or ontological form, of something positive, universal and always true. This is when the nature’s universal goes astray and becomes a mistake. So much for philosophy and linguistics.

If there is anything predictable in international relations and what makes the arena of states’ involvement predictable is its intention towards own security prospects. This intention is always individual but at the same time common among many, various state actors. Since this common denominator often presupposes power partition between various stages of interaction, historically in win – lose processes, its predicaments are the main security concerns for nations willing to survive. Needless to say, security and own power gains have historically been the main motor of state’s involvement in foreign affairs. Side by side with economic gains and religious anxiety, and we should add – the prestige, as an outcome of previous two, where emotions play always an added dimension. This does not mean that other motives can be rejected. As some state, other attitudes most definitely also play a major role³⁴. Nonetheless, at least this is the realist theory approach, and it seems that this perspective dominates interaction, on one side, and on the other

³⁴ Vide: R.N. Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008.

presupposes that various other elements may also play the role but will have to be accountable at the end to power struggle, war, and so on. Whatever the motives would be, at the end it is the security of the state, its elites, and peoples, which has to be weighed. This why, regardless of ideological stands, philosophical descriptions, theoretical divagations, the outcome, and survival is the aim of different interactions and state activities.

We do not wish to participate in theoretical disputes relating to different IR theories, since this is not the main theme of this article and taking sides will move us nowhere, however it is agreeable that cultural and autobiographical motives will play a role because of the state leaders³⁵. Even though, as it is proved by Richard Ned Lebow in his book *Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives for War*³⁶, security concerns were responsible only for one/fifth of the wars fought (as the main reasons for wars). This finding may just add to our concern that other – in this case, as it may be, ideological, cultural, and autobiographical – in reference to the foreign policy of Barack Obama, will be very important. Those will stray away from the pragmatic and realistic approaches of previous presidential cabinets.

As is the case with Obama's Administration and his "doctrine", it had rather austere consequences for the international arena. On one side, it created regional power vacuums by US military withdrawal from the neuralgic regions, and on the other, changed the "realistic" measures that the other international actors hitherto were able to adhere. His idealistic outlook on post-cold war worldwide power struggle arena was rather naïve in its outcome because of fallacy of the "universal". Moreover, looking at the behavior of other power State players like China and Russia, we could observe that its outcome was a cause for international disrespect. Barack Obama through his normative approach changed the rules for the realistic win – lose – draw calculations of nations throughout the world. In this sense, he was liberal in his idealistic vision for world peace, but not a realistic president, in view of his foreign policies and its security outcome. We may add, if our evaluation is correct, that his "doctrine" leans closer towards the ideological character and strays away from pragmatic one, even if at the end of his presidency we do observe a shift in his security policies. The "shift" was rather forced upon him by Russia, China, ISIS, and others. This has been noticed in the "Foreign Affairs" article by Harvard international relations professor and one of Pres. Obamas cooperatives, Stephen M. Walt, in his article *Obama was not a realist president*³⁷ (with an under title – "if he had been, he might have avoided some of his biggest foreign policy mistakes").

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Vide: R.N. Lebow, *Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives for War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010.

³⁷ S.M. Walt, *Obama was not a realist president*, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/07/obama-was-not-a-realist-president-jeffrey-goldberg-atlantic-obama-doctrine/>

Professor Walt has been presented as influencing Obama on some of his policies³⁸ (in respect to the Middle East), however he himself rejects this claim in the above mentioned article. What he does say proves our point of rather weak realistic goals achievement, with his international examples (Afghanistan, Syria, Palestinian–Israeli conflict, Russia and Ukrainian conflict, the “Arab Spring”, rebellion in Yemen)³⁹. He states this claim bluntly: “But after seven-plus years in office, this most articulate of presidents never articulated a clear and coherent framework identifying what those vital interests are and why and spelling out how the United States could advance broader political ideals at acceptable cost and risk...”. In addition, he continues with statement that may clearly be used for our above claim of Obama’s leaning toward “idealistic doctrine”: “His failure to define U.S. interests clearly and his tendency to recite the familiar rhetoric of liberal hegemony had several unfortunate consequences. First, it meant Obama faced constant pressure to “do something” whenever trouble beckoned in some distant corner of the world, but he had no overarching argument or principle with which to deflect the pressure (save for the correct but unhelpful dictum to avoid “stupid shit”)⁴⁰. Let us still remember that a doctrine is differentiated from ideology by its practical implications and pragmatic goals. This is not seen clearly in “Obama’s doctrine”.

Problem being is that the idealism, if claimed as standing behind “universal” values, in reality leaves empty spaces and security voids that quickly may be filled by the universal desire to fill it by those willing to use its influence or power in utilizing prestige, economic, military, and other means for achieving the final goal. This goal, whatever its descriptions may be, usually misleading, has to do with energy gains for organic, in both egoistical and minimal sense, life and space for life’s energy growth. Philosophical as it may be, it has nothing to do with the ideals or positive change of the world. In reality, it has no meaning whatsoever and is immanently meaningless, since its potentiality can never be observed, as achieved but always in a process and context within different energy flows and meaningful statements for secure growth of whatever we culturally, politically, religiously, organically (and by other means), define as life. Nevertheless, life is a tandem with security, as it is nowadays portrayed, and this implies that international power play is a constant, regardless of our description.

Professor Walt seems to understand this criticism of Barack Obama’s “liberal idealism” when he writes in his more recent Foreign Affairs article: “Fast forward to today. Relations with Russia and China are increasingly confrontational; democracy is in retreat in Eastern Europe and Turkey; and the entire Middle East is going from bad to worse. The United States has spent hundreds of billions of dollars fighting in Afghanistan for 14 years, and the Taliban are holding their own and may even

³⁸ L. Smith, *As George Kennan inspired Tryman’s foreign policy, now Stephen Walt inspires Obama’s*, “Tablet”; <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/161815/stephen-walt-the-new-kennan>

³⁹ S.M. Walt, *Obama was not a realist president*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

be winning. Two decades of U.S. mediation have left the Israeli-Palestinian “peace process” in tatters. Even the European Union – perhaps the clearest embodiment of liberal ideals on the planet – is facing unprecedented strains for which there is no easy remedy”⁴¹.

Yes, even when we look at the European Union, taking into consideration that this is a particular – authors’ Polish perspective, we can notice that the Obama approach towards the different world regions ended in created vacuum, at least in Europe, with transatlantic relations called into question. From the end of cold war, with roughly 270 000 American troops stationed in Europe, its size was reduced to 64 000 in 2013⁴². In 2012 there were approximately 80 000 stationed⁴³. It is not only Barack Obama that should be called responsible for this reduction, but surely he did continue the process and called into question a military strategy that relied on a presence of American troops, not only in Europe but in different parts of the world. In a mean time the Europeans themselves were cutting or limiting their forces to the minimal, and with the exceptions of EU countries like Poland were not very eager to spend at least 2% of their national budgets on defense matters. This of course would change after the NATO Summit 2016 in Warsaw. Perhaps the Obama strategists finally noticed that his doctrine in reality weakens the United States across the globe and, as Professor Walt noticed, the global security problems were not diminished but rather growing with Obama’s foreign policy. Its residues we can observe still today. In a mean time, there were major changes observable in Europe, the changes from “the Bush era” to “the Obama era”, which rested on the ideal precepts that nations will rather cooperate than try to subdue each other, for whatever the power gains might be. At least Russia proved the point, but Germany also, even if by “mere” political and economic means. In Europe we could observe at that time how German–Russian “economic tandem” filled the power vacuum with its rather aggressive economic cooperation, that influenced European Union’s future, where the Germany became the main leader of political evolvement, and Angela Merkel became close Obama’s friend.

One of the most visible outcomes of Obama’s vision and naïve political thinking in this case, under the line of “braking with the Bush’s legacy” was the mental abandonment of some of its allies, in Europe for example. The “Wall Street Journal” put it bluntly in one of its titles: Obama’s Missile Offense – It’s better these days to be a U.S. adversary than its friend⁴⁴. This title refers to Obama’s Administration decision on cancelling some of the most important missile defense programs features that were to be located in Poland and Czech Republic. From the strategic

⁴¹ S.M. Walt, *What Would a Realist World Look Like?*, “Foreign Affairs”, January 8, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/08/what-would-a-realist-world-have-looked-like-iraq-syria-iran-obama-bush-clinton/>

⁴² L. Coffey, *The Future of U.S. Bases in Europe: A View from America*, <http://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-future-us-bases-europe-view-america>

⁴³ J. Vandiver, *Pentagon lays out significant cuts to U.S. forces in Europe*, “Stars and Stripes”, February 16, 2012, <https://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-lays-out-significant-cuts-to-u-s-forces-in-europe-1.168861>

⁴⁴ “The Wall Street Journal”, Sept. 18, 2009.

point of view, this decision was unintelligible. From the political point of view, it seemed as an appeasement towards Russia and went in line with Obama's "removal" of American presence in different regions of the world. For some it was a "gift" for the Russian leader Vladimir Putin, as a "new opening" of US–Russian relation. Poland became especially nervous, since Obama proved his rather uneducated side and lack of sensitivity towards its most important Slavic ally. One can just wonder why the announcement by Obama's Administration came on September 17th⁴⁵ (in Poland's history a very sad anniversary), the date when Soviet Russia attacked Poland in WWII after it was already fighting its war since September 1st with Nazi Germany. This in diplomatic terms was a slap in a face, and proved that Obamas sensitivity was rather near sighted. For Poland, one of the top US allies in Europe, it seemed as if Obama sold it, and sale was made in order to improve the relations with Poland's old enemy Russia. The voices from Russia were of course very positive.

How the politics of faith in universal and ideal perception of reality leads us into oblivion in international relations is a matter of theories, but usually it is a fast process. If we can paraphrase the cited "The Wall Street Journal", in reality of his universal values the U.S. President Barack Obama was "working hard to create antagonists where it previously had friends", fortunately his mistakes were later "fixed" by Russia's aggressive behavior in Ukraine. Perhaps if not for the politics of appeasement of Barack Obama, Russia would not dare to attack and annex the Crimean Peninsula. Latter the Obama Administration admitted that its GMD – Ground-Based Midcourse Defense policy was wrong⁴⁶ and long range missile threat to the US was under evaluated and "Obama's doctrine" in this case delayed by years defenses against this threat⁴⁷; Final question remains however, how much of a "doctrine" is in "Obama's doctrine"?

In conclusion: the empty meanings behind "doctrine" in "Obama's doctrine"

There are plenty of definitions for a "doctrine", as given in vocabulary, and as given within particular subject settings. Some refer to general statements and goal description, others to particular frames of objective interest. Some rise on deductive, some on inductive fundamentals. We should forget nowadays about a doctrine being a science or principal knowledge of...⁴⁸, since this medieval understanding of a "doctrine" (from which it arises) as an end to knowledge obtaining process and the essence of teaching, is not applicable to many variations of "doctrine"

⁴⁵ "The Guardian", *Obama abandons missile defence shield in Europe*, Sept. 17, 2009.

⁴⁶ M. Dodge, *President Obama's Missile Defense Policy: A Misguided Legacy*, "The Heritage Foundation", <http://www.heritage.org/>

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Synthesis of typical dictionary presentations. Vide: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/doctrine>; <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/doctrine>; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/doctrine>; <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/doctrine>;

currently. In contemporary times, “doctrine” is the “means” for turning principles into activity of pragmatic facts and evaluative practices of various methodologies for both theoretical and practical ends. Its practice of inductive processes is now much more common than in the past, when knowledge was unified under limited sets of principles.

In contemporary times, especially in the politics, international relations, and security studies we understand “doctrine” as means to achieve proclaimed goals. That is, what was a passive body of knowledge, has become an activity, or at least a process of a changing rules. The authors understand that principles in foreign policy imply the set of rules for conducting foreign activities. Looking at Obama's doctrine with its foreign policy and security implication it is hard to determine of what type of “body of knowledge with essential principles” we are dealing with. Some may argue that it is because of his pragmatic approach. However, we may add that if a particular presidential doctrine is used only by one administration than it is a mere “instruction”, but if it is used as a constant by other administrations, it is a doctrine as a practice of principles. And this is how doctrine should be defined? If such is the case, we do not have any “Obama doctrine” and have only an impressionistic, ideological by nature set of universal principles turning into the wishful thinking.

First let us try to differentiate between the national security doctrine and foreign policy, although sometimes they go hand in hand. Perhaps neither can be viewed separately and the range of principal influence will be visible at the outset when the foreign policy will be understood as the means of projecting own national interests on foreign actors, and the national security doctrine will be understood as protection against foreign state's foreign policy that goes against own goals. The ranges of various concepts will differ, of course, based on theoretical persuasions. Upon reading Barack Obama's different speeches and statements, we do not find any particular theoretical mode that stands apart from the others.

There is a great mixture of many points of view in Barack Obama thinking. Many of those sound like speeches of Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and other great political figures. We like Barack Obama, he has done great deal for his brethren in the USA and perhaps in some other parts of globe. Nonetheless, domestic normative disposition does not always bring peace to others. American style democracy is not a universal value. For some, the policies of his predecessors were more in touch with reality, than the ideals of Barack Obama. We are sorry to state this. Surely, his appeasement to Russia brought Poland many unnecessary tremors. His foreign policy of no action and appeasement forced Poland to fight for a new security doctrine within NATO. This doctrine is now in place after the NATO Warsaw Summit of 2016.

This second point, as we can notice in rather purposefully philosophical part of discussion in this article, the principle has to be the *spiritus movens* of a doctrine. This means that one specific, in practice not just as an ideal, normative activity

should be erected based on a doctrinal thinking. It seems almost as a rule that Obama rejected it. Perhaps, as it seems, not because of intention but of universal potentiality of its fallacy: The idea of the universals means that other actors will have to proclaim that “supreme” rights of the superpower are not supreme by virtue of power, but by virtue of wisdom that is equally spread throughout the world. That is, in at least most parts of the globe this wisdom will be inherent within thinking and activity processes of different humans. Since the world cultures are not currently unified, this wisdom will be in many different pieces. Gathering those “pieces” is a titanic job. One president is not able to achieve it, even someone like Barack Obama, one of the best-spoken Presidents the United States could offer the world.

When we speak of Obama’s doctrine, we face a conventional definition, but not a comprehensive concept. Problem being: can we find a fundamental set of principles for different international activities within a realm that is constantly changing, and changing even faster if the “fundamental” or “universal” are not used in unison (since different players will conceive them in a different ways, i.e. as “ideals”). There is a difference between “Truman doctrine” that was a part of American foreign policy for decades, and a “doctrine” used only as a normative directive by one presidential administration.

What is troublesome in final determining whether there is an Obama doctrine upholding the universal norms rests on problem of dispersed ideas and his approach towards particular regions of the world where his statement goes in one direction, and his decisions in the opposite directions. At the end, he seems very indecisive, what curtails the practice of a “doctrine”. This seems sometimes more like American inactivity than real interest for peace, be it universal or regional. For example in Goldberg’s article we can find quickly a proof of that. Obama normative statements can be readily verified in Syria: “It’s important for us to recognize that when over 1,000 people are killed, including hundreds of innocent children, through the use of a weapon that 98 or 99 percent of humanity says should not be used even in war, and there is no action, then we’re sending a signal that that international norm doesn’t mean much. And that is a danger to our national security”⁴⁹. Well, there was no action when the Syrian children were gassed by the Assad regime. This makes his voice not credible, yet what does he say on credibility? Let’s cite him: “dropping bombs on someone to prove that you’re willing to drop bombs on someone is just about the worst reason to use force”⁵⁰. Obama’s credibility would rapidly decline, yet a doctrine requires credibility, constant normative directives that are practiced, not just talked about. When we do not practice our ideals, we just talk about the ideas.

When talking of any reoccurring Obama’s ideas, can we add them up to a “doctrine”? – Its main value rests more in the restraint than in action. Someone asks: “Does all this add up to a doctrine, much less a grand strategy? Probably not;

⁴⁹ Barack Obama statement cited in “The Atlantic” Goldberg’s article *The Obama Doctrine*, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

it feels more like a collection of post-Bush impulses”⁵¹. Albeit, this question was put in Obama's sixth year of presidency in 2014. The leading idea behind those impulses would be the idea of restraint, since he could very well be in this case both, an idealist and realist, or whoever, restraining himself from action. The authors are aware that there are those calling President Obama “an idealist” and others “realist”, still others “pragmatic” and so on, giving ample examples for their arguments in his speeches and various activities. Problem being is this, if he is all of those, than was he honest with us, or was he just a rhetor?

Perhaps one of the strongest condemnation of “Obama's doctrine”, one of many, we may add, we find in opinion of Richard Cohen from “The Washington Post”, under a title: “What's the Obama Doctrine? A shrug of the shoulders”⁵². In it the author states a vast criticism of Obama's rather weak standard on, let's say – the universal idea of freedom, that president would seem to aspire to in his many speeches. Cohen is blunt: “We finally have an Obama Doctrine. It is the 223 words of the White House statement on the death of Fidel Castro. It is blank of moral judgment, empty of indignation, blind to injustice, dismissive of history and indifferent to injury. A dictator has died, and Barack Obama sent him off with lazy weasel words: “History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.”⁵³ History will also record Obama's failure to condemn”⁵⁴. In this case R. Cohen is right in a sense that Obama's rhetoric is that of the escapism. When going gets tough, he distracts the public with a universal statement that has no meaning whatsoever, since it is as general as “history” and its “judgment”. In history the many particulars are lost, just like common men destroyed by tyrants, of whom history will talk forgetting the names of the individuals perished – too many to speak of. The historical argument was common among various totalitarian regimes and its leaders – history will decriminalize our crimes. Unfortunately, when so many different values are used by President Obama, what stands out are only his speeches and wishful thinking, that history will or will not forget. Is it because there is a future, and the future has to be of the common good? But the “good” is as common as the “evil”, and if no choice is made between one and the other in action, than nothing is forbidden if it's suits us. So perhaps Cohen is right when he describes Obama's presidential foreign policies: “It's the Obama Doctrine in a nutshell: Do what you want”⁵⁵. Well, if we have many “positive” ideas and ideals, as Barack Obama presents them in his rhetorically fine speeches, some

⁵¹ R.E. Kelly, *Is There an Obama Doctrine?*, “The Diplomat”, September 22, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/is-there-an-obama-doctrine/>

⁵² R. Cohen, *What's the Obama Doctrine? A shrug of the shoulders*, “The Washington Post”, November 28, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/whats-the-obama-doctrine-a-shrug-of-the-shoulders/2016/11/28/7048e6d6-b591-11e6-b8df-600bd9d38a02_story.html

⁵³ Vide: *Statement by the President on the Passing of Fidel Castro*, November 26, 2016, The White House Office of the Press Secretary, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/11/26/statement-president-passing-fidel-castro>

⁵⁴ R. Cohen, op. cit.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

of them will have to clash, or one will have to be called the major one. It seems that Barack Obama does not have one; therefore, his “doctrine” is rather a slippery one.

For that reason, the world at the end of his presidency was as insecure, as it has always been throughout history. Perhaps not less, but after all it was for his “universalism” that he was granted a Noble peace prize, even if a statement simplifies the explanation by Nobel Prize Committee: The Nobel Peace Prize 2009 was awarded to Barack H. Obama “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples”⁵⁶. Strange, as this award is his activities up to that point were rather ordinary, what was not ordinary was his rhetoric of the “universal” values. In addition, his foreign policy and security policy was unified under few anti-Bush ideals – “unilateralism, pre-emption, democracy promotion, prevention and, generally, the global war on terrorism”⁵⁷. This was the case in 2009, 2013, and only the glimpse of change in Warsaw NATO Summit finally came into being in 2016, at the end of his presidency. At this moment everyone already knew, that the world is not more secure than it was in 2008, for many like Ukraine, Poland and other European countries it seemed less secure because of Russia that Barack Obama tried to appease.

This criticism came from different parts of the world, especially where security is the main concern, like in Israel: “For seven years observers have attempted to discern what President Barack Obama’s foreign policy is, since the closest he has come to articulating one was the simplistic declaration he made to reporters on Air Force One: *don’t do stupid stuff*”⁵⁸. As the author of this statement concludes the outcome of such approach: “The result is that the leader of the free world has abnegated his responsibility and put America and its allies in great danger”. Even if that opinion comes from a region far away from Poland, it is very well applicable to the outcomes of Obama’s policies in East-Central Europe and Europe in general. However, after the Russia’s Crimean Peninsula annexation and its support for insurgents and war in eastern Ukraine, the NATO strategists managed to change the previous policies’ negative impact.

So at the end let us answer this special question: What is the Obama Doctrine? It is the faithful believe in the “universal” spoken word. It is everything and nothing, unless verified. When verified, however, it has many more pieces to be gathered, than the authors could think of. It is not simple at all, and in action not principal as it should be. Yet, the books have been already written about it, about the “idea” of Obama’s doctrine. We are still looking for this “universal” good intention, being aware that the road to hell (for many) is paved with the good intentions, and the good intentions are preceded by wishful thinking and great rhetoric. Who is the

⁵⁶ http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/

⁵⁷ L. Colucci, *Is there an “Obama Doctrine”?*, “The Washington Times”, April 2, 2013, <http://www.washington-times.com/news/2013/apr/2/is-there-an-obama-doctrine/>

⁵⁸ S. Boteach, *No holds barred: Is there an Obama Doctrine?*, “The Jerusalem Post”, April 18, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/No-Holds-Barred-Is-there-an-Obama-doctrine-451628>

best Rhetor? The one who has 100 other rhetors behind him. Well, if Barack Obama is still not in the top 100 of the American rhetoric speeches⁵⁹, this should change.

Oh, yes – the doctrine... It should follow values, but the values have to be made into practice and pragmatically checked. Doctrine is not only a set of principles, it is what allows the principles to come to life, and then the activity it is the life of the principles.

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PREZYDENTURA BARACKA OBAMY NA TLE IDEI POLITYKI ZAGRANICZNEJ I WPŁYWU NA BEZPIECZEŃSTWO REGIONALNE I MIĘDZYNARODOWE

Streszczenie. Artykuł jest kontynuacją dyskusji na temat polityki międzynarodowej prezydenta Baracka Obamy w trakcie jego dwukrotnej kadencji, w odniesieniu do głoszonych wartości i wpływu na bezpieczeństwo globalne. Można zauważyć, że jego podejście do polityki międzynarodowej było nastawione bardziej ideologicznie niż w przypadku innych amerykańskich administracji. Jednym z ważniejszych i ostatnich eksplanacji takiego działania był wywiad z nim i późniejsza debata w miesięczniku „The Atlantic”. Autorzy sugerują w odniesieniu do tej dyskusji dychotomiczną korelację między lewicowo-liberalnymi poglądami prezydenta Obamy a poszukiwaniem przez amerykański establishment politycznie poprawnej ideologii, którą można było wykorzystać jako narzędzie lub tarczę ideologiczną dla potrzeb międzynarodowych rozgrywek w ramach „dobrych intencji” przez pryzmat odpowiednio rozwiniętych prezydenckich przemówień. Niektóre z amerykańskich mediów były częścią wytłumaczenia tej korelacji. W tym sensie pojawia się dwoiste pytanie, jak dobre jest takie podejście dla relacji transatlantyckich oraz jak wpływa na bezpieczeństwo światowe. Autorzy rewaluuja z perspektywy swojego wcześniejszego artykułu część polityki prezydenta Obamy w odniesieniu do bezpieczeństwa światowego. Fundamentalna treść odnosi się do dyskusji w „The Atlantic”, jednakże główne elementy skupiają się na związkach przyczynowo-skutkowych, w sposób krytyczny przedstawiających prezydencką politykę bezpieczeństwa w odniesieniu do amerykańskiego realizmu w stosunkach zagranicznych oraz perspektywy pragmatycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: relacje międzynarodowe, polityka, polityka wojskowa, agenda bezpieczeństwa, Polska, Stany Zjednoczone, Unia Europejska.

