

Professor Chodakiewicz Describes Why Poland Is Vulnerable

By: *John Czop*

This is the fourth article which describes the Second Annual Kościuszko Chair Lectures at The Institute of World Politics (IWP) in Washington, DC on 14 November 2009. These lectures and the questions and answers period which followed them, are important because they challenge the widespread, but wrong view that Communism collapsed throughout the former Soviet space.

Professor Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, the first and incumbent holder of the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies delivered the first of the two lectures at this event: "Transformation, 1988-1992: The Case of Poland". He preceded his lecture with a graphic demonstration. Professor Chodakiewicz asked those who had a piece of paper on their seats to crumple that piece of paper and then to straighten it out in order to show Communism transformed. He then said that had he wanted to illustrate Communism destroyed, he would have shredded and burned that piece of paper.

Continuity trumped change throughout the former Warsaw Pact with the exceptions of former East Germany, which was incorporated into West Germany, and Estonia where the pre-World War II elite returned and succeeded in receiving restitution of their private property which the Communists had nationalized. This enabled the Estonian elite to constitute themselves as rival elite to the transformed Communists. The social and economic power of the transformed Communists came from their private control, through purchase with inexpensive credit, or lease on favorable terms of State property which they had administered when they were upper level Communist civil servants.

Elsewhere in the former Soviet space including Poland, the transformed Communists continued to wield power. The transformed Communist elite consist of former Communist upper level civil servants who transformed themselves with alacrity into capitalists in the early 1990s. They did so by buying on favorable credit terms arranged for them by their junior pals still serving in government, the very Polish State property that they had been administering when they served as Communist upper level civil servants. Now they were managing these assets to make a profit for themselves. To claim that Communism collapsed is to engage in what Professor Chodakiewicz aptly labels "the propaganda of success." There was no collapse, just transformation. Continuity outweighs change.

Chodakiewicz next explained why the failure to implement lustration in a thoroughgoing way makes Poland's national security vulnerable. Lustration is the effort to weed out Communists from positions of power in Polish State and society with particular emphasis on purging Communists from positions of leadership in the armed forces. Lustration started in the winter of 1992, when Jan Olszewski was Prime Minister, but lustration has been obstructed since the fall of Olszewski's short-lived government by the transformed Communists who hold the key levers of power in today's Poland.

In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s the key NATO powers, the U.S.A. and the U.K. assumed that Communist agents had infiltrated the armed forces of their NATO ally West Germany, and therefore gave West German officers serving at NATO headquarters second class security clearances. This gave West Germany second class status in the alliance. This is the situation of Poland today. Failure to carry-out lustration and to break with the Communist past jeopardizes Poland's national security, and therefore attenuates Polish national sovereignty. It makes Poland a second-rate NATO country.

During the questions and answers session which lasted as long as did the two lectures, Mr. Witold Dzielski, Second Secretary of Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, DC said that he was offended as a Polish patriot by Professor Chodakiewicz's description of Poland as a country ruled by former Communist upper level civil servants enriched by the purchase of Polish State property who are indifferent to Poland's national security and who use their new wealth to manipulate the Polish political system. Dzielski did not challenge any of the facts which Chodakiewicz described of who rules today's Poland. Instead, Dzielski stated that Chodakiewicz's description overlooks Poland's role as America's loyal NATO ally. Dzielski asserted that Poland merits applause for sending Polish troops to support America's invasion of Iraq.

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"The Point Of No Return"

Justyna Ball

<http://justyna-polishdelight.blogspot.com>

In our favorite play, Edward Albee's "Who's afraid of Virginia Wolf," a middle aged couple, fabulously played by Burton and Taylor, Taylor playing a small New England university's president's daughter, Burton's character lives on an "associate professor's salary," throughout the evening they play mind games with each other and kill us with humor and wit.

Our own relationship may not be as sophisticated, but from time to time we may practice our possibilities and test each other's nerves. So when my dearest husband signed us up for ... sailing (yes, s-a-i-l-i-n-g!), I took it as payback for all the dance classes we took a couple years ago. What else?

Until now, my only connection to sailing was that my husband loves it, and I love my husband. So I hoped that we'll spend the first couple of classes, at least, on solid ground in the classroom learning the theories, doing and undoing some knots and maybe memorizing points of sail. Wrong! In the very first class, you learn how to rig the sail, and on your second class you... sail. The introduction lasted less than 10 minutes when the instructor asked students what were their reasons for signing up, saying that the most common one for female students was: "My stupid husband bought a boat and I figured that I should learn what it's all about." Mine was: "Someday my husband wants to buy a boat, and he thinks that I would look good on it!" Don't get me wrong, I love the way sailboats look, on the water, in the open sea, against the sunrise, over the sunset... but I would rather have other people doing the rigging, steering and unrigging for me so I can relax, take pictures, and enjoy...

How can I relax when I have all those idiots in motor boats coming at us? I'm sorry if you are one of them, but that's what you are!

By watching others, I learned to always bring an extra set of clothes to the class and to always wear waterproof mascara. And when the teacher says, "No matter what happens, **do not** grab the mast." Do exactly what he says and another one: "Never have two good size men on the same side of the boat unrigging..."

The eventual goal is to pursue... a helmsman's license, but I'll be happy to just stay dry for the rest of the season.

I'm determined to finish the course just like the crew of Tu-154M (named after designer Andriej Tupolev) was determined to land at the Smolensk airport. Although my decision and eventual consequences may only cost us and the marina a rather small price (if I have to I'll pay them back in installments), the decision made by the Polish pilots had quite a tragic ending.

Now that we know the full transcript of the last minutes of the fatal flight, we know the crew's actions but we can also see the errors leading to the event all along. To begin with, the procedures on the ground, the training of the future pilots. But also following the laws by authority should be a standard. Captain Marek Fronczak, who was a guest on "Teraz My" program, was fired(!) for refusing to land when asked by a prominent passenger.

To have a member of the government, Karol Karski call (and report as a crime), the refusal to land in Tbilisi, Georgia, which the late President Kaczyński requested, a "shameless act," tells you about some of the practices. Karski changed his mind since then.

Another factor was an evident mistake of the President's cabinet, people responsible for creating the list of passengers, to have so many dignitaries booked on the same flight.

Was it necessary to have them all present at the Katyń ceremonies? And if it was, don't you think that the people on the ground should be able to postpone the ceremonies for a couple of hours knowing that the plane carrying the presidential couple and so many VIPs was going to be late? The plane left the Warsaw airport 30 minutes past the scheduled time.

An airplane is not a taxi, which you can wave down and tell the driver to speed up. If necessary, you rearrange plans on the ground accordingly, especially when the honorary guests are on board. Even the slightest risk of crashing the plane should be of greater concern than changing the scheduled time of services on the ground. No risk should be worth undertaking. An experienced crew should know that.

But it may have been the pressure of being late that later added to the tragedy.

Several experts, Stefan Gruszczyk, retired pilot of the Special Transport Unit of Polish Air Force among them, voiced their opinions on the fact that the crew seemed to be inexperienced in flying that specific route over to Russia. Those retired pilots who frequently flew over it said that Russians have specific procedures.

The biggest mistake was trying to land in such weather conditions. The crew took that risk, and here we are. Gruszczyk and others wouldn't even consider landing at the Warsaw airport (much bigger and better equipped) under such circumstances. You move to plan B and land elsewhere. Tupolev-154 had two other options: Witebsk and Minsk.

(The Secret Service would organize the car escort, to the Katyn site, for the presidential couple and several other members of the government).

The determination to land no matter what forced them to take that risk, and this is what pilots should NEVER do: NEVER TAKE A RISK. If you are on a regular commercial flight, but even more so when you have a president and half of the government on board.

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Calendar of Events

Aug 1, Sun, 30th Annual Polish American Day at the Pope John Paul Center in Yorba Linda. For more info see article on page

Aug 8, Sun, noon - Polish American Congress meeting in Yorba Linda. See AD on page 9
Sep 17, 18 & 19, Fri, Sat & Sun, Fall Festival - DOŻYNKI Polish Center in Yorba Linda.

Sep 25 & 26, Sat & Sun, Fall Festival - BAZAAR Polish Parish in Los Angeles.

Oct 9, Sun, San Diego Festival at the Saint Maximilian Kolbe Polish Mission 1735 Grand Ave. - North San Diego (Pacific Beach).

Oct 15 - Hollywood Presbyterian Church - Poland Forever - Chopin meets Paderewski.

Oct 17, Sun, 10:30 a.m., PNA meeting, Polish Parish in Los Angeles

Oct 23, Sat, The Polish American Heritage Month at The Polish Club of Laguna Woods.

Oct 24, Sun, Friends of John Paul II Annual Banquet.

Nov, Sat and Sun, Paderewski Festival in Paso Robles

Nov 21, Sun, 1:30 p.m., Friends of John Paul II Ważne Zebranie.

Dec 5, Sun, 10:30 a.m., PNA Meeting, Polish Parish in Los Angeles

Dec 18, Sat, 5 p.m., Traditional Christmas Dinner Celebration at The Polish Club of Laguna Woods.

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbyskoopet@aol.com ★