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Like the proverbial cat, some concepts have several lives. Or, like the mythological phoenix, they can be reborn from the ashes. This is certainly the case of the Intermarium, a geopolitical concept that envisaged an alliance of countries reaching from the Baltic Sea over the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea that would serve as a third power bloc between Germany and Russia. The Intermarium belongs to the long genealogy of geopolitical concepts looking for and promoting a Central and Eastern European unity: sandwiched between a *Mitteleuropa* under German leadership in the nineteenth century and a *Near Abroad* under Moscow's supervision after 1991, the "middle of Europe" or the "land between the seas" has been searching for historical models in everything from the Jagellonian dynasty and the Polish-Lithuanian Rzeczpospolita to the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Launched by Polish state leader Józef Piłsudski in the 1920s, the idea of a *Międzymorze* (the Land between the Seas, latinized as Intermarium) has since been regularly revived in evolving contexts and finds itself reactivated today. In its current form, it refers to the Central and Eastern "new Europe" dear to George Bush, Donald Rumsfeld and now Donald Trump, celebrated for being more pro-Atlanticist than the Western "old Europe," which is seen as being too conciliatory with Russia. The Intermarium has also, gradually, come to comprise a conservative Central and Eastern Europe that sees itself as the "other" Europe—that is, opposed to the European Union—and advances a conservative agenda sometimes permeable, as we see in the Ukrainian case, to far-right ideological schemes.

While the early history of the Intermarium has received little attention from scholars, with the only example of such research being a doctoral dissertation by political scientist and attorney member of the International Criminal Court Bar Jonathan Levy,¹ even less academic attention has been paid to the revival of the term since the 2000s. Yet it was deployed by former United States Army Europe (USAREUR) commander General Ben Hodges to describe the U.S. strategy for Central and Eastern Europe,² before being revived on a much broader scale by the Polish Party of Law and Justice as well as by Ukrainian far-right movements in the wake of the Euromaidan.³

¹ Jonathan Levy, 'The Intermarium: Wilson, Madison, & East Central European Federalism' (PhD dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2006), https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=ucin1147397806&disposition=attachment. The following authors have dedicated either a chapter or longer sections to the early history of Intermarium: Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Free Press, 2000); Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (London: William Heinemann, 1991); Mark Aarons and John Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis, and Soviet Intelligence* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

² 'Washington Returns to a Cold War Strategy,' Stratfor Worldview, 2015, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/washington-returns-cold-war-strategy>.

³ Alexandra Wishart, 'How the Ukrainian Far-Right Has Become One of the Biggest Proponents of Intermarium,' *New Eastern Europe*, 25 September 2018, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2018/09/25/ukrainian-far-right-become-one-biggest-proponents->

To understand the many lives of this concept, one has to think of it as an “imagined geography”—a concept famously launched by Edward Said to interpret the notion of Orient—or a geopolitical imaginary in Gerard Toal’s perspective—a set of shared representations of power relations and geography that may impact policy decisions and popular perceptions of the world order.⁴ We propose here to follow Felix Berenskoetter in his approach to concept analysis and see this Intermarium geopolitical concept as having a cognitive function which can be broken in four dimensions: socio-political (formation of the concept within a political system, its use among different actors and its contestation), temporal dimension (historicity of a concept), material (how the concept manifests itself, and its agency), and theoretical (how the concept is situated in a broader ideational realm).⁵

Intermarium 1: Which Central Europe after the Empires?

The idea of the creation of a third power bloc between Western Europe, particularly Germany, and Russia, which came to be known as Intermarium, emerged from the period in which the Austro-Hungarian Empire was being dismembered in line with the Treaty of Versailles that brought an end to the First World War. In 1919, Sir Halford Mackinder, discussing the opposition between the “Heartland” (continental powers) and “sea powers” (UK at that time), was already mentioning the need for a “Middle Tier of East Europe” going from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic to federate in order to resist to both Germany and Russia: “Perhaps the Smaller Powers (...) will set about federating among themselves. A Scandinavian group, a group of the Middle Tier of East Europe (Poland to Jugo-Slavia), and a Spanish South American group (if not also including Brazil) may all, perhaps, be attainable.”⁶

But the most well-known proponent of this Intermarium concept in its first iteration was the Polish leader Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935), who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had attempted to create paramilitary units (the Combat Organization of the Polish Socialist Party) to free Poland from the yoke of the three encroaching empires: Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. His return to Poland after the defeat of the Central Powers gave rise to the proclamation of the independent Second Polish Republic (1918–1939), of which he became head of state from 1918 to 1922, a period that largely coincided with the Polish-Soviet war (1919–1921).

As Poland became independent in 1918 after 123 years of foreign control, Piłsudski envisioned a federation of Eastern European states that would, together, be strong enough to fend off potentially belligerent neighbours, particularly a downsized Germany offended by the loss of Eastern Prussia and a rising Soviet Union. These early unsuccessful plans for an “Eastern European Federation”—a Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth accompanied by a currency and customs union with Belarus, Latvia, and Estonia—roughly paralleled the Jagiellonian commonwealth of the Rzeczpospolita, which existed from the sixteenth century until Poland’s third dismemberment in 1795.⁷

intermarium/; Matthew Kott, ‘A Far Right Hijack of Intermarium,’ *New Eastern Europe*, 26 May 2017, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/05/26/a-far-right-hijack-of-intermarium/>.

⁴ Gerard Toal (*Gearóid Ó Tuathail*), *Critical Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁵ Felix Berenskoetter, “Approaches to Concept Analysis,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 2 (2017): 151–173.

⁶ Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Constable and Co, 1919), 269.

⁷ Janko Bekić and Marina Funduk, “The Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative as the Revival of ‘Intermarium,’” Institute for Development and International Relations Brief, February 2016,

While still in Versailles, August Zaleski, who would later become Polish foreign minister, led talks with representatives of Lithuania and Ukraine about forming a federation.⁸ Shortly thereafter, in 1919-1920 Piłsudski reconceptualized the federation as a broader “Eastern European League of Nations.” Poland and Lithuania would again form a federal state in the East, with Belarus being granted special autonomy. Ukraine and Romania would enter into a military and political confederacy with Poland. Finland and the Baltic states were to form a “Baltic Bloc,” while Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia would comprise a “Federal State of Caucasia.” These early plans for an Eastern European federation did not come to fruition: no new state wanted to find itself under Polish leadership. Instead, Belarus and Ukraine (re)integrated into the Soviet Union, while Lithuania became an independent country. The never-ratified Warsaw Contract of March 1922 was, according to the German historian Hubert Leschnik, “the last serious effort by Polish diplomacy to establish an Intermarium, and during the term of foreign minister Aleksander Skrzyński (1924–1926) the MSZ [Polish Foreign Ministry] ultimately bowed out of all ‘Intermarium conceptions.’”⁹

During his second stint as de facto state leader (1926–1935), Piłsudski’s primary focus was on ensuring that the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were upheld.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the period also saw the establishment of the Promethean League (*Prometejska Liga*), a semi-clandestine network that envisioned cooperation between a group of nations fighting against the Soviet Union.¹¹ The Promethean League had its ideological roots in Piłsudski’s long-time geopolitical strategy, “Prometheanism,” i.e., the idea that any great power would collapse if its ethnic minorities were empowered, just as the Greek Prometheus helped mankind emerge from the shadow of the gods when he was given fire. According to the British scholar and journalist Stephen Dorril, the Promethean League served as an anti-communist umbrella organization for anti-Soviet exiles displaced after the Ukrainian government of Simon Petlura (1879–1926) gave up the fight against the Soviets in 1922.¹² It was established by the Ukrainian émigré Roman Smal-Stocky and based in Warsaw, but, as Dorril affirms, “the real leadership and latent power within the Promethean League emanated from the Petlura-dominated Ukrainian Democratic Republic in exile and its Polish sponsors. The Poles benefited directly from this arrangement, as Promethean military assets were absorbed into the Polish army, with Ukrainian, Georgian and Armenian contract officers not uncommon in the ranks.”¹³ The alliance between Piłsudski and Petlura became very unpopular among many Western Ukrainians, as it resulted in Polish domination of their lands. This opposition joined the insurgent Ukrainian Military Organization (*Ukrainska viiskova orhanizatsiia*, UVO—founded 1920), which later transformed into the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia ukrainskykh natsionalistiv*, OUN).¹⁴

Piłsudski’s early Intermarium plans and later the Promethean project were clandestinely supported by French and British intelligence.¹⁵ These links dated back to the First World War, when France supported Piłsudski’s troops in the hope of defeating the Soviets. In

www.irmo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IRMO-Brief-2-2016.pdf; Hubert Leschnik, *Die Außenpolitik der Zweiten polnischen Republik: “Intermarium” und “Drittes Europa” also Konzepte der polnischen Außenpolitik unter Außenminister Józef Beck von 1932 bis 1939* (Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010), p. 21; Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 165.

⁸ Leschnik, *Die Außenpolitik der Zweiten polnischen Republik*, op. cit., p. 29.

⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., 165.

¹² Ibid., p. 168-169.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 184.

February 1921, Piłsudski travelled to Paris, where, during negotiations with French President Alexandre Millerand, the foundations for the Franco-Polish Military Alliance were laid. The most exhaustive study of support for the Intermarium project by French and British intelligence was made by Jonathan Levy, based in part on three interviews with former American intelligence agent William Gowen, the son of senior State Department officer Franklin Gowen, who had been an assistant to Myron Taylor, Roosevelt's personal representative to the Holy See under Pope Pius XII. Gowen described the Intermarium "as a prewar British-French sponsored association that would be useful in countering both Soviet and German ambitions in Eastern Central Europe. The original members, according to Gowen, were anti-German, anti-Habsburg elites who also opposed socialism and communism...Gowen named three prominent prewar Intermarium leaders: Vlatko Macek (Croatian Peasant Party leader and Yugoslav Vice Premier), Miha Krek (Catholic Slovene Peoples Party leader and also Yugoslav Vice Premier), and Gregorij Gafencu (Romanian Foreign Minister 1938-1941)."¹⁶ All three would become Western intelligence assets after the Second World War.¹⁷

A second, more serious attempt to establish an Intermarium occurred during Colonel Józef Beck's tenure as Poland's foreign minister (1932–1939). Following Poland's two non-aggression pacts signed with the USSR and the German Reich, Beck had been instructed by Piłsudski to find new solutions to guaranteeing Poland's security, since France was no longer considered a trustworthy ally.¹⁸ Beck elaborated such solutions as a "politique d'équilibre" aiming at an equal distancing from both Germany and Soviet Russia; an "Intermarium" as a third power bloc between Germany and Russia; and later the concept of a "Third Europe," an offensive alliance with the aim of furthering the political influence of Poland within Europe.¹⁹ Beck made considerable efforts to approach potential federation partners, but the only ones interested appear to have been Hungary, Latvia, and Estonia. Beyond these three, his ideas apparently fell on deaf ears.²⁰

Intermarium 2: Central European Unity between Collaboration with the Nazis and Support from the Allies

Although all attempts to unify the states of Central and Eastern Europe failed in the 1920s and 1930s, the new balance of powers that emerged during the Second World War helped to reopen some space for the Intermarium concept. Declassified American intelligence documents indicate that the project continued to receive support from Polish, British, and French intelligence until the incorporation of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia into the Axis, whereupon the established networks were either "absorbed or suppressed by German military intelligence."²¹ Based on Gowen's reports, such authors as Christopher Simpson, Stephen Dorril, Mark Aarons, and John Loftus have suggested that the networks of the Promethean

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, 'Paper Mills and Fabrications,' February 1952, p. 39 and p. 42, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/519697e4993294098d50b909>; declassified files pertaining to Miha Krek, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/miha%20krek>; declassified files pertaining to Grigore Gafencu, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/gafencu>.

¹⁸ Piłsudski is reported to have said, "France will abandon us, France will betray us." Stanisław Sierpowski, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski*, 31, quoted in Leschnik, *Die Außenpolitik der Zweiten polnischen Republik*, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁹ Leschnik, *Die Außenpolitik der Zweiten polnischen Republik*, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 180 and p. 184.

League and the Intermarium were utilized by German intelligence.²² But Levy argues that such an absorption of pre-war Intermarium networks into Nazi intelligence is unlikely given Germany's plans for Poland, and a closer look at the fates of these networks' leaders seems to indicate that, even if many shared the fascist *Zeitgeist*, they sought support more from the Allies than from the Axis powers. One of the three, the Romanian Grigore Gafencu, collaborated with the Germans until the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, then looked for British and French support. By the end of 1944, some of the old Intermarium liaisons appear to have been reactivated by MI6²³ and French Intelligence.²⁴ Levy states:

Even while the war was still raging and entering its final stages, MI6 officers had made secret contact with pro-fascist elements among the central and eastern European nationalist groups. British Intelligence saw the potential value of their pre-war connections with organisations such as the Promethean League, Intermarium and the Ukrainian OUN-B in again mounting anti-Soviet espionage operations. (...) It was MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, that reinvigorated the east central European federal movement by reconstituting the formerly Polish sponsored clandestine pre-war organizations: the Promethean League and the Intermarium under the leadership of what was now called the Central European Federal Club.²⁵

The Central European Federal Club (CEFC), which appropriated the Intermarium concept, was established around 1940 in Britain as a platform for exiled anti-communists and supporters of Central and Eastern European federalism, some of whom had ties to the pre-war Intermarium. The CEFC grew into a worldwide network, with offices in New York, Paris, Rome, Brussels,²⁶ Chicago,²⁷ Jerusalem, and Beirut.²⁸ At the heart of the CEFC was the exiled former collaborationist Czech military officer Lev Prchala (1892–1963).²⁹ Upon reaching England, Prchala became an important figure in the Czechoslovakian exile community in London, heading the Czechoslovak National Council and later the Czech National Committee.³⁰ Prchala served as chair of the CEFC in 1951, according to a document in his rather lengthy CIA file,³¹

²² Ibid., p. 179.

²³ Dorril, *op. cit.*, p. 17 and p. 113.

²⁴ Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

²⁵ Levy, *The Intermarium*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²⁶ A. T. Lane, *Europe on the Move: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the European Union* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), p. 125.

²⁷ Pauli Heikkilä, 'Baltic Proposals for European Unification during World War II,' Research Paper, University of Tartu, Estonia, 2014, p. 76, [https://www.lvi.lu.lv/lv/LVIZ_2014_files/2.numurs/P_Heikila_Baltic_Proposals_LVIZ_2014_2\(91\).pdf](https://www.lvi.lu.lv/lv/LVIZ_2014_files/2.numurs/P_Heikila_Baltic_Proposals_LVIZ_2014_2(91).pdf).

²⁸ Levy, *The Intermarium*, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

²⁹ Declassified document 'General Prchala and Associates,' 19 November 1951, https://ia801305.us.archive.org/12/items/PRCHALALEV-0115/PRCHALA%2C%20LEV_0115.pdf; Declassified document 'Background and Present Status of the Prchala Movement,' 28 May 1951, <https://archive.org/details/PRCHALALEV-0100>.

³⁰ Declassified document 'The Prchala Movement,' 7 (?) December 1951, <https://archive.org/details/PEKELSKYVLADIMIRVOL1-0054>.

³¹ Declassified documents pertaining to Lev Prchala, <https://archive.org/search.php?query=%22prchala%2Clev%22>; declassified document, 19 March 1951, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/PRCHALA%2C%20LEV_0091.pdf.

and would later become vice president of the Presidium of the People's Council of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, which succeeded the CEFC.³²

From the moment of its inception, the CEFC was active in the international arena. On 25 April 1945, for instance, the CEFC appealed to the U.S. Congress, asking for "aid and support" for its initiatives in the face of Soviet aggression: "The world must awake to the reality of the situation and recognize that it is essential to guarantee equal freedom and independence to all nations situated between Germany and Russia."³³ That same year, the CEFC published the "Free Intermarium Charter," subtitled "The Intermarium future is the fate of 160,000,000 Europeans."³⁴ In 1946, a Congress of Delegates of the Oppressed European Nations was convoked by the Scottish League for European Freedom with the assistance of the CEFC.³⁵

Much of the CEFC's activity centred around its Rome office, which started to publish the *Intermarium Bulletin*.³⁶ According to a declassified U.S. Central Intelligence Group document from 1946, the president of the CEFC Rome branch was Miha Krek.³⁷ Krek (1897–1969), named by Gowen as one of the three most prominent pre-war Intermarium supporters, was a Slovenian lawyer and politician who became an important representative of the Yugoslav government-in-exile in London and subsequently a British intelligence asset. In 1944, he moved to Rome, where he organized the anti-communist Slovenian National Council Abroad. While there, he also established the Slovenian Welfare Society network, which helped several thousand Slovenes emigrate, especially to Argentina and the United States.³⁸ The Slovenian Welfare Society is mentioned in a CIA document from 1948 called "Organizations for the Assistance of Refugees in Italy"³⁹ that lists several of the now-infamous "ratlines,"⁴⁰ such as the one set up by the Croatian priest Krunoslav Draganovic, who was said to be a "prominent

³² Declassified document, 'LETTER TO JAROSLAW STETZKO FROM (Sanitized),' 13 September 1958. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80b01676r003900010031-7>.

³³ Proceedings and debates of the 79th Congress, 25 April 1945.

³⁴ *The Free Intermarium Charter: The Intermarium Future is the Fate of 160,000,000 Europeans!* (Central European Federal Club, 1945); Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 233.

³⁵ 'Congress of Delegates of the Oppressed European Nations, Convoked under the Auspices of the Scottish League for European Freedom with the Assistance of the Central European Federal Club, London, Held on June 24th and 25th, 1946 in Edinburgh, Scotland' [Report of proceedings], <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000811070>.

³⁶ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 249 ff.

³⁷ Declassified document, Central Intelligence Group, 'Soviet Penetration of and Use of the ABN and Central European Club,' 31 October 1946, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp82-00457r000100790001-7>.

³⁸ Declassified document, 'Organizations for the Assistance of Refugees in Italy,' 2 October 1948, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp82-00457r002200350003-0>. See also FOIA document, 'Slovenian Immigrants in Argentina,' 31 March 1949, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdhttps://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp82-00457r002200350003-0>. See also Zlatko Skrbis, *Long-Distance Nationalism: Diasporas, Homelands and Identities* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2017), p. 32.

³⁹ 'Organizations for the Assistance of Refugees in Italy,' op. cit.

⁴⁰ The term "ratline," which originally denoted a rope ladder reaching the top mast of a sailing boat, was later used as "a generic intelligence term for an evacuation network," specifically the escape routes established after the Second World War to help Nazis and Nazi collaborators flee Europe in order to escape persecution as war criminals. See Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*, op. cit., chapter XI. The various ratlines are amply described in Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa: How Perón Brought the Nazi War Criminals to Argentina* (London: Granta, 2002), and in Aarons and Loftus, *Ratlines*, op. cit.

member of the Intermarium” and in close contact with Krek.⁴¹ In 1947, Krek moved to the United States and was officially elected as president of the Slovene People’s Party in Exile.

American intelligence began to take notice of the Intermarium network in August 1946⁴² in the framework of Operation Circle, a Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) project the original goal of which was to determine how networks inside the Vatican had spirited away so many Nazi war criminals and collaborators, mostly to South America.⁴³ Among the group of CIC officers involved in the operation was Levy’s source William Gowen. Then a young officer based in Rome, Gowen suspected the Intermarium network to be behind Nazi war criminals and collaborators’ extensive escape routes from Europe. To pursue this hunch, he secured as an asset the Hungarian Nazi collaborator Ferenc Vajta (who worked with the German Abwehr as a member of the collaborationist Hungarian Arrow Cross⁴⁴), whose “Hungarian Popular Front” seems to have been admitted into the CEFC/Intermarium⁴⁵ and who was in contact with French intelligence.⁴⁶

The CIA archives contain about 20 documents that include the term Intermarium,⁴⁷ most of which reference Vajta’s files.⁴⁸ According to Aarons and Loftus, although he had initially been thoroughly opposed to this course of action, by “early July 1947, Gowen was strongly advocating that American intelligence should take over Intermarium; before long, the CIC officer was no longer hunting for Nazis, but recruiting them.”⁴⁹ Other declassified files describe how Vajta and Gowen later pledged U.S. support for a new organization, a “Continental Union”⁵⁰ that would—unlike the French-British-Vatican-supported Intermarium—be under U.S. control.⁵¹ Upon being tracked down in the United States in 1949, Vajta became one of only two Nazi collaborators to be deported from the country on the basis of their Nazi past since the end of the Second World War.⁵²

That post-war intelligence activities in Rome were of great importance to wary Soviet espionage is indicated by the fact that no less than the infamous double agent Kim Philby, head

⁴¹ Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁴² Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 254.

⁴³ Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴⁴ Information Control, Office of Special Operations, ‘Ferenc Vajta,’ 25 November (no year given, probably 1947), https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/VAJTA%2C%20FERENC_0021.pdf.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ FOIA documents matching the search term “Intermarium,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/intermarium>.

⁴⁸ FOIA documents pertaining to Ferenc Vajta, <https://archive.org/search.php?query=ferenc+vajta&page=2>.

⁴⁹ Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

⁵⁰ FOIA document, “Informal and Unofficial Conversation with Former Eastern European Diplomats Concerning the Projected Establishment in Madrid of an ‘Eastern European anti-Communist Center,’” 3 November 1947, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/VAJTA%2C%20FERENC_0019.pdf.

⁵¹ Vajta “claimed that the Intermarium was anti-American in its makeup and policies. He stated that he had gathered this impression from the period when he was Hungarian Consul General in Vienna and worked with the French General Staff and the Zeme Bureau on Hungarian emigre problems, he added that his subsequent relations with Hungarian and other Eastern European personalities in the Intermarium in Rome of this year confirmed this belief. The British and French General Staffs, Mr. VAJTA remarked, are attempting to ‘shut the U.S. out’ of Eastern European affairs. Likewise it was his belief that the entry of monarchist elements representing Otto of Habsburg into the ranks of the Intermarium, gave it an anti-American bent.” (‘Informal and Unofficial Conversation...,’ op. cit.)

⁵² ‘Office of Special Investigations,’ *US State’s Attorney’s Bulletin*, 54: 1 (January 2016), p. 2, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-hrsp/legacy/2011/02/04/01-06USABulletin.pdf>.

of the SIS/MI6 anti-Soviet section since 1944, “infiltrated the Ustashe ratline and Vatican Intermarium with Soviet spies, while Angleton and Dulles chose to ignore the ultra-Fascist leanings of their Croatian assets.”⁵³ According to a FOIA document, the British ceased to financially support the Intermarium network in June 1947⁵⁴ as part of an effort to prune the number of costly Churchill-supported intelligence projects and thereby relieve the strain on an overextended British budget. By 1948, the Intermarium network seems to have been superseded by the anti-communist umbrella organization Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), founded in 1946 and supported until its dissolution in the mid-1990s by the British, American, and German secret services.⁵⁵

Intermarium 3: Central Europe as the Anti-Communist Front

In the framework of the American “Liberation Policy”—which John Dulles formulated in 1953 as being directed toward the liberation of Central and Eastern European nations from Soviet domination and the whole of Europe from Communist influence⁵⁶—a vast number of anti-communist organizations were formed in the immediate post-war period and supported by the US.⁵⁷ They constitute one of the main components of the Intermarium “genealogical tree,” in the sense that they revived the memory of Piłsudski’s attempts to unify Central and Eastern Europe against Soviet Russia and gave them new life, but blended this memory with far-right tones inspired by collaboration with Nazi Germany.⁵⁸

The most important of the European anti-communist organizations was the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN). Officially founded on 16 April 1946, and headquartered in Munich, it served as a coordinating centre for anti-Communist émigré political organizations from the Soviet Union and neighbouring socialist countries. Because fascist movements were, in the 1930s, the first to organize themselves against the Soviet Union, the ABN recruited massively among their ranks and served as an umbrella for many former collaborationist paramilitary organizations in exile, amongst them the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists—Bandera (OUN-B), the Croatian Ustaše, the Romanian Iron Guard, and the Slovakian Hlinka Guard.⁵⁹ It thus contributed to guaranteeing the survival of their legacies at least until the end of the Cold War. According to the liberal Institute for Policy Studies think tank, created by two former aides to Kennedy advisors, the ABN was the “largest and most important umbrella for former Nazi collaborators in the world.”⁶⁰

The headquarters and cells of the ABN organized anti-Soviet rallies and demonstrations, international conferences and congresses, and the distribution of various anti-

⁵³ Jonathan Levy, ‘The Lawsuit Against the Vatican and the CIA,’ *News Insider*, 17 January 2001, http://www.newsinsider.org/editorials/Vatican_CIA.html. On Draganovic, see also Goñi, op. cit.

⁵⁴ ‘Informal and Unofficial Conversation...,’ op. cit.

⁵⁵ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 319.

⁵⁶ J. Dulles, ‘Statement on Liberation Policy,’ *Teaching American History*, 15 January 1953, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/statement-on-liberation-policy/>.

⁵⁷ Birkholz, “*Die stärksten Verbündeten des Westens: Der Antibolschewistische Block der Nationen 1946–1996. Geschichte, Organisation und Arbeitsweise eines ... Zerschlagung der Sowjetunion* (Hamburg: KVV Konkret Verlag, 2017), p. 21.

⁵⁸ Richard L. Rashke, *Useful Enemies: America’s Open-Door Policy for Nazi War Criminals* (New York: Delphinium Books, 2015).

⁵⁹ Birkholz, op. cit., p. 38.

⁶⁰ ‘World Anti-Communist League,’ Institute for Policy Studies, 9 January 1990. Archived version of 3 March 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20160303235651/http://rightweb.irc-online.org/articles/display/World_Anti-Communist_League.

communist propaganda publications. The ABN cooperated closely with the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) and the European Freedom Council (EFC). The most active groups within the ABN became the Ukrainian and Croatian organizations, particularly the Ukrainian OUN.⁶¹ The OUN, under the leadership of Andriy Melnyk (1890–1964), collaborated with the Nazi occupiers from the latter’s invasion of Poland in September 1939. The Gestapo trained Mykola Lebed and the adherents of Melnyk’s younger competitor, Stepan Bandera (1909–1959), in sabotage, guerrilla warfare, and assassinations. The OUN’s 1941 split into the so-called OUN-B, following Stepan Bandera, and OUN-M, following Andriy Melnyk,⁶² did not keep both factions from continuing to collaborate with the Germans.⁶³

OUN-B leader Stepan Bandera held meetings with the heads of German intelligence regarding the formation of a Ukrainian army. In February 1941, following negotiations with the leader of the German Abwehr, Wilhelm Canaris, Bandera received two and a half million marks to form the corps of the future independent army of Ukraine.⁶⁴ In April 1941, this “Legion of Ukrainian Nationalists,” composed of 600 Banderites⁶⁵ incorporated into the Roland and Nightingale battalions, both equipped by the Abwehr, was created ad hoc with the aim of fighting the Soviets on behalf of the Third Reich. Supporters of both OUN factions were recruited into the infamous Ukrainian SS division Galizia, established by Heinrich Himmler.⁶⁶ The OUN-B leadership, upon its release from preferential detention in a rather comfortable block in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen in 1944, also agreed to cooperate further with the Germans.⁶⁷

An important contact for the Ukrainians around the time of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, who would become decisive after the war, was the Abwehr officer Theodor Oberländer (1905–1998). Oberländer became deputy commander of the collaborationist Ukrainian “Nightingale Battalion” (*Nakhtigal’ legion*), established under German supervision and known for its utter brutality.⁶⁸ Its commander, Roman Shukhevich (1907–1950), a military leader of the OUN-B who also served as Hauptmann of a local German auxiliary police battalion, was one of the organizers of the Halych-Volhyn Massacre, in which 40,000–60,000 ethnic Poles were murdered.⁶⁹ “The OUN-B and UPA alone had between 1943 and 1944 murdered more than 90,000 Poles and several thousand Jews in the framework of ‘ethnic cleansing.’”⁷⁰ OUN

⁶¹ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 170.

⁶² Alexander Motyl (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, Volume 2 (Cambridge, MA: Academic Press, 2000), p. 40.

⁶³ John M. Merriman, *Encyclopedia of Modern Europe: Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction* (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2006), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/ounupa>.

⁶⁴ *Organizatsiia ukrains'kikh natsionalistiv i Ukrain's'ka povstans'ka armiia* [Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army] (Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2004), pp. 17-30, <http://www.history.org.ua/LiberUA/Book/Upa/1.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Motyl, op. cit., p. 40.

⁶⁶ Per Anders Rudling, ‘The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust: A Study in Manufacturing of Historical Myth,’ *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 2107 (2011), <http://carlbeckpapers.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/cbp/article/view/164>.

⁶⁷ Birkholz, op. cit., p. 33-34.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 164, p.168, p. 170, p.176.

⁷⁰ Birkholz, op. cit., p. 43. See also Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide, and Cult* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2014), p. 324.

members subsequently assisted the German SS in murdering approximately 200,000 Volhynian Jews.⁷¹

The connection with Oberländer would become central for Ukrainian nationalist groups after the war. While in Soviet Ukraine the UPA kept on fighting against Moscow until the early 1950s, their capacities were exhausted. Most of the OUN-B cadres had taken refuge in the Displaced Person (DP) camps in Bavaria under American occupation, where they re-organized with the help of the occupying authorities.⁷² As Federal Minister for Displaced Persons, Refugees, and the War-Damaged during the Adenauer government, Oberländer played a crucial role in the rise of the ABN and allowed Ukrainian collaborationists to take the lead in it. Yaroslav Stetsko (1912–1986), who presided over the Ukrainian collaborationist government in Lviv from as early as 30 June 1941, led the ABN from its creation in 1946 until his death in 1986.⁷³ Applying brutal intimidation tactics learned during the war years,⁷⁴ the OUN-B won the upper hand within the ABN, which consolidated its power over rival anti-communist umbrella organizations. A report from the CIC, the precursor to the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM), described the situation as follows:

CIC confirmed that by 1948 both the “Intermarium” and the UPA (Ukrainian partisan command) reported to the ABN president, Yaroslav Stetsko. The UPA in turn had consolidated all the anti-Soviet partisans under its umbrella. Yaroslav Stetsko was also Secretary of OUN/B and second in command to Bandera, who had the largest remaining partisan group behind Soviet lines under his direct command. Thus, OUN/B had achieved the leadership role among the anti-Communist exiles and was ascendant by 1950, while the more moderate and Madisonian-oriented platforms and groups, the Prometheans, Central European Federal Club and the others, had been fused with the ABN or abandoned.⁷⁵

In 1966, the ABN integrated into the newly established World Anti-Communist League. It nevertheless remained headquartered in Munich under an address that was also used by the European Freedom Council, founded by Stetsko and Oberländer in 1967⁷⁶ and whose main aims were “to coordinate and intensify anti-Communist activity in Europe and to give support to the cause of the subjugated peoples in the Soviet Russian empire.”⁷⁷ The same address was given

⁷¹ ‘Nazi War Crimes in Ukraine,’ Encyclopedia of Ukraine, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\N\A\NaziwarcrimesinUkraine.htm>.

⁷² Birkholz, op. cit., p. 37; see also Rudling, op. cit.

⁷³ The chairmen of the ABN Peoples’ Council included V. Bērziņš, V. Kajum-Khan, F. Ďurčanský, F. Farkas de Kisbarnak, and R. Ostrowski. The long-time general secretaries were Dr. Niko Nakashidze and C. Pokorný.

⁷⁴ Levy, *The Intermarium*, op. cit., p. 318.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ivan Matteo Lombardo (President, European Freedom Council), ‘Aide Memoire. European Captive Nations and Free World’s Demands for Peace and Security in Europe,’ *ABN Correspondence* 25: 3 (1974), pp. 34-28, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/13975/file.pdf>. Quoted in Birkholz, op. cit., p., 62.

⁷⁷ ‘European Freedom Council Formed at Munich Meeting,’ *Svoboda*, 15 July 1967, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/pdf2/1967/The_Ukrainian_Weekly_1967-27.pdf.

as the contact for *ABN Correspondence*, a fiercely anti-communist and historical revisionist magazine published from 1949 to 2000, at various times in English, German, and French.⁷⁸

The ABN could count on lasting support from Western intelligence services until it was disbanded after the Berlin Wall collapsed. While the British ceased their support of Bandera's network in 1954, once any hope of guerrilla warfare on the Soviet territory itself had disappeared, the ABN received backing from the Gehlen Organization (1946–1956) and later from its successor, the German intelligence service Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND). U.S. intelligence likewise continued to support the organization and appears to have recruited many CIA assets from amongst the Melnyk faction of the OUN.⁷⁹ For example, in the context of project AERODYNAMIC (1949–70; later renamed QRPLUMB, 1970–91),⁸⁰ the CIA provided support for the Foreign Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council ZP/UHVR, a Ukrainian émigré organization established in 1949 of which Mykola Lebed was elected Minister of Foreign Affairs.⁸¹ According to declassified CIA documents, QRPLUMB's "operational activity concentrated on propaganda and contact operations."⁸² Furthermore, the "CIA helped to establish in New York City the Prolog Research and Publishing Company in 1953 as ZP/UHVR's publishing and research arm." Through a Munich-based affiliate, the so-called Ukrainian Society for Foreign Studies (CIA Cryptonyms: QRTERRACE, AETERRACE), Prolog "published periodicals and selected books and pamphlets which sought to exploit and increase dissident nationalist tendencies in Soviet Ukraine."⁸³

In 1967, the World Congress of Free Ukrainians was founded in New York City by supporters of Andriy Melnyk. It was renamed the Ukrainian World Congress in 1993. In 2003, the Ukrainian World Congress was recognized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as an NGO with special consultative status. It now appears as a sponsor of the Atlantic Council, in the donation bracket of \$250,000–\$999,999 in 2015 and \$100,000–\$249,000 in 2016.⁸⁴ The continuity of institutional and individual trajectories from Second World War

⁷⁸ *ABN Korrespondenz* (German) (1949-1969), https://www.worldcat.org/title/abn-korrespondenz-monatl-informationsblatt-des-antibolschewistischen-blocks-der-nationen-erscheint-in-dt-engl-u-franz-sprache/oclc/183212035&referer=brief_results; *ABN Correspondence* (English) (1950-2000), <http://diasporiana.org.ua/?s=ABN+Correspondence>; *ABN Correspondence* (French) (1952-1954); *ABN Correspondence*, Vol. XI, No.1, January-February 1960, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/13903/file.pdf>; *ABN Correspondence*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, January-February 1988, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/14113/file.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Birkholz, op. cit., p. 85.

⁸⁰ National Archives and Records Administration, 'Research Aid: Cryptonyms and Terms in Declassified CIA Files Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Disclosure Acts,' June 2007, <https://www.archives.gov/files/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release-lexicon.pdf>; declassified CIA-files about Project AERODYNAMIC, <https://archive.org/details/AERODYNAMIC> and <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/Aerodynamic>; Declassified CIA files about Project QRPLUMB, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/qrplumb>; declassified CIA file 'Project AERODYNAMIC,' 15 February 1967, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/AERODYNAMIC%20%20VOL.%205%20%20\(D%20EVELOPMENT%20AND%20PLANS\)_0004.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/AERODYNAMIC%20%20VOL.%205%20%20(D%20EVELOPMENT%20AND%20PLANS)_0004.pdf).

⁸¹ David C.S. Albanese, *In Search of a Lesser Evil: Anti-Soviet Nationalism and the Cold War* (PhD dissertation, Northeastern University, 2015), 213 ff., <https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:rx915s212>.

⁸² National Archives and Records Administration, 'Research Aid,' op. cit.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Atlantic Council, 'Honor Roll of Contributors,' 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170517122607/http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/support/supporters>;

collaborationists to Cold War-era anti-communist organizations to contemporary conservative U.S. think tanks is significant for the ideological underpinnings of today's Intermarium revival.

Intermarium 4: Central Europe as the Pro-U.S. "New Europe"

After having been diluted by the broader anti-communist fight in the course of the Cold War, the concept of Intermarium once again began to make the rounds in some Western strategic circles in the late 2000s. The late Alexandros Petersen, in his book *The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West* (2011), inspired by Halford Mackinder's notion of the Heartland and then by Brzezinski's attempts to avoid the balkanization of Central and Eastern Europe, explained: "Western policy-makers must therefore reacquaint themselves with Piłsudski's concepts, especially that of Prometheism, in order to move beyond a containment strategy and make the strategic inroads to Eurasia that will prevent that critical region from coming under the sway of authoritarian organizers, about which Mackinder warned."⁸⁵

This new usage of the Intermarium concept has been revived by Stratfor, a private intelligence think tank whose customers include large corporations as well as government agencies such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Marines, and the Defense Intelligence Agency. The earliest Stratfor email mentioning the notion of Intermarium dates from 2009 and advanced the concept in the context of Poland's solidarity with Georgia following the August 2008 war with Russia.⁸⁶ A total of 394 Stratfor emails up to December 2011 (leaked by Wikileaks) contain the term "Intermarium."⁸⁷ Since around 2012, Stratfor has also used the term publicly. In 2012, the Hungarian-born geopolitical analyst and advisor George Friedman, founder of Stratfor and still at the time its head, was vocally promoting an Intermarium project in which Poland should distance itself from the EU and form a bloc with other Central and Eastern European countries between Germany and Russia. In a video from the European Forum of New Ideas in October of that year, he stated:

Poland must now depend on itself. Why? It's a nation of 38 million, it has a vibrant economy, it has highly intelligent educated people, and it is rising. I will put a more radical idea forward to you, which I think is a fundamental one that we get from General Piłsudski, the Intermarium, [which] basically says we are caught between Germany and Russia, and that stinks [...]⁸⁸

Atlantic Council, 'Honor Roll of Contributors,' 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180519083222/http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/support/supporters>.

⁸⁵ Alexandros Petersen, *The World Island: Eurasian Geopolitics and the Fate of the West* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), p. 153.

⁸⁶ 'Russia Profile Weekly Experts Panel: Russia's Stake in Ukrainian Elections,' Wikileaks, 28 November 2009, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/65/656190_-eurasia-utf-8-q-russia_profile_weekly_experts_panel.html.

⁸⁷ Leaked Stratfor emails containing the term "Intermarium" on Wikileaks, <https://search.wikileaks.org/gifiles/?q=intermarium&mfrom=&mto=&title=¬itle=&date=&nofrom=¬o=&count=50&sort=1&file=&docid=&relid=0#searchresult>.

⁸⁸ 'Lecture by George Friedman "Beyond the European Union: Europe in the Middle of the 21st Century,"' YouTube video, 1:15:26, posted by "EFNI 2012" (Europejskie Forum Nowych Idei [European Forum of New Ideas]), October 25, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2858&v=ywrjTZrEgF4, time stamp [47:48].

In 2015, Stratfor recognized in its Geopolitical Diary web project that “it has been discussing an alliance system called the Intermarium for quite a while” and referred to Piłsudski's original project:⁸⁹

We have been arguing that, given the re-emergence of Russian power, the idea of the Intermarium—supported not by France, but by the United States, and focused on Russia—would become inevitable. [Former United States Army Europe (USAREUR) commander General Ben] Hodges’ statements on pre-positioning essentially announced the Intermarium, or its small beginning. The area in which the equipment would be pre-positioned stretches from the Baltic states through Poland and then skips to Romania and Bulgaria on the Black Sea. It signals to the Russians that whatever happens in Ukraine, the next line of countries is the line that triggers the alliance.⁹⁰

In 2017, Friedman returned to the idea, stating “The Intermarium is a concept—really, an eventuality—that I have spoken about for nearly a decade.” Boosted by the current U.S.-Russia tensions, he has advanced a more precise vision of what this union is meant to be: he sees Poland and Romania—the two closest military allies of the U.S. in the region— as the “two foundations of the Intermarium” and does not hesitate to hope that the Intermarium would challenge the “hegemony of the 1950s-style corporations that dominate European economics” and promote an economic model that would be “more entrepreneurial, more closely resembling the United States.”⁹¹

The concept has been supported by other pro-NATO think tanks such as the Institute of World Politics,⁹² a national security and international affairs graduate school founded in 1990. Looking at its board of trustees, one can find, for example, William H. Webster, former Director of the FBI and CIA.⁹³⁹⁴ Its founder, John Lenczowski, worked in the State Department in the Bureau of European Affairs and as Special Advisor to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the early 1980s. From 1983 to 1987, he was Director of European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council and served as principal Soviet affairs adviser to Ronald Reagan.⁹⁵ One of the IWP’s most important advocates of the Intermarium is Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, who, besides having authored a book on the subject,⁹⁶ has spoken on the topic at several IWP conferences.⁹⁷ Chodakiewicz holds the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies at the IWP and directs the Center for Intermarium Studies, whose mission is:

⁸⁹ ‘Washington Returns to a Cold War Strategy,’ Stratfor Worldview, 27 January 2015, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/washington-returns-cold-war-strategy>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ George Friedman, “From the Intermarium to the Three Seas,” Geopolitical Futures, 7 July 2017, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/intermarium-three-seas/>.

⁹² Institute for World Politics website, <https://www.iwp.edu/>.

⁹³ Institute of World Politics, ‘Board of Trustees,’ <https://www.iwp.edu/about/page/board-of-trustees>.

⁹⁴ ‘U.S. Foreign Policy Options: Security Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe,’ YouTube video, 59:24, posted by “The Institute of World Politics,” May 6, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3Fy3Y4lsUI>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Intermarium: The Land between the Black and Baltic Seas* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012).

⁹⁷ A number of Chodakiewicz’ speeches on the topic are available on YouTube, as a quick search shows: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=chodakiewicz+intermarium.

to champion the continuity of Trans-Atlantic relationships to re-stimulate US-European amity, and to reconfirm America's commitment to Europe—a Europe that includes the Intermarium. This is particularly crucial in the ear that needs reminding that America's systemic arrangements, institutions, law, and culture were transplanted from the Old Continent and the Mediterranean Basin. The spirit of Jerusalem-Athens-Rome via London arrived in the New World to forge a new nation.⁹⁸

In 2015, IWP hosted in Pentagon City a conference entitled “Between Russia and NATO: Security Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe,” featuring, among others, Chodakiewicz:

At this year's conference, his [Chodakiewicz's] talk focused on the history of the Intermarium, a region stretching from the Baltic Sea, to the Black Sea, to the Adriatic coast. He explained that, after the dissolution of the Habsburg, Hohenzollern, and Romanov dynasties in the twentieth century, the region experienced a period of disintegration and petty bickering in stark contrast with the harmony that prevailed during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, lasting from the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. As the ancient nations of Poland and Hungary sought to secure their lost territories, ethno-nationalist states, like Latvia and Slovakia, attempted to distance themselves from their former rulers. Conflicting irredentist claims and the precarious egos of the fledgling Central European nation-states precluded the sort of regional solidarity necessary to defend the cluster of states from Germany and the USSR. The events and aftermath of World War II demonstrated once and for all the foolishness of regional bickering in light of very real existential threats brewing at the thresholds of Central Europe: if the region hopes to avoid repeating history, Professor Chodakiewicz concluded, regional solidarity must trump petty intra-regional concerns.⁹⁹

Chodakiewicz had been appointed by former U.S. President George W. Bush to serve as president of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council for a five-year term. His appointment was criticized at the time by various organizations, such as the Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC), which summarized allegations that he held anti-Semitic views.¹⁰⁰ In a long dossier, SPLC revealed Chodakiewicz to be a frequent commentator on right-wing Polish media, such as the weekly *Najwyższy Czas!*, “the magazine of the Real Politics Union party, a fringe, pro-life, anti-gay marriage, pro-property rights, anti-income tax group,” and the far-right Polish

⁹⁸ Institute of World Politics, ‘Center for Intermarium Studies,’ <https://www.iwp.edu/programs/page/center-for-intermarium-studies>.

⁹⁹ Polish American Congress, ‘Notes from the Fifth Annual IWP Kosciuszko Chair Spring Symposium, “Between Russia and NATO: Security Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe,”’ 25 April 2015, http://www.paconglisland.org/website_conference__4-25-15_reflections.pdf. Archived version: <https://archive.fo/ApaDZ>.

¹⁰⁰ Larry Keller, ‘Historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz with Controversial Views Serves on Holocaust Museum Board,’ Southern Poverty Law Center, 29 November 2009, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2009/historian-marek-jan-chodakiewicz-controversial-views-serves-holocaust-museum-board>.

website Fronda.pl.¹⁰¹ In July 2008, Chodakiewicz was among those who accused Barack Obama of having been a Muslim and a communist associate.¹⁰²

Another important figure in the D.C. think tank world, Robert D. Kaplan, Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, chief geopolitical analyst at Stratfor for some years, and member of the Defense Policy Board at the Pentagon while Robert Gates was Secretary of Defense, has likewise used the notion of “Greater Intermarium” to define the region and invite the US to take a more active leadership role in Europe lest the continent be fractured.¹⁰³ The same agenda is advanced by the Washington-based Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), whose mission is to promote the “strategic theater encompassing the region between Berlin to Moscow, and from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, [as] represent[ing] an area vital of strategic interest to the United States. (...) From Wilson and Masaryk to Reagan, Havel and Wałęsa, CEPA works to preserve and extend the shared legacy of fighting for freedom, and America’s essential role in Europe, among a new generation of Atlanticists.”¹⁰⁴ Based in Kyiv, the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation has been, too, nurturing the Intermarium concept, with Kostiantyn Fedorenko and Andreas Umland proposing some concrete ideas for the Intermarium treaty that could address the contradictions of having some of its members inside EU and NATO, and some outside.¹⁰⁵

The Intermarium concept thus seems to have gradually taken root among a group of U.S. policy experts and decision-makers who support strengthening NATO’s presence in Central and Eastern Europe. NATO’s expansion into Eastern Europe has been a fundamental and enduring point of contention in East–West relations, with Russian leaders accusing the United States of non-compliance with the oral commitment James Baker made to Gorbachev that NATO would not move closer to Russian borders.¹⁰⁶ While neither Georgia nor Ukraine has yet succeeded in convincing NATO to allow their accession, several other initiatives have been deployed in the region. The turning point was the July 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, at which it was decided to deter Russia by strengthening the Alliance’s military presence on its eastern flank. By 2017, there were four NATO battalions in the region, stationed in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on a rotational basis. Each of these battalions was provided by a NATO country—the United States, Canada, Germany, or Britain. The 2016 summit also inaugurated NATO’s Ballistic Missile Defense, putting a base in Romania. The stated purpose is to counter the threats posed by Iran and North Korea, but Russia believes it is also a target. Montenegro was invited to become NATO’s twenty-ninth member and discussions on

¹⁰¹ Ibid.; articles by Jan Marek Chodakiewicz on fronda.pl, <http://www.frona.pl/szukaj?cx=partner-pub-3000582343842169%3A1778531132&ie=UTF-8&q=Chodakiewicz>; articles by Jan Marek Chodakiewicz on *Najwyższy Czas!*, <https://nczas.com/?s=chodakiewicz>.

¹⁰² Keller, op. cit.; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, ‘Lustrowanie Obamy,’ *Salon24*, 18 July 2008, <https://www.salon24.pl/u/chodakiewicz/80994,lustrowanie-obamy>.

¹⁰³ Robert D. Kaplan, ‘Europe’s New Medieval Map,’ *Wall Street Journal*, 19 January 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/europes-new-medieval-map-1452875514>.

¹⁰⁴ See the Center’s website, <https://www.cepa.org/about>.

¹⁰⁵ Konstiantyn Fedorenko and Andreas Umland, “How to solve Ukrain’s security dilemma? The idea of an Intermarium coalition in East-Central Europe,” *War on the Rock*, August 30, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/how-to-solve-ukraines-security-dilemma-the-idea-of-an-intermarium-coalition-in-east-central-europe/>

¹⁰⁶ Mary Elise Sarotte, ‘A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion,’ *Foreign Affairs*, September–October 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-11/broken-promise>.

the status of Georgia and Ukraine were held, angering Moscow.¹⁰⁷ NATO also launched a “Strategic Communication Center” in Latvia and opened a training center in Georgia.¹⁰⁸

The Intermarium concept fits into this geopolitical and military context quite well, offering the missing ideological and historical legitimization of U.S. policy for Central and Eastern Europe. Yet the term itself does not seem to have been endorsed by the transatlantic Alliance.

Intermarium 5: Central Europe Unity Revived through Regional Economic Cooperation

Simultaneously with its promotion by some American think tanks, the concept experienced a revival in Central Europe, especially Poland. There, the memory of Piłsudski’s project had never totally disappeared but simply transformed in line with the new geopolitical realities. The Paris-based émigré journal *Kultura*—the main Polish cultural journal published in emigration, led by Jerzy Giedroyc (1906–2000)—played a key role in reformulating Poland’s Eastern strategy. Giedroyc’s vision, expressed during the Cold War decades and which inspired *Solidarność*, paved the way for the Polish leadership of the 2000s to become an active player in the field of regional cooperation against Russia. In Giedroyc’s view, Poland should adopt a “ULB (Ukraine—Lithuania—Belarus) doctrine,” i.e., fight for the independence and rapprochement with the West of a trio of its eastern neighbours. Without these neighbours, he argued, Warsaw would not succeed in its own return to Europe. Giedroyc thus invited Polish elites to recognize post-war borders with them and not cultivate any revanchism toward the three countries.¹⁰⁹ While some elements of *Kultura*’s “Eastern policy” are reminiscent of the Intermarium notion, they strongly differ in that the journal was not anti-Russian and, on the contrary, called for the search for a common language with liberals in Russia.

Kultura’s “ULB” doctrine was appropriated, and given a more virulently anti-Russian tone, by the Confederation of Independent Poland (*Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej*), clandestinely launched from 1979 by Leszek Moczulski (1930–1997), an admirer of Piłsudski who led some small far-right movements after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1994, the Confederation co-founded the League of Lands of Międzymorze, which organized three conventions in subsequent years.¹¹⁰ The term was also seized upon by some members of *Solidarność*, who integrated this “Eastern strategy” into their programmatic declaration at the movement’s First Conference in September 1981.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Richard Sokolsky, ‘Not Quiet on NATO’s Eastern Front,’ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 29 June 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/29/not-quiet-on-nato-s-eastern-front-pub-63984>.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Russia Suspends Joint Consultations on Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,’ *ITAR-TASS*, 10 March 2015, <http://tass.com/russia/781973>; ‘NATO Strategic Communications Center Unveiled in Riga,’ *Latvian Public Broadcasting*, 20 August 2015, <http://www.lsm.lv/en/article/societ/society/nato-strategic-communications-center-unveiled-in-riga.a142243/>; ‘NATO Opens Training Center In Georgia,’ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 27 August 2015, <http://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-nato-training-center/27212128.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Pauline Joris, ‘La revue *Kultura* : au cœur de la dissidence polonaise’ [The Journal *Kultura*: At the Heart of Polish Dissidence], *Nouvelle Europe (blog)*, 5 October 2009, <http://www.nouvelle-europe.eu/la-revue-kultura-au-c-ur-de-la-dissidence-polonaise>.

¹¹⁰ Robert Buliński, ‘Międzymorze—polska ułuda czy realność’ [Intermarium—Polish Illusion or Reality], *Tygodnik Solidarność* 2 (1414), 8 January 2016, pp. 28–29.

¹¹¹ Sarah Struk, ‘La diplomatie polonaise: de la doctrine “ULB” au Partenariat Oriental’ [Polish Diplomacy: From the ‘ULB’ Doctrine to the Eastern Partnership], *Nouvelle Europe (blog)*, 23 August 2010, <http://www.nouvelle-europe.eu/la-diplomatie-polonaise-de-la-doctrine-ulb-au-partenariat-oriental>.

In the 1990s, when Poland was intensively engaged in its EU accession process and led by liberal governments, the notion of Intermarium was absent from the mainstream scene, even if the idea of a “NATO-bis” was evoked by then President Lech Wałęsa. It was only during the next decade that the notion returned to prominence on the Polish political landscape, advanced by the conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS). The Kaczyński brothers, Lech and Jarosław, seized upon the term during their victorious presidential campaign in 2005 and used it widely up until Lech’s death in the Smolensk plane crash in 2010.¹¹² They associated it with Poland’s increased activism toward both the Visegrad group and the “Eastern Partnership” countries—including Lech’s symbolic trip to Tbilisi during the 2008 Russian war with Georgia alongside the presidents of Estonia, Lithuania, and Ukraine and the Latvian prime minister, intended as a message of support for Georgian sovereignty. Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1998–2001) and Minister of National Defense (2005–2007) Radosław Sikorski was likewise a fervent supporter of so-called Jagiellonian politics.¹¹³

Around this time, the idea of a specific security coalition for the Central and Eastern European countries was championed by the Lithuanian president, Algirdas Brazauskas, and his prime minister, Casimir Prunskienė. At a 2006 summit in Vilnius devoted to “Common Vision for Common Neighborhood,” Prunskienė declared: “I have not lost hope that the Baltic-Black Sea alliance is not only our historical past from the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Certain historical motivations have remained until now.”¹¹⁴

However, it was Poland that became the driving force behind more active regional integration, this time more economic than political or military.¹¹⁵ Under the mentorship of Jarosław Kaczyński, the new Polish president, Andrzej Duda, elected in 2015, relaunched the idea of a Baltic-Black Sea alliance on the eve of his inauguration under the label of “Three Seas Initiative” (TSI). Originally, the project grew out of a debate sparked by a report co-published by the Atlantic Council and the EU energy lobby group Central Europe Energy Partners (CEEP) with the goal of promoting big Central European companies’ interests in the EU.¹¹⁶ The report, entitled *Completing Europe—From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union*, was co-edited by General James L. Jones, Jr., former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, U.S. National Security Advisor, and chairman of the Atlantic Council, and Paweł Olechnowicz, CEO of the Polish oil and gas giant Grupa Lotos.¹¹⁷ It “called for the accelerated construction of a North-South Corridor of energy, transportation, and communications links stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic and Black Seas,” which at the time was still referred to as the “Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Initiative.”¹¹⁸ The report was

¹¹² Lech Wyszczelski, *Polska mocarstwowa : wizje i koncepcje obozów politycznych II Rzeczypospolitej : Międzymorze, federalizm, prometeizm, kolonie i inne drogi do wielkości* [Polish Superpower: Visions and Concepts of Political Camps of the Second Polish Republic: Intermarium, Federalism, Prometheanism, Colonies, and Other Routes to Size] (Warsaw: Bellona, 2015).

¹¹³ Buliński, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

¹¹⁴ Oleksiy Volovych, ‘The Baltic-Black Sea Union: Prospects of Realization (Part 1),’ Borysfen Intel, 30 May 2016, <http://bintel.com.ua/en/article/volodich-balto/>.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Central European Energy Partners, ‘About Us,’ <https://www.ceep.be/about-us/>.

¹¹⁷ ‘#1826 Grupa Lotos,’ *Forbes*, as of May 1, 2013, <https://www.forbes.com/companies/grupa-lotos/>.

¹¹⁸ Atlantic Council, ‘Completing Europe and the Three Seas Initiative,’ published on the website of the Ukrainian Employers Association, <https://www.hup.hr/EasyEdit/UserFiles/Completing%20Europe%20and%20the%20Three%20Seas%20Initiative.pdf>; Bekić and Funduk, op. cit.

presented in Brussels in March 2015, where, according to Frederick Kempe, president and CEO of the Atlantic Council, it “generated a huge amount of excitement.”¹¹⁹

In August 2016, the Dubrovnik meeting led to the formal creation of the “Three Sea Initiative.” The meeting was attended by Polish president Andrzej Duda, Romanian president Klaus Iohannis, and Bulgarian president Rosen Plevneliev. In addition to this, “Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia dispatched ministers of foreign affairs, whereas Austria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic were represented on a lower level. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Atlantic Council think tank.”¹²⁰ Since that Dubrovnik meeting, both Duda and Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović have been staunch supporters of a partner bloc of Central and Eastern European countries. U.S. president Donald Trump visited the TSI’s second summit in July 2017 in Warsaw,¹²¹ with Marek Jan Chodakiewicz of the IWP helping to draft his speech.¹²² In a *Washington Post* article reporting on the meeting, journalist Adam Taylor noted the presence of the Intermarium concept in TSI discussions: “[Head of the Warsaw office of the European Council on Foreign Relations Piotr] Buras noted that some in the Polish Law and Justice party even refer to it as ‘Intermarium’... which draws upon a Polish foreign policy concept in the ’30s of the 20th century which was openly directed against the German dominance at that time.”¹²³

At the latest TSI summit in Bucharest in September 2018, Duda insisted on the need for a regional partnership between the 12 countries involved, but also welcomed Germany and the US as closest partners. He declared, “We want to be, and in reality we are, political practitioners, the co-creators of an effective and active Central Europe, on a global scale.”¹²⁴ Poland works closely with the Washington-based Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) mentioned earlier to advance this “Atlanticist” agenda.

The Intermarium concept has also been appropriated by the Belarusian opposition to President Aleksandr Lukashenka to denounce both his authoritarianism and the country’s incorporation into Russia-led structures. As early as 2012, the Institute for World Politics rejoiced that its promotion of the Intermarium had gained the attention of opposition

¹¹⁹ “Presentation of the ‘Completing Europe—from the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation and Telecommunications Union’ Report to the European Commission,” Central Europe Energy Partners, 2 March 2015, <https://www.ceep.be/events/conference-presentation-of-the-completing-europe-from-the-north-south-corridor-to-energy-transportation-and-telecommunications-union-report-to-the-european-commission/>; ‘Completing Europe: From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications,’ YouTube, 54:15, posted by “AtlanticCouncil,” April 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fayDnmf6rLg>.

¹²⁰ ‘Dubrovnik Forum Adopts Declaration Called “The Three Seas Initiative,”’ *EBL News*, 25 August 2016, <https://eblnews.com/news/croatia/dubrovnik-forum-adopts-declaration-called-three-seas-initiative-34593>; Bekić and Funduk, op. cit.

¹²¹ ‘Trump Trip to Poland Forces 3 Seas Summit Change,’ *Fox News*, 13 June 2017, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/trump-trip-to-poland-forces-3-seas-summit-change>; ‘FACTBOX-Three Seas Initiative Summit in Warsaw,’ *CNBC*, 4 July 2017. Archived version: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170708155139/https://www.cnn.com/2017/07/04/reuters-america-factbox-three-seas-initiative-summit-in-warsaw.html>.

¹²² Tom Porter, ‘Did a Polish Far Right Activist Help Donald Trump Write His Speech in Warsaw?’ *Newsweek*, 7 June 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/poland-trump-anti-semitism-632702>.

¹²³ Adam Taylor, ‘Trump’s Visit to Poland Seen as a Snub to the E.U. and Germany,’ *The Washington Post*, 5 July 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/07/05/trumps-visit-to-poland-seen-as-a-snob-to-the-e-u-and-germany/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e5027159d076.

¹²⁴ ‘President Andrzej Duda on the Three Seas Initiative’s Summit,’ President of Poland, 17 September 2018, <http://www.president.pl/en/news/art,844,president-andrzej-duda-on-the-three-seas-initiatives-summit.html>.

newspapers such as *Narodnaia Volia* and the periodical *Arche*: “We are glad that some in Belarus like the idea of the *Intermarium* and appreciate the memory of the old *Rzeczpospolita*, the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth,” commented the IWP website.¹²⁵ More prominently, the topic was discussed during a special session of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in 2016 in the presence of several Intermarium proponents who referred to the Jagellonian past, such as Polish Defence Minister Romuald Szeremietiew; Jan Malicki, director of the Kalinouski program at the Eastern Europe Institute of Warsaw University; leader of the civil campaign “European Belarus” Andrei Sannikov; chairman of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (*Narodnaya Hramada*) Mikola Statkevich; and the head of the Ukrainian analytical center East European Security Research Initiative Foundation, Maksim Khylo; as well as the Belarusian opposition platform Charter97.¹²⁶

Intermarium 6: Central Europe As Dreamed by the Ukrainian Far Right

The most recent reincarnation of the Intermarium has taken form in Ukraine, especially among the Ukrainian far right, which has re-appropriated the concept by capitalizing on the solid ideological and personal continuity between actors of the Ukrainian far right in the interwar and Cold War periods and their heirs today.

This continuity is exemplified by the wife of long-time ABN leader Yaroslav Stetsko, Yaroslava Stetsko (1920–2003), a prominent figure in the Ukrainian post-Second World War émigré community who became directly involved in post-Soviet Ukrainian politics. Having joined the OUN at the age of 18, she became an indispensable supporter of the ABN after the war, first in its press bureau and from 1957 as editor of its publication, the *ABN Correspondence*.¹²⁷ After her husband's death in 1986, she succeeded him as the ABN's president and became a member of the presidium of the World Anti-Communist League.¹²⁸ In July 1991, she returned to Ukraine, and in the following year formed the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (CUN), a new political party established on the basis of the OUN, presiding over both.¹²⁹ Although the CUN never achieved high election results, it cooperated with the Social-National Party of Ukraine (SNPU), which later changed its name to Svoboda, the far-right Ukrainian party that continues to exist.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Kosciuszko Chair and Center for Intermarium Studies, ‘Belarus Referendum and the Intermarium,’ The Institute for World Politics, 12 April 2012, https://www.iwp.edu/news_publications/detail/belarus-referendum-and-the-intermarium.

¹²⁶ See Charter 97's report on the meeting: ‘Intermarium Concept—Response To The Russian Threat,’ *Charter 97*, 1 October 2016, <https://charter97.org/en/news/2016/10/1/225146/>.

¹²⁷ Birkholz, op. cit., p. 48-49; see also Jörg Kronauer, *‘Ukraine über alles!’ Ein Expansionsprojekt des Westens* (Hamburg: KVV Konkret Verlag, 2014).

¹²⁸ Yaroslava Stetsko appeared on the list of delegates of the highly secretive 16th WACL Conference in Luxembourg (held 20-23 September, 1983), together with Roman Zvarych, Catherine Chumachenko, Theodor Oberländer, General John K. Singlaub, Daniel O. Graham, and others.

¹²⁹ Roman Woronowycz, ‘Slava Stetsko, Nationalist Leader, Verkhovna Rada Deputy, Dies at Age 83,’ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 16 March 2003, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2003/110302.shtml>; Birkholz, op. cit., p. 52.

¹³⁰ The Social-National Party of Ukraine is a far-right Ukrainian political party founded in 1991. In 2004, after Oleh Tyahnybok became party leader, the party rebranded itself, changed its name to Svoboda, and dropped the Wolfsangel symbol. However, it remains associated with the neo-Nazi scene and became part of the Social-Nationalist Assembly set up in 2008. In 2013, Svoboda participated in the

The co-founder of the CUN and formerly Yaroslav Stetsko's private secretary, the U.S.-born Roman Zvarych (1953), represents a younger generation of the Ukrainian émigré community active during the Cold War and a direct link from the ABN to the Azov Battalion. In an interview, he declared that at age fifteen he swore an oath to "achieve Ukrainian statehood or ... die fighting for it."¹³¹ Zvarych participated in the activities of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations in the 1980s.¹³² In the framework of the fortieth-anniversary commemoration of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), headed by Yaroslav Stetsko, he represented the World Federation of Ukrainian Students (CeSUS).¹³³ This put him on a list of participants that included, among others, Senator Barry Goldwater, former DIA Director General Daniel O. Graham, former SAC commander-in-chief General Bruce K. Holloway, founder of the US WACL chapter John K. Singlaub, Lev Dobriansky, and Otto von Habsburg.¹³⁴ In an interview published by the BBC Monitoring Kiev Unit in 2005, he stated that he had met his future wife Svetlana in 1983 in the context of a secret mission for Stetsko in Poland, where he was recruiting assets "for work in Ukraine."¹³⁵ He served as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from 1998 to 2005, and again from 2008 to 2013.¹³⁶

In February 2005, after Viktor Yushchenko's election, Zvarych was appointed Minister of Justice. His name appears on Wikileaks documents in various contexts, including the leaked Stratfor emails and the so-called "Cablegate" of around 250,000 U.S. classified diplomatic cables.¹³⁷ According to those emails, Zvarych seemed to have had frequent consultations with the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine between 2006 and 2009. According to Andriy Biletsky, the first commander of the Azov battalion, a civil paramilitary unit created in the wake of the Euromaidan, Zvarych was head of the headquarters of the Azov Central Committee in 2015 and supported the Azov battalion with "volunteers" and political advice through his Zvarych Foundation.¹³⁸ Zvarych returned to parliament in March 2018.

The reintroduction of the Intermarium notion in Ukraine is closely connected to the broad rehabilitation of the OUN and UPA, as well as of their main hero, Stepan Bandera. After Ukraine's independence in late 1991, Bandera was progressively reintroduced as a national hero, first in Western Ukraine, where the memory of hundreds of thousands of civilians

pro-European Union protests to influence regime change but was surpassed in popularity by other far-right movements, such as Pravyi Sektor.

¹³¹ Zenon Zawada, "Zvarych Sees Campaign to Force His Resignation, Suspects Diaspora, Others," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, May 15, 2005, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/2005/200502.shtml>.

¹³² *ABN Correspondence* XXXII: 3/4 (May–August 1981), 10, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/14107/file.pdf>; *ABN Correspondence* XXXII: 2 (March–April 1981), 92, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/14107/file.pdf>.

¹³³ *The Ukrainian Review* XXX: 4 (Winter 1982), 92, <http://diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/14392/file.pdf>.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ According to an interview with Zvarich published in Russian in the 25 March 2005 issue of *Fakty i komentarii* [Facts and Commentary] and republished by the Kiev office of BBC Monitoring Worldwide with the headline "Ukrainian Justice Minister Shares Personal Story" on March 28, 2005.

¹³⁶ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 'Roman Zvarych,' archived on 18 April 2013 at https://web.archive.org/web/20130418093645/http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/AssemblyList/AL_MemberDetails.asp?MemberID=4100.

¹³⁷ Files on Wikileaks matching the search term "Roman Zvarych," <https://search.wikileaks.org/advanced?q=%22roman+zvarych%22>.

¹³⁸ Mariana Pitsukh, "Andriy Biletsky: Avakov Is a Person of the System, and I Consider This System To Be Extremely Negative," *Ukrayinska Pravda*, 18 October 2016, http://pda.pravda.com.ua/articles/id_7123983/.

deported to Soviet camps was still vivid, then across the whole country and in the new history textbooks commissioned after the Orange revolution.¹³⁹ During his presidency (2005–2010), and particularly through the creation of the Institute for National Remembrance, Viktor Yushchenko built the image of Bandera as a simple Ukrainian nationalist fighting for his country's independence, first in the 1930s against Poland, then in the early 1940s against the Soviet Union. His troubling biographical elements—he twice collaborated with the Nazi regime, adhered to many national socialist principles, called for an ethnically pure Ukrainian nation, and demonstrated a fierce anti-Semitism in line with the Nazis' genocidal policy—have often been ignored in the new official Ukrainian historiography.¹⁴⁰ In 2009, the government honoured Bandera with a postage stamp for his one-hundredth birthday, and the following year he was posthumously given the official title of “Hero of Ukraine.”¹⁴¹ This honour provoked outrage in Eastern Ukraine and Europe, however, and was eventually revoked.

The historian Stefanie Birkholz, who wrote the most exhaustive study of the ABN to date, reminds us of Yushchenko's spouse's role in this strategy:

It is not unlikely Yushchenko's readiness during his presidency (2005–2010) to open up to right-wing tendencies of the Ukrainian exile leads back to his wife, who had connections to the ABN. Kateryna Chumachenko [Yushchenko], born 1961 in Chicago, was socialised there in the Ukrainian exile youth organisation SUM (*Spilka Ukrajinskoji Molodi*, Ukrainian Youth Organisation) in the spirit of the OUN. Via the lobby association Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) she obtained a post as “special assistant” in the US State Department in 1986, and was from 1988 to 1989 employed by the Office of Public Liaison in the White House. In 1991, like other activists of the Ukrainian exile, she moved back to Ukraine. A photograph from 1983 shows Chumachenko as director of the Ukrainian National Information Service in conversation with US ambassador to the UN Jeane J. Kirkpatrick and Yaroslav Stetsko.¹⁴²

This rehabilitation trend accelerated after the EuroMaidan. In 2015, just before the seventieth anniversary of Victory Day, Volodymyr Viatrovykh, minister of education and long-time director of the Institute for the Study of the Liberation Movement, an organization founded to promote the heroic narrative of the OUN-UPA, called on the parliament to vote for a set of four laws that codified the new, post-Maidan historiography. Two of them are particularly influential in the ongoing memory war with Russia. One decrees that OUN and UPA members are to be

¹³⁹ Wilfred Gilje, ‘Competing Victimhoods: Post-Soviet Ukrainian Narratives on World War II’ in Ekazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, and Kai Struve (eds) *Shared History, Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941* (Leipzig: Leipzig University Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ Timothy Snyder, ‘A Fascist Hero in Democratic Kiev,’ *The New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2010/02/24/a-fascist-hero-in-democratic-kiev/>.

¹⁴¹ ‘Ukaz Prezidenta Ukrainy No. 46/2010: O prisvoenii S. Bandere zvaniia Geroi Ukrainy’ [Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 46/2010: On conferring the title of Hero of Ukraine to S. Bandera], Official Website of the President of Ukraine, 20 September 2010, <http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/documents/10353.html>. Archived version from January 25, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100125175510/http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/documents/10353.html>.

¹⁴² Birkholz, op. cit., p. 54. See also Kronauer, op. cit. During her tenure in the White House, Chumachenko worked closely with Paula Dobriansky. Dobriansky's father, U.S. Ambassador Lev Dobriansky, was a leading figure in the UCCA and served on the board of the American branch of the World Anti Communist League (WACL) in the early 1980s.

considered “fighters for Ukrainian independence in the twentieth century,” making public denial of this unlawful. The second, “Condemning Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and Prohibiting the Propaganda of their Symbols,” formally criminalizes the entire Soviet regime in Ukraine, ordering the removal of any Soviet-era symbols and making any breach punishable by up to ten years in prison.¹⁴³

These decommunization laws, adopted without any public debate and which do not seem to have majority support,¹⁴⁴ have been extremely controversial: the historian community expressed apprehension about being told how to think “correctly,”¹⁴⁵ and the joint interim opinion from the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR found that the second law infringed on people’s rights to freedom of expression and association. In 2017, Vyatrovych, already accused of “whitewashing” Ukrainian history by placing Soviet-era state archives under the jurisdiction of the Institute for National Remembrance,¹⁴⁶ stated that displaying the Waffen-SS Galicia Division symbols did not fall under the 2015 law.¹⁴⁷ The most recent evidence of this trend is the December 2018 decision to declare January 1 a national day of commemoration of Stepan Bandera.¹⁴⁸

In this context of rehabilitation of interwar heroes, tensions with Russia, and disillusion with Europe over its perceived lack of support against Moscow, the geopolitical concept of Intermarium could only prosper. It has found its most active promoters on the far right of the political spectrum, among the leadership of the Azov Battalion.

This is the case, for instance, of Andriy Biletsky (1979), a Ukrainian member of parliament, lieutenant colonel of the police, and university instructor. From his youth, Biletsky was active in neo-Nazi circles. He took the leadership of the neo-Nazi organization Patriot of Ukraine (*Patriot Ukrainy*) (1996-2014), which became a paramilitary wing of the Social-National Assembly (SNA).¹⁴⁹ In late November 2013, the SNA and Patriot of Ukraine created Pravyi Sektor, joined by other neo-Nazi groups such as White Hammer and C14, the neo-Nazi youth wing of Svoboda. When in April 2014 Minister of Internal Affairs Arsen Avakov authorized the creation of civil paramilitary units to help a weak Ukrainian army fight against

¹⁴³ Lily Hyde, ‘Ukraine to Rewrite Soviet History with Controversial “Decommunisation” Laws,’ *The Guardian*, 20 April 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/20/ukraine-decommunisation-law-soviet>.

¹⁴⁴ ‘The Majority of Ukrainians Demonstrate Lack of Trust towards the Governemnt, Decommunization Reform and Media,’ *Lviv Media Forum*, 6 October 2015, <http://lvivmediaforum.com/en/news/bilshist-ukrajintsiv-uperedzheni-do-vlady-dekomunizatsiji-ta-zmi/>.

¹⁴⁵ See Georgii Kasyanov’s comments on Aksin’ia Kurina, ‘Istorik Georgii Kas’ianov: Sposobi zdiisnennii dekomunizatsii nagadiut’ komunistichni praktiki’ [Historian Georgy Kasyanov: Methods of Decommunization are Reminiscent of Communist Practices], *Ukrains’ka Pravda*, 7 May 2017, <http://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2016/05/7/211912/>.

¹⁴⁶ Josh Cohen, ‘The Historian Whitewashing Ukraine’s Past,’ *Foreign Policy*, 2 May 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/02/the-historian-whitewashing-ukraines-past-volodymyr-viatrovych/>.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Kiev ne priznal simvoliku SS Galichiny Natsistskoi’ [Kiev Does Not Recognize SS Galicia Division Symbols as Nazi], *Korrespondent*, 18 May 2017, <http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3853155-kyev-ne-pryznal-symvolyku-ss-halychyny-natsystskoi>.

¹⁴⁸ JTA and Cnaan Liphshiz, ‘Ukraine Designates National Holiday to Commemorate Nazi Collaborator,’ *Haaretz*, 27 December 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/ukraine-designates-national-holiday-to-commemorate-nazi-collaborator-1.6787201>.

¹⁴⁹ In November 2008, Biletsky created the Social National Assembly (SNA), which included four other organizations: *Spadshchyna* (Heritage), Patriot of Ukraine (2005), *Revoliutsiya i Derzhava* (RiD, Revolution and State), and *Slava i Chest* (SiCh, Glory and Honor).

secessionism in the Donbas region, the Asov Battalion was officially formed, with Biletsky as its co-founder and first commander.¹⁵⁰ The Kyiv government began to provide it with arms and a few months later incorporated it into the National Guard of Ukraine.¹⁵¹ In 2015, the SNA transformed into the political youth organization Azov Civil Corps (*Tsivil'nyi korpus Azov*) and then, in October 2016, into the National Corps political party (*Natsional'nyi korpus*), of which Biletsky is the current leader.

In 2016, Biletsky created the Intermarium Support Group (ISG),¹⁵² introducing the concept to potential comrades-in-arms from the Baltic-Black Sea region.¹⁵³ The first day of the founding conference was reserved for lectures and discussions by senior representatives of various sympathetic organizations, the second day to “the leaders of youth branches of political parties and nationalist movements of the Baltic-Black Sea area.”¹⁵⁴ The senior delegates were from Belarus (Zmicer Mickiewicz, Belarus Security Blog); Croatia (Leo Marić, journalist); Estonia (*Vaba Ukraina*, or “Free Ukraine”); Georgia (Giorgi Kuperashvili, head of the Military School of Colonel Yevhen Konovalts); Lithuania (Gintarė Narkevičiūtė, International Secretary of the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats Party); Poland (Mariusz Patey, director of the Institute of Professor Roman Rybarski); Slovakia (*Slovenská pospolitost'*, or “Slovak Brotherhood”); and Sweden. It also included “military attaches of diplomatic missions from the key countries in the region (Poland, Hungary, Romania and Lithuania).”¹⁵⁵ On October 13, 2018, the ISG organized its third congress. Besides the Ukrainian hosts, a large share of the foreign speakers from Poland, Lithuania, and Croatia had a (para-)military background, among them advisor to the Polish Defence Minister Jerzy Targalski and retired Brigadier General of the Croatian Armed Forces Bruno Zorica.¹⁵⁶ Among the talking points of Polish military educator Damien Duda were “methods of the preparation of a military reserve in youth organizations” and the “importance of paramilitary structures within the framework of the defence complex of a modern state.”¹⁵⁷

Another prominent face of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi scene, who appears in both the Asov and the ISG context, has been Olena Semenyaka. In a 2015 interview with Oleg Odnorozhenko, then the deputy commander of the Azov regiment, published on the “Ukrainian Traditionalist

¹⁵⁰ ‘Dlia uregulirovaniia situatsiia na Iugo-Vostoke MVD sozdaet spetspodrazdeleniia po okhrane obshchestvennogo poriadka’ [To Resolve the Situation in the South-East, the Ministry of Internal Affairs Creates Special Divisions for the Protection of Public Order], *Arena.in.ua*, 15 April 2014, <http://arena.in.ua/politka/186488-Dlya-uregulirovaniya-situatsiya-na-YUGO-Vostoke-MVD-sozdaet-specpodrazdeleniya-po-okhrane-obshchestvennogo-poryadka.html>; ‘Azov Regiment Announces Creation of Own Party,’ *UNIAN*, 16 September 2016. Archived from the original on 17 September 2016, <https://www.unian.info/politics/1526119-azov-regiment-announces-creation-of-own-party.html>.

¹⁵¹ ‘Roz’iasnennia shodo statusu spetspidrozdilu “Azov” [Clarification As to the Status of the ‘Azov’ Special Forces], *ngu.gov.ua*, 23 April 2015. Archived from the original on 9 July 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150709162323/http://ngu.gov.ua/ua/news/rozyasnennya-shchodo-statusu-specpidrozdilu-azov>.

¹⁵² “2nd Paneuropa Conference Was Held in Kyiv,” Ukrainian Traditionalist Club, 3 November 2018, <http://uktk.org/2nd-paneuropa-conference-was-held-in-kyiv/.x>

¹⁵³ ‘The AZOV Movement Held the Inaugural Conference of the Intermarium Development Assistance Group,’ Intermarium, n.d, <http://intermariumnc.org/?p=224>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Post on the Facebook page of ‘Intermarium-Interregnum,’ June 2, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/pg/intermariumsupportgroup/photos/?tab=album&album_id=247919152567343.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Club” website, Semenyaka is presented as “coordinator of the Department of International Relations of the ‘Azov’ regiment “Azov Reconquista.”¹⁵⁸ Little is known about the Reconquista movement. It emerged sometime around 2015 in Ukraine,¹⁵⁹ and now has established groups in several European countries, such as France,¹⁶⁰ Switzerland,¹⁶¹ and Finland.¹⁶² When representatives of European Reconquista groups met in the framework of the First Paneuropa Conference in Kyiv in April 2017, a conference report described the Reconquista project as follows: “the Reconquista Movement aiming at building the Paneuropean confederation of sovereign European nations, or simply Paneuropa, remains on the positions of the classic Third Way (the so-called third political theory) in the vein of Julius Evola, Ernst Jünger, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Oswald Mosley and Dominique Venner.”¹⁶³ The Ukrainian Reconquista network had a website active between 2015 and 2017 available in nine languages,¹⁶⁴ and still has a functioning YouTube channel.¹⁶⁵

The second Paneuropa Conference was organized in Kyiv on October 15, 2018. Under the Reconquista banner, it hosted alongside Semenyaka speakers from Western European far-right organizations, among them Bjørn Christian Rødal (Alliansen—Alternativ for Norge, Norway); Alberto Palladino (foreign correspondent of Casa Pound Italia, Italy); Julian Bender (West Germany area leader of Der III. Weg, Germany); Maik Schmidt (leader of the Brandenburg branch of NPD’s JN, Germany); Yuri Noievyi (All-Ukrainian Svoboda Association, Ukraine); Anton Badyda (Karpatska Sich, Ukraine); Greg Johnson (representative of the U.S. Alt-Right,

¹⁵⁸ ‘Azov Reconquista: Interview with Oleg Odnorozhenko,’ Ukrainian Traditionalist Club, June 9, 2015, uktk.org/azov-reconquista-interview-with-oleg-odnorozhenko-text-photo-video/; “Interview with Oleg Odnorozhenko. Part 1,” YouTube video, 5:44, posted by “Reconquista,” May 9, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBtp6DLgIck>.

¹⁵⁹ During a speech by the head of National Corps’ propaganda department, Mykola Kravchenko, in the framework of the 1st Paneuropa Conference the latter “reflected on the format of the Reconquista project as a result of two years of development,” pointing out that the movement existed as of 2015. ‘1st Paneuropa Conference Report,’ Reconquista Europe, 15 June 2017, archived version from 13 June 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180613133924/http://reconquista-europe.tumblr.com/post/161847863121/1st-paneuropa-conference-report-the-1st-paneuropa>.

¹⁶⁰ According to French historian Nicolas Lebourg, in 2017 “the GUD in Lyon and New-Right member Pascal Lasalle ... were involved in creating the [French] Reconquista, a ‘pan-European’ movement (with an unashamedly pro-Nazi style) that opposes ‘Putin’s anti-national regime,’ which it considers divides European peoples. Reconquista wants to construct the ‘Intermarium,’ meaning a Europe with frontiers at the Adriatic, the Baltic, and the Black Seas.” Nicolas Lebourg, ‘The French Far Right in Russia’s Orbit,’ Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, 15 May 2018, p. 33, https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/the-french-far-right-in-russias-orbit/_res/id=Attachments/index=1/Lebourg-EN%20revised%203.pdf.

¹⁶¹ Reconquista Europe, op. cit.

¹⁶² Facebook page of “Reconquista Suomi,” <https://www.facebook.com/Reconquista-Suomi-651228365227266>.

¹⁶³ Reconquista Europe, op. cit.

¹⁶⁴ The website was accessible via whitereconquista.com and reconquista.co, and also offered a Reconquista app. Archived version of whitereconquista.com from February 11, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170211052338/http://en.whitereconquista.com:80/>. See also “The Reconquista App on Google Play Was Updated for Android Platform,” Reconquista, 20 August 2015, archived version from 4 November 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151104205741/http://en.whitereconquista.com/the-reconquista-app-on-google-play-was-updated-for-android-platform>.

¹⁶⁵ The YouTube channel can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxIVysfTOEy3yyPGWVR9G-Q>.

editor-in-chief of *Counter-Currents*); and Marcus Follin (Swedish Pan-European Nationalist, Identitarian, Sweden).¹⁶⁶ All the groups present, as well as the authors mentioned above and the notion of “Third Way,” set the tone: they belong to the new Identitarian movements attempting to rehabilitate fascist theories under a narrative adapted to our times of a white Europe fighting against both immigrants and cosmopolitan elites.

Semenyaka herself appears well integrated into neo-Nazi countercultural circles. Since its inception in 2016, she has spoken at every “Pact of Steel” (*Stalevyi Pakt*) conference in Kyiv, an event that takes place in the framework of the neo-Nazi Black Metal “Asgardsrei Festival.” In 2016, her talk was on the topic of “Aristocracy of the Spirit and the Great European Reconquista,” while in 2017 it was titled “Wotan, Pan, Dionysus: At the Gates of the Grand European Solstice”¹⁶⁷—a nepagan rhetoric classic for neo-Nazis countercultural groups. Formerly a follower of the Russian far-right neo-Eurasianist ideologue Alexander Dugin,¹⁶⁸ who proposes a federation “from Lisbon to Vladivostok,” Semenyaka turned into a Dugin critic with the Maidan events but continues to embrace the same radical neo-paganism in which Dugin is rooted.¹⁶⁹

Semenyaka has been promoting this new Intermarium project on Facebook,¹⁷⁰ as well as through extensive travels in Europe to meet with various local far-right proponents. In February 2018 she appeared in Tallinn at the Annual Ethnofutur Conference organized by Sinine Äratus, the youth wing of the Estonian nationalist party Blue Awakening, where she spoke on the “Intermarium as a Laboratory of European Archeofuturism,” “and participated in the torchlight march on the occasion of the centenary of Estonia’s independence.”¹⁷¹ In May 2018 she attended the European Congress of the “Young Nationalists” (*Junge Nationalisten*), the youth wing of the German National Democratic Party NPD, in Riesa, Germany, giving a lecture entitled “Beyond the ‘Wall of Time’: Ernst Jünger and Martin Heidegger on the New Metaphysics”¹⁷²—here too, two major philosophical references of today’s radical right. On June

¹⁶⁶ ‘The Second Paneuropa Conference in Kyiv,’ Facebook event created by the Plomin and Interregnum-Intermarium Facebook pages, 15 October 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/events/308172699997826/permalink/310511609763935>.

¹⁶⁷ Olena Semenyaka’s 2016 speech, “Aristocracy of the Spirit and the Great European Reconquista,” is available at “Pact of Steel | Stalevii Pakt | Stal’noi Pakt,” YouTube video, 53:30, posted by “Reconquista Ukraina,” February 14, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsV8tA4rxy4>, time stamps [23:36-45:20]. Her 2017 speech, “Wotan, Pan, Dionysus: At the Gates of the Grand European Solstice,” is available at “Pact of Steel II | Stalevii Pakt II | Stal’noi Pakt II,” YouTube video, 1:47:07, posted by “Reconquista Ukraina,” November 28, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R14Ej-VWwLU>, time stamps [57:24 - 01:47:07]. Her welcoming speech to the Pact of Steel III conference in December 2018 is available at “Pact of Steel III | Stalevii Pakt III | Stal’noi Pakt III,” YouTube video, 2:17:01, posted by “Reconquista Ukraina,” December 24, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7nlqtnmyu4>, time stamps [0:00 - 7:49].

¹⁶⁸ Mark Sedgwick, ‘Evola in the Ukrainian Parliament,’ *Traditionalists (blog)*, 6 July 2017, <https://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2017/07/evola-in-ukrainian-parliament.html>.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Olena Semenyaka: Horizons of Ukrainian Revolution,’ *Sergey Sergienko (blog)*, 17 March 2014, <http://un3position.blogspot.com/2014/03/olena-semenyaka-horizons-of-ukrainian.html>.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Intermarium Support Group’ Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/intermariumsupportgroup/>; ‘Interregnum-Intermarium’ facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/interregnum.intermarium/>.

¹⁷¹ ‘Latvian Legion Day,’ *Reconquista Europe (blog)*, archived version from 12 April 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180412180924/http://reconquista-europe.tumblr.com/>.

¹⁷² Picture of Olena Semenyaka on the Facebook page of ‘3. JN Europakongress—REgeneration.EUROPA,’ 12 May 2018,

8, 2018, she appeared at the Identitarian Club house Kontrakultur in Halle, Germany, which held an “Ukrainian Evening” where she spoke on the topic of “identity, geopolitics, perspectives” and, according to information from the Identitarians, introduced the concept of Intermarium to the audience.¹⁷³

In Lieu of Conclusion: Intermarium’s four conceptual dimensions

Intermarium’s geopolitical imaginary is inscribed into some long-term geopolitical structures: there exists a space of “small” nations located between the Baltic, Black and Aegean Seas that tend to be sandwiched between the two “big” nations of Germany and Russia. Historically, this median space existed as an independent entity able to resist both sides only during the Jagellonian Dynasty and the Polish-Lithuanian Rzeczpospolita. The reference to the Habsburg empire is slightly more complex, as it can be read both as a political emanation of this median space, or as a domination by a German-speaking dynasty of a large conglomerate of nations deprived of their autonomy. The historical dimension of the concept has re-emerged at regular intervals each time there is will of expressing the region’s need to unify to resist neighbors’ supposed or real domination.

The material dimension of the concept manifests itself through some personal and institutional filiations: a geopolitical concept cannot be advanced without some agency. In the Intermarium case, its agents have been groups and figures for who the support of the United States to the region was/is the only guarantee of security against Russia and a Western Europe accused of lacking solidarity toward its Central and Eastern European neighbors. Some shared genealogies can be found between those who fought against early Communism in the interwar and war periods, were involved into anti-Communist structures during the Cold War, and were rehabilitated, directly or indirectly, in today’s politics against Putin’s Russia. Yet these filiations remain difficult to document and should not be extrapolated into a conspiracy reading.

The socio-political dimension of the concept positions it inside the classic conservative and/or far right repertoires—depending of countries and period of history—with almost no competition for meaning coming from more mainstream or from leftist groups. Today’s revival should therefore be understood not only as a geopolitical construction against Russia but as part of a wider conceptual arsenal inspired by conservative and/or far right ideas in tune with the current illiberal atmosphere. While many Western European far right groups are pro-Russian, Central and Eastern European far right tends to be more anti-Russian, a position reactivated by the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. The Polish Law and Justice Party personifies this illiberal stance: anti-Russian and pro-US, but maybe even more molded by an anti-liberal posture, and a vivid critique of the European construction. The current tensions between the Visegrad countries and the European Union institutions—around the refugee crisis but also Brussels’ heavy criticisms of Hungary’s and Poland’s laws on media and justice in particular—integrate the Intermarium concept into the ideological toolkit asserting the legitimacy of Central and Eastern Europe’s right to an identity dissociated from Western Europe and claiming representing the “real” Europe. Krzysztof Szczerski, chief of the Polish president’s Cabinet and an advisor for international affairs, for instance, described for instance the Intermarium as a

<https://www.facebook.com/871677009659302/photos/pcb.991910794302589/991909937636008/?type=3&theater>;

Maik Müller, ‘Report from 3rd JN European Congress in Riesa,’ *The Spear*, 1 November 2018, <https://spear-national.org/maik-muller-report-from-3rd-jn-european-congress-in-riesa/>.

¹⁷³ ‘Vortrag im IB-Hausprojekt: Das Regiment Asow zu Gast in Halle,’ Sachsen-Anhalt Rechtsaussen, 13 June 2018, <https://lsa-rechtsaussen.net/das-regiment-asow-zu-gast-in-halle/>.

Polish answer to the current crisis facing the EU in his recent book *The European Utopia: Integration Crisis and Polish Initiative of Remedy* (2017).¹⁷⁴

The theoretical dimension of the concept, its broader ideational realm, situates it in the geopolitical imaginary of what *is* Europe: what should be its values (Christian, liberal, conservative, socialist?), who embodies it the best (a symbolic fight going on, in a sense, since Carolus Magnus), and where are its borders on the east (who is inside, who is left outside?). The Intermarium thus positions itself as the other side of the coin from the Russia-backed notion of Eurasianism. First conceived in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, structured by Russian émigrés in the 1920s, surviving in a semi-dissident context in the Soviet Union, Eurasianism has been revived in today's Russia as a way to express Moscow's geopolitical positioning toward the West and its leadership in Eurasia. It also competes with another Russian geopolitical imaginary, that of being the second Europe, the Byzantine one, rescuing the continent's authentic identity from a liberal self-denial. Both Central and Eastern Europe and Russia are therefore today fighting for embodying what they see as the "real"—illiberal—Europe.

To become one day a geopolitical reality materialized in some institutional structures, the concept of Intermarium will have to address several deep, inner contradictions. First, many Central and Eastern European countries—among them Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro—are openly or relatively pro-Russian, seeing such a stance as providing balance against Brussels' imposition of its normative framework. How, then, could the Intermarium whose anti-Russian positioning is structural, become a reality? Even with Poland and Romania as its two main pivots, the challenge of unifying the region into an anti-Russian bloc limits the prospects of the concept being operationalized. The rise of illiberalism also complicates bilateral relations: the Polish-Ukrainian partnership has been deeply affected by ongoing memory wars about the responsibility of each for Second World War-related violence, and there does not as yet appear to be any room for the kind of unifying compromise that the Intermarium project would require.

Second, how does the project—politically, economically, or militarily—relate to the EU? All the potential Intermarium members are either EU member states or, in the case of Ukraine and of some countries in the Balkans, hope to become so in the near future. In that case, is Intermarium setting itself up as an alternative to the EU—although none of these countries are keen to leave the EU—or a simple regional initiative inside the EU—in which case it should be negotiated with Brussels—or a will to transform the EU from the inside? The third option seems the most likely: Donald Trump presidency has accelerated US's ambiguous relationship to Europe, with the hope of shifting Europe's gravity center from the Paris-Berlin axis to Central Europe, with Warsaw at the vanguard. Trump's enthusiastic speech at the 2017 Tree Seas summit, Poland's hosting the Iran talks in February 2019, as well as several recent Visegrad's courting initiatives toward Washington,¹⁷⁵ indicate the possibility a tectonic move of Europe's inner balance. Growing dissensions between the Paris-Berlin axis and the Central/Eastern European countries, both in terms of EU domestic politics and foreign policy stances, are supported by Washington to pursue Russia's isolation as well as to avoid Europe taking distance from transatlantic paradigm for its security and defense policy.

¹⁷⁴ Krzysztof Szczerski, *Utopia europejska: kryzys integracji i polska inicjatywa naprawy* [The European Utopia: Integration Crisis and Polish Initiative of Remedy] (Krakow: Biały Kruk, 2017).

¹⁷⁵ https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/02/12/le-groupe-de-visegrad-allie-de-donald-trump-en-europe_5422389_3210.html#xtor=AL-32280270