The Intermarium as the Polish-Ukrainian Linchpin of Baltic-Black Sea Cooperation

Edited by
Ostap Kushnir

Cambridge Scholars Publishing
## CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations ........................................................................................................ vii

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... ix

*Ostap Kushnir*

Chapter One ......................................................................................................................... 1


*Daria Nałęcz*

- Introduction. The original idea of the Intermarium.
- The war with Russia and the failure of the Intermarium.
- The Intermarium in inter-war times: Oblivion.
- The Intermarium in communist and post-communist Polish realities.
- Concluding remarks.

Chapter Two ...................................................................................................................... 22

Ukraine and the Intermarium: From the Middle Ages to the Collapse of the USSR

*Volodymyr Poltorak*

- Introduction. The Ukrainian point of view on the Intermarium.
- Imagined past: Pre-Intermarium strategies from the Middle Ages and Early Modern Ages.
- The long 19th century: Back to the future (1795-1914).
- Ukraine and the Intermarium in the 20th century.
- Concluding remarks.

Chapter Three .................................................................................................................. 45

Ukraine, Poland and the Intermarium: In the Midst of Ambiguity

*Ostap Kushnir*

- Great geopolitical confusion: The Intermarium is everything.
- Polish-Ukrainian linchpin.
- Ukraine’s real-life alternatives to the Intermarium: ODED-GUAM.
- Ukraine’s real-life alternatives to the Intermarium: BSEC.
- Why is a genuine Intermarium cooperation unfeasible at the moment?
- Concluding remarks.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATO—Anti-Terrorist Operation (Anty-Terorystyczna Operacja)
BBSA—Baltic to Black Sea Alliance
BSEC—Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSU—Black Sea Union (Al’yans Chornomors’kyh Derzhav)
CAP—Comprehensive Assistance Package
CEF—Connecting Europe Facility
CIS—Community of Independent States
CSCE—Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DCAF—Democratic Control of Armed Forces
ECHR—European Court for Human Rights
ENP—European Neighbourhood Policy
ESIF—European Structural and Investment Funds
EU—European Union
FDI—Foreign direct investment
FDIBAP—Foreign Direct Investment Benefits Absorption Path
FIS—Foreign Intelligence Service (of Ukraine)
FRONTEX—European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GCS—Government Centre for Security (Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa)
GDP—Gross domestic product
GUAM—Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
GUUAM—Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova
ISA—Internal Security Agency (Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego)
KFOR—Kosovo Force (NATO mission)
LITPOLUKRBRIG—Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian Brigade
NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO—Non-governmental organization
NGU—National Guard of Ukraine (Natsional’na Hvardiya Ukrayiny)
NSB—National Security Bureau (Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego)
NSDCU—National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (Rada Natsional’noyi Bezpeky ta Oborony Ukrayiny)
NSZZ (Solidarność)—Independent Self-governing Labour Union (Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy)
ODED-GUAM—Organization for Democracy and Economic Development GUAM
OSCE—Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OUN—Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Orhanizatsiia Ukrayin’s’kyh Natsionalistiv)
PiS—Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość)
PLN—Polish Złoty (currency)
POLUKRBAT—Polish-Ukrainian Peace Force Battalion
PPS—Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna)
SLD—Alliance of the Democratic Left (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej)
SSU—Security Service of Ukraine
TRADOC—The United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
TTFP—Trade and Transport Facilitation Project
UAF—Ukrainian Armed Forces (Zbroyni Syly Ukrainy)
UAV—Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UK—United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
ULB—Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus (Polish foreign policy doctrine)
UN—United Nations Organisation
UNCTAD—United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UPA—Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrayin’s’ka Povstan’s’ka Armia)
UPR—Ukrainian People’s Republic (Ukrayin’s’ka Narodna Respublika)
US—United States (of America)
USD—United States’ Dollar
USSR—Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VC/IIMS—Virtual Centre (for combating terrorism) within the Interstate Information Management System
WW1—First World War
WW2—Second World War
INTRODUCTION

It all started with the conference, *Intermarium in the 21st Century: Visions, Architectures, Feasibilities*, which took place on July 6-7 2017 at Lazarski University in Warsaw. Or, to be more precise, with a range of events accompanying it. Organizers understood, on the eve of the conference, that it would collide with the Global Forum, which had unexpectedly been moved from Wroclaw to Warsaw. This move had been made as a courtesy to the newly elected US President, Donald Trump, so that he could arrive in Poland’s capital, participate in the Global Forum on July 7, and discuss, among other issues, the Intermarium affairs. The presence of the US President in the city, along with his delivering a public speech, distracted several participants and contributors from the Lazarski conference. However, all this confusion unequivocally highlighted one fact; global leaders pay significant attention today to regional politics, in particular, to the issues of good governance, security, and prosperity.

Notwithstanding the imperfect timing, the Lazarski conference on the Intermarium was a success. It gathered dozens of contributors from five countries and thirteen research institutions. Like the Global Forum, it served as further proof that interest in the Intermarium—in all of its diversity—is gaining momentum in the contemporary regional, public, political, and academic discourse.

This book constitutes a modest attempt to shed more light on the concept of the Intermarium to the Western reader. Obviously, it is not the only book existing on the topic, and it is far from being an exhaustive one. However, its uniqueness resides in taking a multi-disciplinary approach to assessing the contemporary potential of regional governance, as the latter was enshrined in daring ideas from the beginning of the 20th century.

The majority of contributors to this book are participants in the Intermarium conference at Lazarski, who decided to structuralize their findings in chapters and bring them to a wider audience. These are specialists in European and regional history, economics, security, geopolitics, and cultural studies. As an academic phenomenon, the book amalgamates numerous perspectives on the Intermarium into a multi-layered, yet comprehensive, narrative.

To make the book methodologically credible, its research focus was limited to the assessment of the efficiency of the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin
in conceptualisations of the Intermarium, both historical and contemporary. Poland and Ukraine, as two major sovereign entities and two neighbouring states, are regarded as a hypothetical engine for regional cooperation, in the same way as France and Germany can be regarded as such an engine for the EU. The contribution of other regional actors, specifically Baltic and Black Sea states, was presented in the light of the overall probability and profitability of the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin.

The book’s six chapters are predominantly grounded on regional primary and secondary sources. Unfortunately, not much original information can be extracted from Western academic literature on the Intermarium today. Moreover, some regional research and discoveries merit an introduction into a broadly understood English-language segment of social sciences.

The book starts with a chapter by Daria Nałęcz in which she unveils the key features of the Intermarium project and concept, as they were coined at the beginning of the 20th century. Nałęcz also outlines the evolution of the topic in Polish political thought, from the early 1920s to the fall of communism. Major Polish intellectuals and their theoretical contributions to the Intermarium are presented in this chapter.

Volodymyr Poltorak assesses the nature and features of the Intermarium concept from the perspective of Ukrainian academic discourse and historiography. He outlines the most notable differences between Polish and Ukrainian leaders’ perception of good governance over the region in various times, from the early Middle Ages to the end of the Cold War.

Ostap Kushnir scrutinizes the geopolitical ambiguity of the term ‘Intermarium’, as it circulates in the regional discourse today. He also enumerates and assesses attempts of selected political actors in Ukraine and Poland to build the Intermarium framework after the 1990s. Finally, Kushnir assesses the hypothetical efficiency of the cognominal intergovernmental organization as it emerged in the contemporary environment.

Kateryna Pryshchepa presents the dynamics of post-Cold War Polish-Ukrainian relations in the light of the evolving political objectives of both states. She refers to the findings and theorizing of Jerzy Giedroyc, one of the most notable Polish diasporic intellectuals, who outlined the ‘new’ strategy for regional cooperation in the 1970s. She also assesses historical traumas which prevent Ukrainian and Polish people from finding a common language on identity issues.

Maksym Bugriy provides an overview of the perspectives and potential of the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin in military and security domains. He assesses the most notable recent bilateral and multilateral projects, both successful and not, defining the factors which either facilitate or hamper
cooperation. He also looks at the history of the Polish-Ukrainian military and security cooperation in the aftermath of the Cold War. Finally, Tomasz M. Napiórkowski calculates the economic potential, and outlines the structure of the markets of the Intermarium states, with a particular emphasis on Ukraine. To accomplish this task, he traces the post-1990s dynamics of international trade between regional actors, and analyses the nature of their FDI. He attempts to point out whether the construction of a ‘rigid’ and comparatively ‘isolated’ regional economic system will suffice to propel the welfare of the Intermarium region.

In its six chapters, the book aims to answer the following research questions: What should be understood by the term ‘Intermarium’? What are its history, and geopolitical meanings? What are its connotations and functionality in political, public, and academic discourses of the region? To what extent does the Intermarium constitute an attractive geopolitical strategy today? Can the Ukrainian-Polish linchpin secure the functioning and flourishing of the Intermarium block of states?

All contributors sincerely hope that the book will meet your expectations.

Ostap Kushnir
CONCLUSION

With the term ‘Intermarium’ re-appearing in regional academic and political discourses, this book constitutes an attempt to explore and assess a variety of its contemporary connotations. Understanding the magnitude of this task, the book does not claim to provide exhaustive research on the topic. It simply sheds some more light on the complex nature of the term. This said, the book applies a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional approach to address the Intermarium. Six high-class researchers in history, geopolitics, international security, economics, and cultural studies, have been invited to share their expert knowledge. As a result, the book consists of six chapters, each of which presents, and assesses, a unique connotation of the Intermarium.

The book opens with a chapter by Daria Nałęcz in which she provides insight into how the Intermarium emerged as a geopolitical concept in Polish political thought. Particular emphasis is given to the way Józef Piłsudski, the Polish Chief of State and Supreme Commander, arrived at the concept in a turbulent international environment of Central and Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. The overview and assessment of events from the first half of the 20th century constitute the core of the chapter.

Amongst other issues, Nałęcz concludes that the Intermarium fluctuates between three distinct, yet not always distinguishable, conceptual dimensions. The first stands for Piłsudski’s historical project to create a federation of sovereign entities which would come into existence after the collapse of the Russian empire. This, above all, envisaged the construction of a Poland-led, military defensive block of all willing nation-states. The second dimension portrays the Intermarium as the framework of a hypothetically beneficial cooperation between all actors in the Central and Eastern Europe. This framework is predominantly of a geopolitical nature, which loosely connects it to Piłsudski’s historical project. The third dimension presents the Intermarium as a geographical region stretched between the Baltic and Black Seas, or between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas, as in the late interpretation of Minister Józef Beck.

Nałęcz specifically highlights the fact that, in his project, Piłsudski did not clearly outline which states should be included within the Intermarium block, and which should not. He took into consideration the
The Intermarium as the Polish-Ukrainian Linchpin of Baltic-Black Sea Cooperation

volatile regional environment and expected only those states to join which would be able to defend their sovereignties after the demise of great European and Eurasian powers. This geopolitical elusiveness and ‘opportunism’, as envisaged by Piłsudski, has not vanished altogether. It continues to fuel dozens of different, and often colliding, contemporary interpretations of the Intermarium, all placed under the common denominator.

Nałęcz points out that if the Intermarium block is ever to succeed, it will need at least three major prerequisites to come into place. The first resides in the free will of the regional states to form a well-functioning international organization on a confederate basis, or, at least, to form a defensive alliance. The second requires a weakened position of Russia, which will either accept, or will not be able to prevent, the Intermarium block from emergence. The third prerequisite resides in the non-engagement of the Western states, or, at least, their neutrality in the process of formation of the regional block. The history of the 20th century reveals, however, that these three conditions have never coexisted at one time.

For his part, Volodymyr Poltorak focuses predominantly on the Ukrainian perception of the Intermarium, and provides a much broader historical overview. He starts his chapter from the peculiarities in the descriptions of lands to the north of the Black Sea as they appear in Roman and Byzantine chronicles. Ancient and medieval historians invariably portrayed these lands as the ‘anti-Empire’, populated with aggressive barbarians. In such a contrasting way, the whole Intermarium region emerged as a militarily and culturally holistic place for the first time ever. Or, in other words, it emerged as an indivisible and relentless source of threat from beyond the border of civilisation.

Poltorak clearly highlights the fact that the Ukrainian and Polish connotations of the Intermarium as a region, framework, and block, are different. Ukrainian historiography and geopolitics perceive the legacies of the Kyiv Rus and Cossack semi-statehood as the cornerstones for the Intermarium framework, while Polish historiography praises the tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, above all. Ukrainian concepts of the Intermarium as a block often fail to embrace Poland as one of its members, or even portray Poland as an alien destructive element. In particular, that was what Mykhailo Drahomanov and Stepan Rudnytsky speculated at the beginning of the 20th century. Finally, when defining the region, contemporary Ukrainian academia usually prefers the terms ‘Baltic-Black Sea axis’ or ‘Baltic-Black Sea area’ to the Intermarium, as the latter is clearly connected to Polish political thought and historiography. Moreover, the Baltic-Black Sea axis is much more south-
oriented than the Intermarium, as it includes the territories of the Caucasus states, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Instead, Poland’s perception of the region is oriented towards north and east, and usually limits itself to the territories of the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine.

With great attention and scrutiny, Poltorak assesses Ukraine’s indigenous ideas of the 19th and 20th centuries about how the region should be governed. That was the ‘golden age’ for Ukrainian political theorising, with numerous intellectuals and statesmen speculating on the future composition and policies of their state. Concepts of a loose federation were dominant at that time. These concepts favoured either the democratisation and re-formatting of the Russian empire, or the creation of a brand-new Slavic federation with Ukraine at its core. In both cases, Ukraine was expected to gain weight in regional governance and project its power onto the Middle East, and even North Africa. These Ukrainian concepts contradicted Pilsudski’s project, to a certain degree, as Poland was downgraded in its role. Moreover, Ukrainian statesmen genuinely attempted to build their federation, as demonstrated by the efforts of Pavlo Skoropadsky, Symon Petliura, or the nationalist leaders of the 1940s.

Starting where Nałęcz and Poltorak left off, Ostap Kushnir unveils some more interesting details in his chapter. From his perspective, the Intermarium evolved today into an all-embracing term which is used to define any international organization or framework of cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe. The Intermarium has become everything. This happened due to its conceptual nebulousness and abundance of connotations preferred at different historical moments by different political theorists.

In his chapter, Kushnir assesses cooperation within the Intermarium region, as well as the Intermarium-block building since the 1990s. At the very beginning, he focuses on the failure of President Leonid Kravchuk to revive the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin or, at least, to secure Ukraine’s joining the Visegrád Group. He also outlines the reasons behind the lack of interest on the part of the Polish elites to return to Pilsudski’s Intermarium objectives: in the early 1990s, Poland was firmly on its road to the European family and NATO, with Ukraine perceived as an unnecessary burden. Later on, Kushnir assesses Ukraine’s individual attempts under President Leonid Kuchma to revive the geopolitical potential of the Baltic-Black Sea axis without Poland. These attempts had very limited success, due to the apathy of Belarus, the pragmatism of the Baltic states, and Russian hostility.

Kushnir also assesses ODED-GUAM and BSEC as international organizations which stand closest to Ukraine’s indigenous visions of
governance in the Intermarium region. Both of these organizations are very south-oriented, embrace Caucasus states, and encourage communication with the Middle East. Both of them strongly favour economic cooperation over political unification; sometimes they attempt to resolve political issues via economic means. Both of them are very modest in efficiency, as their member-states mistrust one another and tend to sabotage centrally-adopted decisions. Both of them promote similar objectives which happen to be in collision. Speaking specifically of the BSEC, it has not been initiated by Ukraine, but by Turkey. It is also used by Russia to reinforce its regional stance. Speaking of the ODED-GUAM, it is far from being able to contain Russian assertiveness in the Black Sea littoral. It is also comparatively ‘weak’, as it comprises of only four states, none of which is a clear regional power. In a word, Ukraine’s visions of the Intermarium governance cannot be efficiently implemented in contemporary geopolitical architecture, and little change is expected in the near future.

Kushnir applies the methodological framework developed by Konstantinos D. Magliveras to assess the efficiency of the Intermarium as a virtual international organization. According to his findings, if the Intermarium block emerged today, with the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin at its core, it would have more flaws than assets. Primarily, the number of states willing to join the block would probably remain close to zero. Secondly, the number of competitive organizations functioning in the region would be comparatively high; they would also be much better established and profitable. Thirdly, it is probable that none of the Intermarium member-states would prefer to use the supranational framework to address bilateral issues. Fourthly, the Intermarium would probably lack the consent of its member-states to evolve into a more ‘rigid’ framework of governance. Finally, even if it emerged, the Intermarium block would not override its competitors in the pace of generating revenues and opportunities.

Kushnir ends his chapter with a statement first voiced by Mikhail Ilyin. To form a viable geopolitical unity, people of the Intermarium region should honestly answer three questions. First, what is the major existential idea behind their unity apart from being ‘different’, ‘threatened’, and stretched between Europe and Asia? Second, what is the added value these people can bring to the world, apart from a long record of failures, errors and wars? Third, what will be the role and place of the unified Central and Eastern European community in global politics?

In turn, Kateryna Pryshchepa addresses the dynamics and nature of the post-1989 Polish-Ukrainian relations in the light of the Giedroyc doctrine. Apart from this, she provides brief coverage of the ambiguity of
historical policies as conducted today by both states. To do this, she refers to an ample number of original Polish sources.

The objectives, which were first voiced by Jerzy Giedroyc, and became the cornerstones of the cognominal doctrine, can be essentialised in the following statements. Primarily, Polish authorities were urged to accept the post-1989 borders of their state and raise no territorial claims against Ukraine, Lithuania or Belarus. Secondly, as a more ‘mature’ and experienced state, Poland was encouraged to provide friendly support to its eastern neighbours and strengthen their connection to the West. Thirdly, Poland’s amiable and cooperative stance towards its neighbours was expected to contain Russian imperial ambitions, and boost overall security in the Intermarium region.


Pryshchepa points to some interesting regularities: Poland becomes more engaged in relations with Ukraine only when the latter meets Polish expectations about the pace and nature of reforms. Instead, if Ukraine underperforms or plunges into chaotic policy-making, Poland alienates itself, and demonstrates some sort of fatigue. Apart from this, Poland’s alienation frequently takes place when it recognizes that a West-advocated deal will not fit Ukraine’s interests; Poland does not want to look like a ‘bad friend’ in the long run. Finally, Poland’s recognition of the superiority of EU institutions in shaping foreign policy prevents it from taking non-aligned unilateral actions, not to mention the fact that the foreign policy potential of Poland is incomparable to the one the EU possesses. All this leads to the conclusion that the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin of the Intermarium region invariably depends on the domestic and international situations in both states. It does not constitute a firm strategic objective today.

Addressing the issues of common memory and historical policies of both states, Pryshchepa highlights a profound misunderstanding. On the one hand, Poles seek a just and fair recognition of the crimes committed by Ukrainians in the mid-20th century; on the other hand, Ukrainians would like to ‘forgive’ Poles for all their earlier ‘records of oppression’, and start building friendly relations from scratch. This misunderstanding is exacerbated by the fact that the political agenda in Poland is shaped by right-wing politicians today, while Ukraine is consumed by a process of
re-assessing its history and re-inventing its identity. Moreover, neither state is prone to grant access to all of the available data on the Volhynia mass murders of 1940s, or other ambiguous activities of the UPA and Polish anti-Nazi resistance. The occasional statements of reconciliation coming from the political elites of both states are symbolic, rather than leading to the resolution of the tensions.

Pryshchepa comes to the conclusion that the Polish-Ukrainian linchpin works best when it has nothing to do with political romanticism or ‘inflated’ over-expectations, but rather centres on ‘calculable’ and pragmatic issues. She stresses the fact that the dynamics of trade, labour migration, energy supplies, and security cooperation demonstrate a steady increase from year to year. In other words, economics and security are the areas which look the most promising for the further development of win-win cooperation. They have no negative social connotations, but tend to be very social in nature. The rights of labour migrants, status of mixed families, schooling in native languages, transboundary taxation and retirement programmes: these and other issues call for a multi-layered and efficient intergovernmental engagement. Moreover, if addressed properly, these issues have potential to push some of the highly provocative and manipulative historical debates onto the margins of public discourse.

Elaborating on security, Maksym Bugriy attempts to assess the real-life probability of establishing a military alliance between Ukraine and Poland, akin to the one Petliura and Piłsudski negotiated at the beginning of the 20th century. Bugriy argues that such an alliance, embracing firm obligations and guarantees, is impossible in the region today. Instead, the two states are in a process of constructing a ‘flexible’ and adjustable strategic alignment against a common threat: Russian neo-imperialist and revanchist policies.

Poland prefers to build its defence and security cooperation with Ukraine within the frameworks of wider multilateral structures which exceed the Intermarium region. These are, in particular, NATO, the EU and the UN. Contemporary Ukraine’s objective resides in upgrading its institutions, achieving the required level of staff proficiency and joining these structures. In other words, Ukraine is on its way to introducing the reforms which Poland successfully implemented in the mid-1990s. In this light, no influential political actors in Ukraine and Poland regard the Intermarium as an alternative to European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Poland demonstrates significant initiative in the export of its experience to Ukraine. Polish officials pay numerous visits to their colleagues in Kyiv, while Polish security experts eagerly join a variety of coordinating and advisory bodies. Moreover, Poland serves as an advocate
and lobbyist of Ukrainian interests in the West. Because of this, Ukraine acquires many more opportunities to cooperate with NATO, such as, for instance, participation in peacekeeping missions or joining the Euro-Atlantic drills. However, this kind of Polish pro-Ukrainian activity can also be smoothly incorporated into the broader EU ENP framework which promotes good governance in the region.

The existing joint Polish-Ukrainian military units are of more symbolic and political value than operational worth. The LITPOLUKRBRIG, the most renowned of these units, numbers 4,500 soldiers: a very small number from the perspective of the overall quantity of the Polish and Ukrainian armed forces. It is also very unlikely to be engaged in a violent conflict any time soon. The major feasible contribution of the LITPOLUKRBRIG to both states resides in providing highly intensive and sophisticated training to military staff.

Polish-Ukrainian cooperation, on the level of structures of ministries of interior, is also comparatively limited and cautious. It takes the form of introducing Polish experience into Ukrainian realities and, when possible, upgrading the practices, regulations, and responsiveness of the relevant Ukrainian agencies. To be more precise, Poland assists in the incorporation of the civic component—voluntary movements—into the structures of interior services, as well as developing the proficiency of the police, national guard, border guard, and intelligence, so that they can meet Euro-Atlantic standards.

One of the most promising areas of Polish-Ukrainian bilateral cooperation is the joint development of sophisticated weaponry. A number of companies from both states revealed interest in working on unmanned battle drones and armoured vehicles, as well as in upgrading the existing equipment and machinery. This said, the level of ongoing technological cooperation, regardless of its inspiring dynamics, remains very modest.

Speaking of economic cooperation within the Intermarium region, its level looks very modest as well. In his chapter, Tomasz M. Napiórkowski assesses the structure of Ukraine’s GDP, FDI, and international trade, to discover that the Intermarium states pay very little attention to each other’s markets. Therefore, any discussion of a more ‘rigid’ Intermarium block is nothing but wishful thinking in given circumstances.

The analysis of Ukraine’s macroeconomic indicators demonstrates that its economy has been unstable in recent years. Foreign investments, despite an increasing role prior to 2009, have decreased in importance as a component of Ukrainian GDP. As for the government expenditures on goods and services, they remain moderately low in determining the value
of GDP. Having combined these findings with the lack of transparency of administrative and legal procedures, Napiórkowski concludes that the coming years will be challenging and trendsetting for the Ukrainian economy.

Taking the Intermarium regional perspective, Poland constitutes the biggest market for goods from Ukraine. It is, thus, in the interest of the latter to increase the quality of its trade relations with Poland. This said, the Polish market, as well as other markets of the Intermarium states, accounts for a very small portion of Ukraine’s exports. In other words, proportionally significant increases in exports, if achieved, will not automatically transform into significant increases in revenues. To make matters worse, the volume of Ukraine’s trade with Russia in 2017 exceeds the volume of trade with the Intermarium states combined. This looks especially paradoxical in the light of Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and its confirmed participation in the military conflict in Donbas.

As much as an increase of Ukraine’s trade with the Intermarium states should never be questioned, it is more profitable to incorporate this trade into a wider framework. Above all, one should speak here of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, and the established Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Napiórkowski unequivocally concludes that it would pay off for Ukraine to prioritize the trade with the EU over regional trade, as the first will provide many more short- and long-term benefits. Ukraine should also consider attracting low-technology FDI from more developed states, notwithstanding their geopolitical affiliations, and build absorptive capacity in Ukraine, so that high-technology FDI may be fully accommodated afterwards. This economic strategy has worked perfectly for other states of the Intermarium region, which, unlike Ukraine, are now EU member-states.

To draw final conclusions, one of the crucial discoveries the book brings to light is that the term Intermarium should be avoided in contemporary public, academic and political discourses. This term evokes confusion and miscommunication between all parties engaged, instead of securing the middle-ground for multilateral beneficial cooperation, as many would expect to happen.

As a concept, the Intermarium presents itself today as a set of unrealistic geopolitical objectives, usually over-romanticized. Furthermore, every state of the Intermarium region possesses a different set of these objectives placing them under one ‘common’ denominator. As a framework, the Intermarium proves to be economically inefficient and unprofitable. In addition, it cannot assure any significant achievements in military and defence cooperation, as it never could. The Intermarium
provokes collisions and incompatibilities in the historical memories of Ukrainians and Poles, both of its linchpin nations. Moreover, it can easily be ‘hijacked’ by right-wing populist movements—including the ‘new Kresowians’—to build their agendas on its multiversity. In this respect, any public reference to the Intermarium by any public figure, regardless of the context, reinforces the populist agenda.

Indisputably, regional cooperation between Central and Eastern European states should be further developed, but references to the Intermarium—at least in the contemporary geopolitical architecture—should be avoided wherever possible.

*Ostap Kushnir*