

**Notes from the Fifth Annual IWP Kosciuszko Chair Spring Symposium,**

**“Between Russia and NATO: Security Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe”**

*On Saturday, April 25th, the Fifth Annual Kosciuszko Chair Spring Symposium took place at the Pentagon City Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Norfolk, Virginia. This year’s symposium was organized around the topic: Between Russia and NATO: Security Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe. The event was hosted by the Institute of World Politics; Sebastian Gorka, Major General Matthew C. Horner Distinguished Chair of Military Theory, Marine Corps University, presided over the day’s speakers.*

Topics centered on the recent events in Ukraine, analyses of security threats in the region, and the role of United States foreign policy. **After Gorka’s introduction**, which described the mission of the IWP and emphasized the necessity of a nuanced approach to American foreign policy, **Professor Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, the Kosciuszko Chair of Polish Studies at the IWP, took the stage.** A historian by training, Prof. Chodakiewicz has been instrumental in organizing IWP’s events for several years. At this year’s conference, his 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 Hapsburg, 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.

**The following speaker was Žygimantas Pavilionis, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America.** Pavilionis provided a very apt follow up to the previous speech, translating Prof. Chodakiewicz’s historical observations into their current, real-world implications. He insightfully notes that the key to establishing regional security partnerships involves larger countries, like Poland, treating smaller countries, like Lithuania, as equals. Patronizing relations elicit spite on the part of smaller nations, thereby contributing to disintegration and bad blood amongst Central European nation-states. Emphasizing the need for NATO to strengthen itself by adopting both a concrete enlargement plan and a specific strategy regarding Russian aggression, he reminded the audience of Lithuania’s leadership in supporting Ukraine’s Euromaidan Revolution and invited Poland to match this level of commitment.

Briefly, Pavilionis mentioned that energy policy might hold the key to preserving Eastern European democracies. The following panel, featuring Ariel Cohen, Senior Research Fellow in Russian and Eurasian Studies and International Energy Policy at the Heritage Foundation, and **Lucja Swiatkowska-Cannon, Chief Economist of the Texas First Investment Management Company**, delved deeper into this question. Both speakers discussed current efforts to achieve energy independence from Russia using Liquid Natural Gas, or LNG. While Mr. Cohen discussed the networks of pipelines and seaports either already existing or under construction, Mrs. Swiatkowska-Cannon raised the question of whether shale gas, which is to be found in abundance on Poland’s territory, might already be a lost opportunity for Poland. She then discussed the exact nature of the exploitation that defines Poland’s energy dependence on Russia, noting that, of all the countries in Europe, Poland pays the most per 1000m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas. The fact that Russia openly engages in price-gouging when it comes to selling natural gas to Europe seemed to confirm Ambassador Pavilionis’ observation about the critical role of energy policy in Central and Eastern Europe.

**The following speaker, Professor Andrzej Nowak from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, dealt more explicitly with the nature of Russian aggression in the 21st century.** Analyzing Vladimir Putin's foreign policy motivations, he identified Putin's membership in the KGB and his personal interest in judo as key influences. While the former provides the basis for a renewed form of Soviet imperialism, the latter lends the means towards achieving this end: using the enemy's power against him by finding weak spots. From the perspective of Russia, one must note, Central and Eastern European nations belonging to NATO and the EU constitute the utmost enemy. Professor Nowak went on to note the role played by the demographic crisis in Russia: Russia, soon enough, will simply lack Russians. Consequently, it needs to look for "future Russians:" Byelorussians and Ukrainians who can be Russified and incorporated into the Russian Empire to make up for the demographic crisis decimating Russia's East. Therefore, sowing divisiveness in the Intermarium region through petty ethno-national conflicts is entirely in the best interests of Russia, exemplifying the divide-and-conquer credo.

**Jack Dziak, a private security consultant with an extensive background in intelligence,** emphasized the continuity between the Soviet Union's imperial efforts and Russia's current resurgence. Comparing the Russian and American intelligence communities, he noted that while the United States has systematically de-funded its Cold War-era intelligence and counterintelligence units, Russia has dramatically increased its spending on its own. One crucial difference between the US and Russia, which makes this augmentation of Russian intelligence services so worrisome, is that Spetznaz units and other Russian special forces exist not under the leadership of Russia's military, but under its security services, including the FSB. When one considers that the irregular troops operating in Ukraine are primarily bolstered by Russian Special Forces, the real-world consequences of Russian intelligence growth become very apparent.

The nature and extend of what is sometimes called Hybrid Warfare, or "New Generation Warfare," was elaborated by the **two following speakers: Chris Zawitkowski, National Director of the Polish-American Congress, Southern California Division, and Philip Petersen.** Mr. Zawitkowski presented an outline of Russian-style hybrid warfare: through a combination of friendly posturing, agents of influence, targeted corruption of foreign officials, and inciting local populations to rebellion, Russia has succeeded in dominating its neighbors either explicitly or implicitly, the most visible examples of which are Russia's invasion of Georgia, and Russia's current occupation of Eastern Ukraine. Mr. Petersen, on the other hand, focused on the ideological elements of Russian war doctrine, which he explicitly termed "New Generation Warfare." This form of warfare includes propaganda, destabilization through fraud and bribery, economic warfare (including price gauging), and the persistently threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons. This form of warfare is the instrument of Russia's resurgent imperialism, the foundation of which is twofold: along with a sincere belief that the Russian-Eurasian civilization is engaged in an existential struggle with the Euro-American civilization, Russia has also adopted a "fourth ideology:" an image of itself as a neoconservative, post-liberal ideological superstate defending "traditional values" against Western relativism and hedonism. This ideology is precisely what allows Russia to provide financial support for, and work closely with, far-right ethno-nationalist groups in Europe, ranging from Hungary's Jobbik to France's Front National. Recalling Professor Chodakiewicz's speech, one can remember that it is precisely this sort of irredentist ethno-nationalism that decimated Central European regional solidarity leading up to World War II.

**The following speaker, Phillip Karber,** added concrete details, numbers, and figures to the ideological scaffolding illustrated by Mr. Petersen. Karber, who is the President of the Potomac Foundation and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University, presented photographs as well as his first-hand accounts of what is currently occurring in the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine. Step by step, he detailed the ways in which hybrid warfare doctrine is currently being employed. Prof. Karber concluded by suggesting solutions that the United States would do well to adopt, including transferring unused American military supplies to the Ukrainian government and supporting and funding pro-Western political parties throughout Central and Eastern Europe, to counteract the information war currently being waged by Russia.

**Colonel Joseph Wood**, the following speaker, spent several years flying for NATO in the 1980s and 1990s and is currently a professor at the Institute for World Politics. His speech was markedly different in tone from the preceding panelists: focusing on the mission and motivations of NATO as an institution, he introduced a discourse about what the United States' place in Europe is and what it is that the North Atlantic Treaty was defending. He read aloud the preamble as well as Articles 5 and 4 of the treaty, which are often invoked in arguments supporting Western military intervention in Ukraine, and contrasted NATO's purpose with that of the European Union. Whereas NATO was always fundamentally based on a defense alliance with the United States, the EU was always about an economic alliance with Germany. Many of the problems associated with current Western intervention in Ukraine can be found in this dissonance between the purposes of these two international organizations. Rephrasing the idea of a clash between the Eurasian and Euro-American civilizations, Colonel Wood identified a philosophical conflict surrounding the question of whether there is a natural order to things and how this belief impacts foreign policy attitudes about ends and means. Such a demarcation divides NATO and the EU's member states along markedly different lines, with countries like Germany and France perhaps adhering more closely to the cynical foreign policy motivations of Russia while Central and Eastern Europe find more in common with the ideals of American foreign policy. He concluded with an examination of NATO's role in a post-Cold War (or, Neo-Cold-War) world: NATO must maximize the freedom of individual member states, while also providing real opportunities for these states to adhere to the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty and to work together in achieving their common goals.

**The penultimate speaker was John Lenczowski**, president of the Institute for World Politics. While wrapping up many of the strands of thought presented throughout the day, Lenczowski emphasized the cynical and insidious nature of contemporary Russian statecraft, which is predicated upon organizing treaties and agreements only to find novel ways in which to violate and exploit these same agreements. As an example, he discussed the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for Ukraine's relinquishment of the Soviet nuclear arsenal found within its borders after the collapse of the USSR. This treaty, of course, was completely ignored by all the signing parties: in retrospect, it seems as if Ukraine's one-time proposal of a nuclear union with Poland would have been the more judicious option for guaranteeing the region's security.

**Sebastian Gorka**, the day's master of ceremonies, summarized the symposium with an overview of the ideas, statistics, problematics and solutions that had been discussed that day. He identified three key points about Russia's resurgent imperialism: Russia is not our partner (but only poses as such to manipulate our weaknesses), Russia does have a plan (whereas the US, NATO, and the EU do not), and we are Russia's enemy (even if we may think that we are its friends). Gorka emphasized the need for action, the importance of swiftness, and the prefer ability of deterrence over full-scale war. Although sometimes bordering on fear mongering, he successfully concluded the day's events with an admonition that the West tirelessly defend its freedoms and values from outside aggression, while nevertheless remembering why it is that these freedoms are worth defending in the first place.