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Why Intermarium Failed

A Neoclassical Realist Perspective

Master's thesis in Political Science

Supervisor: Torbjørn L. Knutsen

June 2022



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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

Abstract:

This thesis concerns the failure of the Intermarium project, an envisioned Polish-led union of Eastern European states during the Interwar period 1918-1939. According to the neorealist theory, the realization of the Intermarium project was the logical goal for Polish policymakers to pursue. However, an influential faction within the Polish government, spearheaded by the National Democratic Party, sabotaged the Intermarium designs of Polish leader Józef Pilsudski. In order to explain this case, this thesis applies the neoclassical realist theory. The findings are that poor elite cohesion within Poland at the time led to the failure of the Intermarium project. The National Democrats subverted Polish foreign policy in order to serve their own agenda of a homogenous Poland. In other words, this case cannot be explained by applying neorealism, but can be explained by applying neoclassical realism.

Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven handler om det mislykkede Intermarium prosjektet, en foreslått polsk-ledet union av stater i Øst-Europa i mellomkrigstida 1918-1939. I følge nyrealistisk teori så var gjennomføringen av Intermarium prosjektet det logiske målet for polske makthavere å jobbe mot. Men, en innflytelsesrik gruppe innad den polske regjeringen, ledet av Det nasjonaldemokratiske parti, saboterte verket til den polske leder Józef Pilsudski. For å forklare denne casen blir den nyklassiske realistiske teori anvendt i denne masteroppgaven. Konklusjonen er at dårlig elite samhold innad i Polen førte til at Intermarium prosjektet mislyktes. Nasjonaldemokratene omstyrte polsk utenrikspolitikk for å tjene deres egen agenda for et homogent Polen. Med andre ord, denne casen kan ikke forklares ved å anvende nyrealismen, men kan forklares ved å anvende nyklassisk realisme.

Preface

I would like to extend my most heartfelt thanks to all the people who have helped me along with writing this thesis. Firstly, I must extend my thanks to my family. My darling mother and devoted father, you have always been there to listen to my rambling and incoherent musings throughout my life. While you may not have understood what I have been talking about at all times, you can take comfort in knowing that your son does not always know himself. My dear sister, who helped me with editing and proofreading this thesis. And my grandmothers who are always there to welcome me when I return home. I must also thank my dear friends and study mates whom I have shared this path. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to an amazing study environment despite the worst of circumstances. I must also extend my thanks to the Polish Review. This English language journal, written primarily by Polish expats regarding their fatherland, have been a completely indispensable resource for the writing of this thesis. Lastly, I will extend my most grateful thanks to my supervisor Torbjørn Knutsen, who patiently took hold of my incoherent idea and helped me shape this thesis into its final form.

Jakob Knudsen, June 6th, 2022

To Gunnar Ropphaugen

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1. Introduction

After the Great War, Poland reemerged as an independent nation. The Polish rebirth came after over a century of being subjugated by the German, Austrian and Russian Empires. These empires had, during the 1700s, taken advantage of the weakness of the Polish state. The result was the partitioning of Poland. The lesson that Poland learned from this century of imperial subjugation was that the country had to be strong or be nothing. As the dust settled over Europe in 1918, a unique opportunity presented itself to the Poles. With their former oppressors collapsing into revolutions and civil war, Poland could carve out a strong position in Eastern Europe. Using whatever resources at hand, the Poles set about to expand in all directions. The political vision was simple. Poland's leader wanted to realize a vision called *Intermarium*. Literally meaning "between the seas" (referring to the Baltic and the Black Sea) the Polish objective was to create and dominate a federation of nations in the region between Germany and Russia (Chodakiewicz, 2012). The Intermarium corresponded to the modern states of Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and the Baltic States. This region presents a sort of European middle ground, neither part of the Germanic civilization of Central Europe, nor of the Russian civilization to the East.

Historically, this region had been the migratory path of many peoples entering Europe. It had been exposed to much external pressure, both from the east and the west. During the 1400s this consistent external pressure led to the two significant powers in the Intermarium, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to unite their forces and fend off German crusaders from the west and Mongol invaders from the east. The result of this union was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This state was the premier power in Eastern Europe until it declined in the late 1600s. When Poland regained its independence in 1918, many of its leading statesmen looked back at this Commonwealth as the peak of Polish power and thus tried to recapture it. The Commonwealth served as the inspiration for the federalists designs for Intermarium. A federation of nations in Eastern Europe (Davies, 1981).

Theoretically, this ambition made perfect sense. In practice, not. Neorealists would argue that the small nations of Eastern Europe, squeezed between Russia and the West would band together in a tight alliance or federation. In 1919, Poland made contact with and supported the Ukrainian independence movement, fighting in the concurrent Russian Civil War. The Polish expansion inevitably brought the Poles into conflict with Russian factions. This culminated with the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. While initially unfavorable for Poland, the Polish Army won a resounding victory before the gates of Warsaw in August 1920. The subsequent

roust and near destruction of the Red Army led Polish forces to advance eastward into Ukraine and Belarus by October 1920 (Davies, 1971). The Intermarium vision seemed ready to be realized by the force of Polish bayonets. However, a ceasefire was suddenly brought into effect between the belligerents. In the subsequent Treaty of Riga, Poland received land roughly corresponding to the Commonwealth's 1772 borders. This treaty left most of modern Ukraine and Belarus under Bolshevik rule, later to be absorbed into the Soviet Union. The Treaty of Riga was a deadly blow to the Intermarium project. It left Poland a middling power surrounded by hostile states.

So, why did Intermarium fail? The neorealist theory cannot account for this unprecedented turn of events which directly led to Poland's unfavorable position in the Interwar period, and eventual destruction. Neoclassical realism can explain this case better. The vision of Poland reestablishing the Commonwealth was not universally held by the Polish elite. The Polish elite was, in fact, split on this point. To the right of Polish politics was a faction strongly against constituting a Polish state in union with other Eastern European nations. This faction, the National Democratic Party, held considerable sway over foreign policy and effectively controlled the negotiations with the Bolsheviks at Riga (Wandycz, 1969b). In order to make sense of this situation we must therefore apply the neoclassical realist theory. This thesis is therefore a study of a curious case of a counterfactual coalition. This thesis will take the shape of a case study where I will primarily focus on the Polish-Soviet War and the Treaty of Riga from the neoclassical realist perspective. This thesis will be split into four sections. In the first section I will outline the neoclassical realist theory, its relationship to classical realism and neorealism, and why neoclassical realism is a good fit for this case study. In the second section I will analyze the history of Poland and the Intermarium. The emphasis on this section will be the Polish-Soviet War and the Treaty of Riga, but I will include an analysis of the history of the Intermarium up until that point as well as a brief overview of Polish foreign policy 1921-1939. In the third section I will apply the theory of neoclassical realism to discuss why Intermarium failed. The fourth and final section will be the conclusion of this thesis.

1.1 Research Question

The research question for this thesis is therefore: **Why Intermarium failed?** The Intermarium is the name for the envisioned Interwar Polish-led alliance of Eastern European nations between Germany and the Soviet Union. This initiative was spearheaded by Polish leader Józef Piłsudski and Intermarium took various shapes throughout the Interwar period. The initial shape of Intermarium was a federation of largely former Russian states that emerged following the

collapse of the Empires after the Great War. Later during the Interwar period, Intermarium was envisioned as an alliance of sovereign states in Eastern Europe. I will elaborate on the exact definition of Intermarium as a historical, geographical and political concept further below.

The dependent variable for this analysis is therefore Polish foreign policy between the years 1918 and 1939. I will argue in this thesis that internal conflict among Poland's ruling elite in the crucial initial years following the end of the Great War is the primary reason for the failure of the Intermarium initiative. The independent variable of this thesis is therefore the internal conflict among Poland's elite at the time. I will furthermore argue that the more or less successful formation of a large Intermarium bloc was not only possible, but also intuitive and expected in accordance with neorealist theory. Given Poland's situation as a lesser power caught between aggressive greater powers, the Poles would be wise to seek the maximization of their own power and security by exploiting the weakness of their aggressive neighbors. The Polish elite, knowing this, should have wholeheartedly backed Pilsudski's drive for Intermarium in order to ensure the safety and security of their nation. I argue therefore that since this did not happen than we must seek other explanations for why the Intermarium initiative failed. As mentioned above, I will therefore apply the neoclassical realist theory to explain why the certain important segments of the Polish elite did not support Intermarium, and indeed, caused its ultimate failure. Methodologically I apply the historical method for this thesis with the primary focus being on the theoretical analysis of the shaping, execution and failure of Polish foreign policy.

1.2 Literature Review

I draw on secondary and tertiary historical sources for this thesis. Among my sources are the works of Welsh-Polish historian Norman Davies (1971, 1981), Polish-American historian Piotr S. Wandycz (1962, 1969, 1988) as well as the book of Polish-American historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz (2012). Theoretically I primarily use *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, by Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro (2009) as well as subsidiary and supplementary articles by other neoclassical realists. For my dissertation on neorealist theory, I draw primarily from *Theory on International Relations* by Kenneth Waltz (1979), with supplementary works by other notable neorealists such as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. The history of Poland 1918-1939 features prominently in Polish academia. As the crucial age of Polish reemergence leading to national disaster, this period is important for Polish studies for the simple reason of identifying what went wrong. During and following World War Two, a large number of Polish denizens were driven from their homeland. The result became the

strong Polish diaspora inhabiting the West. The realist tradition stands strong within the diaspora. Zbigniew Brzezinski, counselor to US presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Jimmy Carter were among the more prominent Polish expatriates in the West. Wandycz, native of Krakow, fled Poland as a teen during the Invasion of 1939 and later became associate professor at Yale responsible for Eastern European studies. Davies, born in Wales, was educated in Poland and holds dual British and Polish citizenship. His works include his doctoral thesis on the Polish-Soviet War and the authoritative history of Poland in the West, *God's Playground*.

Within the post-war Polish historiography there is little mention of the concept of Intermarium, save largely dismissing the project as a fool's errand. Both Wandycz (1969b) and Davies (1981) are rather dismissive of the efficacy of the Intermarium project. Both men's primary works date from the Cold War period. For factual sources I draw primarily from Polish historiography of this period. I will, however, reach different conclusions than these authors regarding the Intermarium project. Intermarium as a recurring Polish political goal reemerged following the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland was free to pursue an independent foreign policy, the concept of Intermarium was revived. The false dichotomy of East-West gave way to viewing Central-Eastern Europe as an area distinct from the Western and Russian civilizations. The concept of Intermarium, the union of the nations between East and West, were revived. Chodakiewicz published *Intermarium* in 2012. While a controversial author, rightly criticized for his views on national minorities, LGBT rights and Jews, Chodakiewicz presents a compelling case for the distinctiveness of Central-Eastern Europe. A recent article headed by the Slovak author Robert Ištók (2021) outlines Intermarium as a long-term Polish geopolitical goal. The reviving of Intermarium as a Polish political goal is not limited to academic circles, however. In 2015, Polish president Andrzej Duda unveiled the Three Seas Initiative (3SI), a regional project including 12 Eastern EU member states dedicated to improving infrastructure and facilitating economic growth in EU's eastern half (Popławski & Jakóbowski, 2020). The unstated goal of the 3SI is to divest the Eastern EU from Russian energy dependence and increase Polish influence within the Union. The legacy of Intermarium is apparent both in the intentions and naming of this initiative.



Figure 1: Chodakiewicz's Intermarium (2012)

2. Theory: On the Many Faces of Realism

In order to fully understand this case, we will first have to make an overview of the realist tradition and the origins of neoclassical realism. In brief, neorealism diverged from classical realism by divorcing the human element from the theory in favor of a systemic framework. As illustrated by the model below, states react to systemic stimuli, which shape foreign policy response. Neoclassical realism diverged from neorealism by addressing the shortcomings of this systemic understanding. While neorealism can explain why states act optimally, it cannot explain why states sometimes act in contradiction to systemic principles. Neoclassical realism therefore introduces the unit level variable to the analysis and systematizes said unit's effect on foreign policy response. This divergence from the neorealist theory have been met with no small amount of criticism from neorealists (Rathbun, 2008). However, I will argue in this thesis that neoclassical realism provides a better framework for understanding how states respond to systemic stimuli, especially for this case. In order to understand why neoclassical realism reintroduces the human element into the analysis we must understand why neorealism dispensed with this variable in the first place. Therefore, below is an outline of the intellectual origins of realism, the formation of classical realism and neorealism, and the framework of neoclassical realism.

Systemic stimuli → Policy response

Figure 2: A neorealist model of foreign policy (Ripsman, 2017)

Realism is one of the major theoretical approaches within the field of international relations. Realism has significantly influenced the thoughts and approaches of real-world politics both before and after realism was constituted as a formal theory. Realism purports to analyze international relations “as they are,” hence the name. The central tenet of realism is that the international system is lawless. By lawless, realists hold that the international system is not governed by any superior power that may enforce rules and laws. In essence, if nations were to be analogous to individuals, there are no state structure that may enforce laws upon the individuals. Therefore, nations are entirely reliant on their own power and strength to survive as there are no formal structures that may compel other nations to comply to common laws (Dunne & Schmidt in Baylis, et. al., 2014).

The origins of realism in international relations are found among the classics of Western literature. These include the writings of ancient Greek historian Thucydides, renaissance Italian politician Niccolò Machiavelli, and 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes.

Thucydides, who wrote on the Peloponnesian War between ancient Athens and Sparta, purports that international relations are driven by an endless, and tragic, struggle for power. He ascribes the root of this behavior in human nature. Humans will innately seek power over other humans; so, as states are human constructs, the same is the case for states. The normal trappings of domestic life, law, justice and society have no place in the international space (Dunne & Schmidt in Baylis, et. al., 2014).

Machiavelli, who knew about Thucydides insisted that principles must always be subordinated to policies. Principles such as objective morality, pacifism and ethical conduct are luxuries that the wise statesman cannot afford to adhere to. Principles are not laudable qualities, but rather constraints that may adversely affect the statesman's choices of action. Hence, sound policy must always take precedence. The ultimate skill of the statesman, according to Machiavelli, is the ability to adapt to changing political and power configurations in world politics. (Machiavelli, 1532)

Thomas Hobbes, who was the first to translate Thucydides to English, wrote in the backdrop of the English Civil War. In his seminal work, *The Leviathan*, Hobbes wrote of the state of nature before the formation of state structure. He likened this state of nature to a perpetual war of all against all. The human being can only rely on itself since there is no overarching structure of authority. The state of nature is therefore a constant state of paranoia as man lives in fear of his fellow man who may steal his possessions and, indeed, his very life. The solution to this terrible state of affair was, as it turned out, the state. Humanity surrenders its absolute freedoms in exchange for safety and security. The emergence of the state, however, does not mean the end of the state of nature; the state of nature transcends into the space of international politics. Since the same principle of no overarching authority still holds true among the nations. States compete for scarce resources and exist in the same state of fear and paranoia as the human beings did in the state of nature. The state may therefore only rely on its own power in ensuring its own safety and security (Hobbes, 1651).

2.1 Classical Realism

The realist tradition was challenged in the aftermath of the Great War. The peace negotiations at Paris were influenced in part by prevailing liberal ideological thought, especially by American president Woodrow Wilson. His fourteen points became the blueprint of the envisioned post-war world order. The principles of national sovereignty, free trade, freedom of

navigation, and international law and cooperation were enshrined in the Peace Treaty of Versailles. From the fallen empires of Europe, nation states were to be erected.

However, the question of how this international order was to be enforced was not satisfactorily answered. The formation of the League of Nations was supposed to provide an instrument for resolving disputes among nations. The League, however, would prove infamously ineffective at its intended purpose. The League failed to prevent the rise of revisionist powers, nor prevent their aggression against member-states. The annexation of Manchuria in 1931 and Ethiopia in 1936 by Japan and Italy respectively, are two prominent examples of the League's failures. The perceived failure of international liberal policy during the Interwar period fueled further argumentation by emerging realists that international lawlessness prevailed. As such, states must see to their own affairs and rely on themselves for defense. The international system is lawless not because that is just the natural order of things, but because there exist no compelling forces to enforce a supranational order (Dickinson, 1916). The three cores of all realist theory are therefore: statism, survival, and self-help (Dunne & Schmidt in Baylis, et al, 2014).

The realist theory was formalized largely as a response to the failures of the liberal Interwar world order. Realists dismissed the proponents of liberalism as utopians and idealists. Realists purported to view the world not as they wished it to be, but rather how it functioned in practice. Realism gained considerable traction following the conclusion of the Second World War. Hans Morgenthau contributed heavily to the formation of what is today known as classical realism. Morgenthau stressed that no matter what ideology or principles a nation chose to cloak itself in, the object of international politics will always remain the same: power. Similar to the argumentations of Thucydides, Morgenthau believed that the human nature provided the best explanation for how states behave. He argued that humans are inclined towards pursuing power. States will therefore seek to either maintain their power, attain more power, or demonstrate their power over other states. Security is the primary purpose of a state's foreign policy. As there are fewer constraints in the international system, it is important to establish a balance of power among states in order to ensure peace (Morgenthau, 1948). Morgenthau's theory is today referred to as "classical realism."

2.2 Neorealism

One common criticism of classical realism is its notion that human nature is the driving force of politics. In 1979, Kenneth Waltz published *Theory of International Politics*, in which he argued that the persistence of the anarchic system was not a reflection of human nature, but

rather a result of a self-perpetuating logic among states which constitutes the system. States feel unsafe and therefore seek to maximize their power in relation to other states because that is the logical course of action in an anarchic system. Other states will seek to redress the balance by increasing their own power. International cooperation is therefore usually discouraged. States will cooperate only when they seek to balance against more powerful states. In other words, states cooperate because they have to, not because they want to. A balance of power is therefore a logical result of the constant attainment of power by actors within an anarchic system (Waltz, 1979).

Neorealists define the structure of the international system in terms of three elements: organizing principles, differentiation of units, and distribution of capabilities. Waltz identified two organizing principles. These are the systemic anarchy among states and domestic hierarchy within states. Since all states are organized along some form hierarchical structure, the political system internal to the state is irrelevant to international relations. Put simply, it does not matter whether a state is a democracy or a dictatorship because all states are subject to the same systemic stimuli, and will therefore work to fulfill same goal: security. The second element, differentiation of units, is defined by the third element, distribution of capabilities. Distribution of power within the system is ultimately the deciding factor of how the system is shaped. The only important part of a state's inner workings is its capacity to marshal resources in order to maximize power (Waltz, 1979).

Waltz stresses, however, that power is only a means to an end, the end being security. Waltz outlook on how states act within the international system is therefore defensive in nature. States will see how another state increases its power as a possible security threat. The first state will then seek to increase its power in order to balance against the second state. This course of action becomes more unstable within a multipolar system (a system with multiple great powers), as the action of one great power may provoke a reaction from several other great powers. This may lead to unstable alliances as great powers temporarily comes together to balance against the aggressor. The most obvious example of this systemic behavior is the European system of great powers which persisted between the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. European great powers cooperated in multiple short-lived coalitions (usually targeting France) in order to maintain the balance of power. A multipolar system is therefore unstable and frequently leads to war. For this reason, Waltz argues that a bipolar international system is the most stable, as the two reigning superpowers keep each other in check (Waltz, 1979).

While Waltz argued that states seek to attain more power for defensive reasons, John Mearsheimer presents a different logic for attainment of power. He stresses the fact that states can never be certain of the intentions of other states. Mearsheimer takes Waltz's point that power is a means to security, to its logical extreme. States are power maximizers because being the most powerful means being the most secure. The international system is saturated by a sort of "fog of war" where no one can be quite certain how their neighbor will act. All states will therefore seek to maximize their power in order to become the most secure. This is what drives conflict in the international system. Mearsheimer describes this state of affairs as a tragedy. The defensive act of maximizing one's own security is perceived as an offensive act by everyone else. The quest for security for one, threatens the security of all. Ultimately, as classical realism owes a significant portion of its intellectual background to Thucydides, neorealism owes its' to Hobbes. He argued that human beings act ruthlessly in the state of nature because their circumstances allow them no other option. So too is the case with states. States seek power to ensure security because the alternative is oblivion (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Since the publication of *Theory of International Politics* neorealism has been one of the dominant theories of international relations. Especially in recent years of democratic backsliding and the rise of authoritarian regimes around the world, the liberal theory of international relations has come under greater criticism. The seemingly constant failure of international organizations to maintain world peace adds fuel to the neorealist argument that states only serve their own interests. However, neorealist theory is, on the most basic level, a cost-benefit analysis. Waltz' education was initially in economics, and this background is evident in the neorealist theory. One might equate the international system as a "market" where the "product" is security. The party that is able to produce the most security will dominate the market. The system then resembles a kind of oligopoly, but that the competing actors are not rational firms, but national states. The Great Powers dominate this oligopoly. The "competitors" in this "market" also have an incentive to maintain their dominant position within the system. Rising powers will be met by a high barrier of entry. Status quo powers are likely to collude to clamp down on rising powers in order to maintain the status quo. Again, likening the international system to a "market," states are likely to choose the course of action that will reap the greatest benefit (Mandelbaum. In line with economics, the state's choice is predicated by the state's knowledge of the market. The international system, while anarchic, is not akin to a perfect free market where all actors have perfect knowledge of everything. Mearsheimer illustrates this conundrum by his fog of war where no state can be perfectly sure of other states'

intentions and capabilities. Regardless, states will act in such a way that they *perceive* will gain them the most power. More power equals more security. In essence, a state will act like an investment banker. The state will choose the course of action that will reap the greatest dividends. The currency in question being power and security (Mandelbaum, 1988).

Needless to say, this is not always the case. States will make mistakes. This is not really a criticism of neorealism as neorealists themselves fully admit that states are capable of making mistakes. States are not akin to perfect computers and are fully capable of making miscalculations, and potentially disastrous ones at that. The British decision in 1940 to carry on the war following the capitulations of their continental allies, was at the time an unexpected development. It would be a perfectly rational course of action for the British government to seek a peace with Germany at that point. However, Britain was resolved to fight. Britain would, in the end, emerge victorious, but arguably at the cost of its own empire as its colonies and dominions broke away from the mother country after the war. Britain was no longer capable of maintaining its empire. Was it rational for the British to fight on when the gains would be negligible, and the costs would be disastrous? Neorealists would argue no. While we in the present may hail the British crucial contribution in saving Europe from fascism, it resulted in the collapse of the Empire. In other words, states are motivated to act not only by pure security concerns. There are important ideational factors, as well as internal cohesion of the state that affects how a state will act in a given situation. This segues into the central theoretical framework of this thesis: the neoclassical realist theory.

2.3 Neoclassical realism

This thesis examines the internal politics of Poland during the Interwar period, and how this impacted foreign policy. As such, neoclassical realism is an appropriate theory to apply for this exercise. In order to analyze the case, I will be applying three analytical tools of neoclassical realism: elite cohesion, foreign policy executive, and perception. Below is an outline of these concepts. The neoclassical realist theory (NCR for short) was developed in the late 1990s. The term was coined by Gideon Rose in his 1998 article “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy.” (Rose, 1998) Neorealist theory explains that a state is defeated because it does not follow the optimal course of action. However, neorealism does not explain why a state not always follow the optimal course of action. This is the gist of the NCR argument. NCR theorists therefore seek to refine the neorealist theory by introducing unit level variables into the analysis. As mentioned above, Kenneth Waltz explained that if a state does not adhere to the systemic principles of the neorealist theory, then unit level observations are needed to explain the non-

optimal course of action. NCR theorists follow this line of logic to explain the course of action of states. NCR theorists maintain that states are still motivated by the systemic parameters defined by neorealism, but that there are plenty of cases of states acting in complete violation of these parameters. Consequently, alternative explanations are needed. Neoclassical realism is not a theory on the international system. Neoclassical realists agree with neorealists on the structure of the international system. NCR provides an analytical framework for explaining foreign policy (Rose, 1998).

2.3.1 Foreign Policy Executive

Neoclassical realism therefore reintroduces the human element arguably absent from the neorealist analysis. One of the central human elements of a state is the internal cohesion of the ruling elite. Elite cohesion is the ability of the state for decisive collective action. An optimal foreign policy requires the internal power factors of the state to all be on the same page with regard to a course of action. If internal power factors are unhappy with, or do not benefit from the government's stated course of action, these disaffected powers may work against the government's foreign policy. This may result in a state's foreign policy not being optimally executed. Here we must introduce the term foreign policy executive. The foreign policy executive (FPE) is the organ within the state responsible for executing the foreign policy. Specifically, a state's ministry of foreign affairs fills this role. However, in a broader term, the FPE must be expanded to include a state's top level decisionmakers, the head of state and/or head of government, as well as relevant cabinet ministers and those responsible for conducting negotiations (Lobell, et al, 2009).

2.3.2 Elite Cohesion

For the purposes of group exercises, it is imperative that everyone in the group work in unison in order to achieve a specific goal. If the goal is to move a heavy piece of metal from one side of the room to another it is important that everyone lifts correctly, balances the weight, and most importantly, move in the same direction. By the very nature of moving something from one place to another, some members of the group may not have a good overview of where they are going. Still, it is important that even when someone does not see where the group is heading with their lumbering big piece of metal, that they trust their compatriots and keep moving. Pulling in the wrong direction or redistributing balance to fit one's own need, may put at risk the whole endeavor of moving. In other words, in order for the successful completion of a group exercise, it is important that everyone is on the same page, and work together, even if they do

not comprehend the immediate end to their labors. The state is perhaps the ultimate group exercise so having everyone pull in the same direction is doubly important (Lobell, et al, 2009)..

Neoclassical realists identify “elites” as those domestic groups that may have an effect in shaping foreign policy. This is not to say that the mass public may not influence foreign policy. It can. But the specific handling of foreign policy is shaped by interest groups. Elites are therefore often identified as economic elites. Those that have a significant stake in the economy are more likely to influence the foreign policy executive to steer foreign policy to the formers’ benefit. For example, one persistent problem for Polish foreign policy throughout the Interwar period was Poland’s problematic relationship with France. France was not a stable country throughout this period. Numerous cabinet shakeups and governmental turnovers made French foreign policy throughout the period unpredictable and inconsistent. Following the German surrender in 1918, French prime minister Georges Clemenceau pursued a hard line against the Germans. He belonged to the Radicals who advocated Germany’s total defeat and disarmament so Germany could never again threaten France. His influence was decisive in hammering out the harsher terms of the Treaty of Versailles. However, Clemenceau was replaced as prime minister by the conservative Alexandre Millerand in early 1920 who initiated the French policy of rapprochement and leniency towards Germany. This policy was partially based on economic concerns as France needed to import products and raw material made in Germany, such as coal and steel. French big industry needed Germany. This kind of governmental turnovers led to foreign policy flipflopping. The French simply did not stay the course that Clemenceau charted in 1918. While the Treaty of Versailles provided a framework for mitigating German power, the political will to enforce the treaty was simply not there. This example serves to illustrate how internal elites may sway foreign policy not necessarily in line with the perceived national interest. Elites also include political factions within the government structure, such as political parties. What the goals of these parties are and what influence they have over the foreign policy is therefore important to analyze (Lobell, et al, 2009).

2.3.3 Perception

Neoclassical realists lean towards the defensive realist perspective when formulating foreign policy. That is, they assume that states seek balance in the international system. Foreign policy is therefore the act of balancing the power of potential threats within the system. For neorealists, identifying what states constitute a threat is a relatively straightforward affair. A threat is identified by assessing material power. If a state has a larger population, more capable military, and stronger economic endurance to wage war, then that state is a threat. It does not matter if

that state is going to attack another state, just that the former state is capable of attacking. Hence, the threatened state must increase their own power to balance against the threat. Neoclassical realists argue that the issue is more complicated than that. The process of assessing which states are threats, is influenced by the perceptions of the decisionmakers and the elites. Stephen Walt’s concept of the “balance of threat” is a useful analytical tool in this respect. Walt identifies four criteria for states to evaluate a potential threat. The criteria are, aggregate strength (as mentioned above), geographic proximity, offensive capability, and hostile intent (Walt, 1985). Perception of intention is key to the argumentation of neoclassical realists. While neorealists emphasize observable, material sources of power (such as military and economic might) to identify capabilities, neoclassical realists recognize decisionmakers’ perception of capabilities. While numbers of materiel and resources are good indicators of capabilities, one cannot assess, with complete confidence, the capabilities of another state before they are put to the test. As such, ideological concerns become important for the shaping of foreign policy. Externally, states might perceive that another state dominated by a contradictory ideology to be a threat. Internally, the importance of ideological similarities is important for maintaining elite cohesion (Dyson, 2010).

In a case study on post-communist Georgian politics, Gvalia, Lebanidze and Siroky found that following the 2003 Rose Revolution, a largely homogenous group of Western-educated politicians took control of the country. Between 2003 and 2008, the Georgian economy grew exponentially. The new ruling elite replaced local political magnates identified as pro-Russian or post-communist. The country’s leadership became decisively pro-Western and reoriented the Georgian economy away from Russia. Even after Russia imposed sanctions on Georgia in response to the regime change, the Georgian economy was able to diversify its markets and orient further towards Europe. Further Georgian integration into the EU was however forestalled by the war with Russia in 2008 (Gvalia, et al., 2019). This study shows the importance of the predominant ideology among the Georgian elite. The Georgian leadership’s internal cohesion led to an effective shift of Georgian foreign policy away from Russia and towards the West.

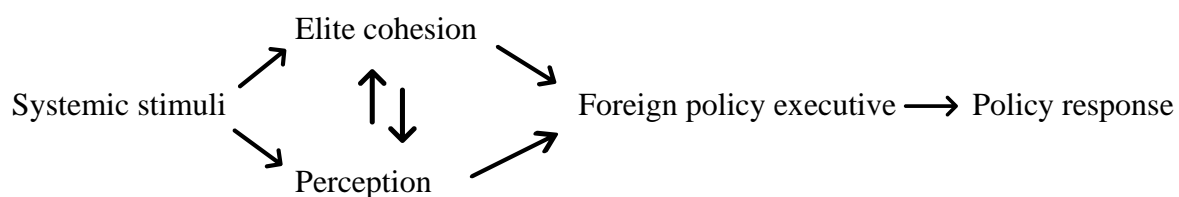


Figure 3: A neoclassical realist model of foreign policy

2.3.4 Assessment and Criticism of Neoclassical Realism

To summarize, where neorealism provides a framework for how states should formulate their foreign policy in response to stimuli from the international system, neoclassical realism focuses on how foreign policy is shaped in practice. By introducing unit-level variables, neoclassical realism provides us with significant analytical flexibility to examine how states shape their foreign policy while also maintaining the realist perception of the international system. NCR helps fill in the gaps left by neorealism, specifically why states at times make mistakes. Before moving on it is important to address the criticism leveled against neoclassical realism. NCR is often criticized for being both ontological and epistemologically incoherent. Critics point out that including the unit-level variable is not compatible with the realist tradition. Neorealism is a theory on the international system and specifically how the international system socializes states to act in a certain way. Waltz stressed the importance of anarchy. The anarchical structure of the international system encourages state-actors to seek power in order to ensure national security. Since there is an optimal way to respond to the overarching problem of security, the internal structuring of the state does not matter. As such, critics claim that by introducing the unit-level variable, neoclassical realism radically departs from the established realist tradition to such a degree that NCR can no longer be deemed a realist theory. Epistemologically, neoclassical realism is also criticized for addressing variables as they appear instead of adhering to a strict set of parameters. Generally speaking, critics claim that NCR simply try to explain away anomalies and inconsistencies in the neorealist framework. Lastly, critics also claim that neoclassical realism sacrifices the theoretical rigor and elegance of the neorealist design by including the unit-level variable (Rathbun, 2008).

These are all valid criticisms. Thankfully, many of the initial criticisms have been worked out by recent theorists. As described above, the epistemological problems are addressed by formalizing and operationalizing the unit-specific variables of the analysis. The inclusion of concepts perception, elite cohesion, and the foreign policy executive, serve as valuable tools for analyzing the shaping of foreign policy. Therefore, neoclassical realists have formulated a set of clear parameters that can be replicated across several cases, not simply tailored to explain one specific case. Ontologically, proponents of neoclassical realism dismiss the charge that their theory is an incompatible departure from mainstream realism. On the contrary, neoclassical realists argue that their theoretical approach is a logical continuation of the neorealist theory. As mentioned above, Waltz himself acknowledged that when a state fails to properly adapt to systemic stimuli, then the cause was probably domestic. Neoclassical realists

follow this line of logic by defining how domestic factors shape foreign policy. NCR explains how domestic factors contribute either to an appropriate level of balancing, or, in the case of poor elite cohesion, over-, or underbalancing (Rathbun, 2008). On these credentials I assess that neoclassical realism provides the appropriate theoretical framework for this thesis.

3. The Intermarium Case

The Polish case in the Interwar period provides us with a suitable case to apply the neoclassical realist theory. Below is an introduction to the concept of Intermarium, both geographically and historically, and its relationship with Polish history and ideological thought. Following this introduction is an overview of early Polish independence, the Polish-Soviet War, and the Peace Treaty of Riga. I argue that the period 1918-1921 provided Poland with its only opportunity to realize the Intermarium project. Following this opportunity, the Interwar order solidified, forcing Poland to pursue a policy of balance between the great powers, effectively abandoning Intermarium. This policy ultimately failed, leading to the destruction of the Polish Republic at the hands of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939.

3.1 What is the Intermarium?

The subject and title of this thesis concerns the concept of the Intermarium. As such, it is important to define what the Intermarium is. Intermarium refers to two concepts, one geographical and one political. Firstly, we must define the geographical term of Intermarium. *Międzymorze* is a Polish word that literally translates to *Between the Seas*. The word Intermarium is a Latin translation of this Polish word. For the purposes of this thesis, I will exclusively be using the Latin word for referring to both the geographical and political term Intermarium. The political term involves both concepts of security and governance; both are products of a peculiar regional history, and the term is as many-faceted as the region itself.

3.1.1 Geographical Intermarium

Geographically, Intermarium is the part of the European landmass between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The exact boundaries of this region differs between authors. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz set the eastern boundary of Intermarium running from Lake Peipus, along the Dvina and the Dnieper to where the latter river meets the Black Sea. The southern boundary is set at the Danube estuary, running north along the eastern and northern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains till where the mountains meet the Vistula River in Poland. The Vistula, running north to the Baltic marks the western boundary of the Intermarium (Chodakiewicz, 2012). Others set the eastern and western boundaries at slightly different places. For example, some place the western boundary as far west as the Oder, corresponding to the modern Polish-German border. Others still include virtually all the Balkans to the Adriatic Sea, usually excluding Greece, into Intermarium.

Hence, Intermarium can also be described as between *three* seas rather than just the Baltic and the Black Sea. For the purposes of this thesis, I will define the geographical space of the Intermarium as corresponding to the present day internationally recognized borders of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and Transcarpathian Romania. Included in this definition is also the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.



Figure 4: Geographical boundaries of Intermarium overlaid contemporary state borders (geopolityka.net)

3.1.2 Political Intermarium

Though not named as such, Intermarium is an old political concept. As indicated in the map above, Intermarium is the only natural landmass that connects Europe with the rest of Eurasia. As such, this is a hugely important space in Easter-European politics. Students of geopolitics will recognize the borders of the Intermarium as the place defined by Halford Mackinder as the controlling condition of the *Heartland*. Mackinder’s famous summary stated:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
who rules the World-Island commands the world.
(Mackinder, 1919, p. 150)

Regardless of the veracity of Mackinder's theory, this summary is indicative of the Intermarium's huge importance for European, and in turn, world politics. The Intermarium is topographically mostly flat and is completely devoid of natural barriers, excluding rivers. The Eastern-European landmass between the Baltic and the Black Sea forms a natural bottleneck that funnels towards Western Europe. The land has consequently played host for many different tribes, peoples and nations. Some only briefly passed through, while others stayed and made the region their home. As such, the region is defined by the people who settled there, and those who passed over. This region was rarely united and the peoples who lived there were diverse. Hence, the region is defined by internal strife and external pressure. In essence, the Intermarium as a region is not dissimilar from Scandinavia. Both regions share common historical, cultural and political bonds that define the regions as different from their immediate neighbors.

3.2 The Historical Background of Intermarium

By the 11th century, several distinct states started to form within the Intermarium. The ancient Rus state formed around the city of Kyiv in present day Ukraine. Norse Vikings, called Varangians, came to rule the local East Slavic population. These Norsemen eventually adopted the customs and language of their subjects. The Rus state was not a centralized kingdom, but rather a heavily decentralized confederacy of petty princedoms and city-states. The Rus looked south, spiritually, and adopted the Orthodox Christian faith of the Byzantine Greeks. What united the Rus was their language and their common faith. To the west in the Intermarium the first Polish state emerged. Poland was heavily decentralized. The kingdom collapsed several times, and the Polish lands were fragmented among several related, but independent rulers. This phenomenon, called feudal fragmentation, had its longest run for nearly two centuries, from the beginning of the 12th century until the early 14th century. Unlike the Rus to the east, the Poles looked west and adopted the Catholic Christian faith. To the north in the Intermarium, several Baltic tribes dwelled. These tribes were generally isolated and were notably the last part of Europe to be Christianized. The greatest of the Baltic tribes were the Lithuanians, who emerged as a strong power in the wake of Polish and Rus weakness. The Intermarium was therefore heavily divided among different states, which in turn suffered from a large degree of internal discord.

The order in the Intermarium would be interrupted by two different, but related events. The Mongol Invasion and the Northern Crusades. The Mongol Invasion destroyed the Kingdom of the Rus. Kyiv itself was destroyed by the Mongols and the remaining Rus states were subjected to Mongol suzerainty. The strongest Rus state to emerge from this collapse was an insignificant city state called Moscow. The Muscovites gained the position of the Mongol taxman among the Rus, responsible for extracting tribute for the Khan. The rulers of Moscow would in turn grow rich and powerful. As Mongol power waned, Moscow would eclipse the Mongols and become the ruling power among the Rus. Moscow's influence would first stretch south and east, away from the Intermarium. The Muscovites inherited the mantle of the eastern pressure point on the Intermarium. The other external pressure point on the Intermarium would come from the west in the form of the Northern Crusades. Originally invited by Polish lords to combat pagan tribes raiding Polish lands, the Northern Crusades would expand way beyond its original purpose. The crusaders, primarily Germans and some Western Europeans, drove back the Baltic tribes. The crusaders then went on the offensive and conquered the lands of Prussia and Livonia. The crusaders established a monastic crusader state in this region and continued their warring along the Baltic coast.

In response to the growing power of the Teutonic Order, something remarkable happened. The Poles and the Lithuanians came together and checked the expansion of the Teutonic Order State. Poland had at this time emerged from its fragmentary state and reestablished itself as a significant power in the region. The pagan Lithuanians, facing pressure from the crusaders, adopted Catholic Christianity and solidified ties with Poland. This culminated in the marriage of the sovereigns of the two states. The Polish Queen Jadwiga married the Lithuanian ruler Jogaila. Jogaila took the name Wladyslaw, and his pagan name was Polonized to Jagiello. His dynasty would rule Poland and Lithuania for nearly two centuries thereafter. In response to the Polish-Lithuanian union the crusaders made war on these two Christian kingdoms. The Teutons were decisively defeated at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. The Order's power was forever broken, and the battle paved the way for Polish-Lithuanian dominance in the Intermarium.

The Polish-Lithuanian union is remarkable because it reversed the existing dynamic in the region between the seas. The disunity of the local peoples invited surrounding powers to divide and conquer in order to dominate the region. But external pressure resulted in internal unification. From 1410 until the 1700s, the Intermarium would be dominated by a local power, Poland-Lithuania. These two states would eventually formalize their personal union into a permanent union. This union state is historically known as the Polish-Lithuanian

Commonwealth. In Polish historiography this state is known as the First Republic (*Rzeczpospolita*). Some historians, including Norman Davies, use the terms “Commonwealth” and “Republic” interchangeably (Davies, 1981). This state was one of the most unique states in European history. The Commonwealth was ruled by a monarch elected for life by the nobility. The constituent laws of the Commonwealth placed great restraints on the central power in favor of the local nobility. While the Commonwealth stretched across nearly all the Intermarium, it grew weaker overtime as its neighbors grew stronger. The three principal neighbors of Poland-Lithuania were Muscovite Russia, Habsburg Austria, and Brandenburg-Prussia. These powers grew into strong, centralized autocracies, eclipsing the Commonwealth. Internal strife flared up in the Commonwealth as the nobility consistently, and successfully, resisted all royal attempts at curtailing the privileges of the nobility. The 17th century was a disastrous century for the Commonwealth. Civil wars shook the region, resulting in famine and disruption of trade. By the 18th century the Commonwealth was politically paralyzed. In the latter half of that century, Poland-Lithuania would be systematically dismembered by its three great neighbors. The state would not even survive the century as the Commonwealth was partitioned for the third and final time in 1795, erasing Poland-Lithuania from the map.

Again, external forces would take advantage of the internal strife of the Intermarium. The partition of Poland dissolved the final independent state in the Intermarium for over a century. The Russian Empire would be the largest power within the Intermarium. However, Russian control was always contested by the Germanic powers. Rebellions would also rock the Intermarium, especially in the old Polish regions where resistance to foreign rule was great. In response, the Russians intensified a russification of the Intermarium, trying to replace the local cultures with the Russian.

The russification process would be interrupted by the outbreak of the Great War and the Russian Revolution. Subsequently, most of the Intermarium came under German or Austrian occupation by the end of the conflict. The German plans for the Intermarium was the creation of multiple smaller satellite states, including a small Polish state, that would act as a buffer between the Reich and Russia. The German defeat on the Western Front in 1918 ended any immediate ambitions for a German dominated Eastern Europe. As part of the armistice agreement, German forces occupying former Russian lands, marched home to the fatherland. What remained then? As Russia was tearing itself apart in the Civil War, and German forces evacuated the Intermarium, what remained could only be described as a power vacuum.

3.3 *The Polish Rebirth*

This is the time to introduce our dramatis personae. As Poland rose from the ashes of war, two men would emerge as the prominent leaders of modern Poland. The first was Józef Pilsudski. Pilsudski descended from the Polish nobility in old Lithuania and called Wilno (Vilnius) his hometown. A fierce Polish patriot, he cut his teeth as an editor for the Polish Socialist Party's (PPS) newspaper. Pilsudski represented an older strand of Polish nationalism. His background and upbringing emphasized the ideas of the old Commonwealth. This tradition the shared historical, cultural, political and social traditions of the Commonwealth, which had brought together Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews in a necessarily tolerant society. While politically dominated by a Polonized landed nobility, the Commonwealth had been remarkable for its religious tolerance in the age of religious strife in Europe. Pilsudski largely embraced this tradition and hoped to reestablish Poland along the line of the old Commonwealth (Lenkiewicz, 2002). He hoped to incorporate Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine into a federal state with Poland. Pilsudski's reasoning for essentially reestablishing the Commonwealth was to primarily counterbalance the Russian threat to Polish sovereignty. As such, Pilsudski joined the Central Powers during the Great War. He raised and commanded the Polish Legion to fight alongside the Austrians to liberate Poland. Pilsudski and his men would later be interned in

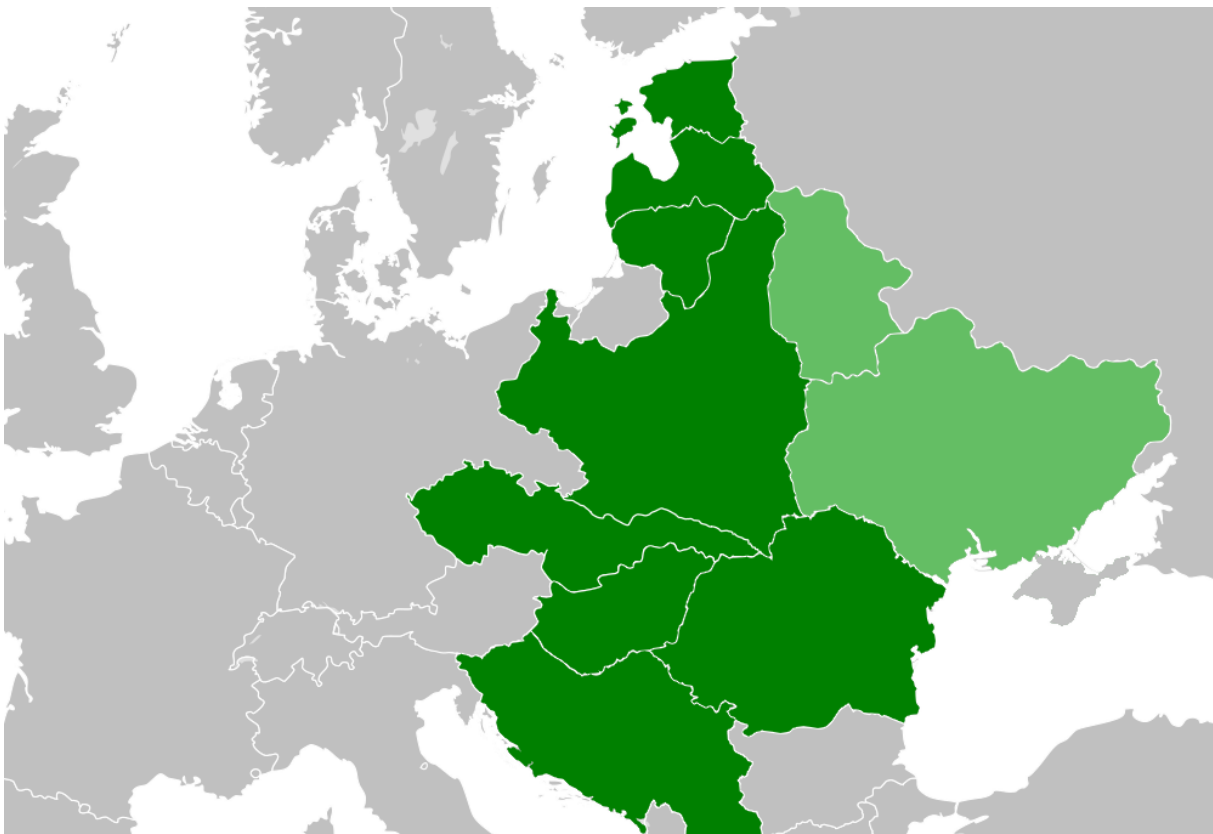


Figure 5: The Intermarium political union as envisioned by Pilsudski, including independent Belarus and Ukraine

Germany following perceived German duplicity on reestablishing Poland. On the armistice day November 11th, 1918, Pilsudski sat imprisoned in Magdeburg. On that day he was hurriedly placed on a train bound for Warsaw.

The other Polish national leader at this time was Roman Dmowski. Dmowski came from a working-class background and grew up near Warsaw. Following his education, he joined the Polish Youth Organization. Dmowski represented a very different form of Polish nationalism. Dmowski's nationalism was much more in line with the ethnocentric nationalism in vogue at the time. This brand of Polish nationalism emphasized centering the state on the ethnic Polish population. The Polish language and the Catholic faith were to be the basis of the new Polish nation state. Dmowski therefore advocated for a smaller Polish state with only so much of the old eastern lands incorporated so it would not offset the Polish majority. Those of differing national identity were to be polonized. Dmowski's nationalism also harbored a deep antisemitism common among national movements at the time.

This strand of Polish nationalism tried largely to work within the Russian state structure to establish an autonomous Polish state within the Empire. As such, these nationalists placed themselves in stark opposition to the Pilsudskiites, who advocated armed struggle against those occupying Polish lands. Dmowski would formalize his party into the National Democratic Party (*Endecja*) and achieved seats in the Russian state Duma (Groth, 1969).

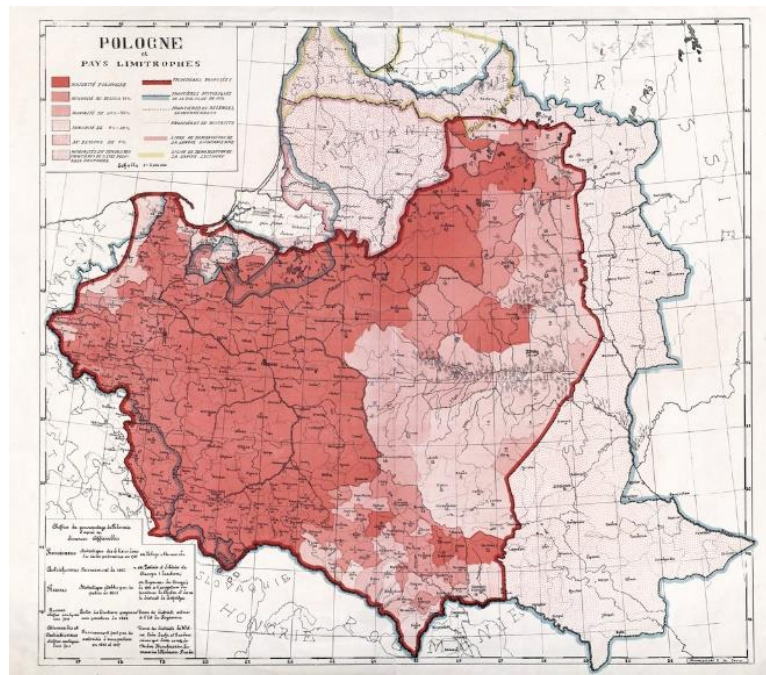


Figure 6: Dmowski Line superimposed over the Commonwealth's 1772 borders with ethnic compositions

When the Great War broke out, Dmowski, and the *Endecja* wholeheartedly sided with the Russians. They hoped to achieve Polish autonomy by fighting alongside the forces of the Tsar. The Russian defeat in 1917 shifted the *Endecja* plans. Dmowski came to lead the Polish delegation in Paris and formed the Polish National Committee in 1917. At this point, many Polish volunteers were fighting on the Western Front. By the time of the 1918 armistice,

Dmowski's National Committee claimed to be the legitimate government of Poland. As such, Dmowski headed the Polish delegation at Versailles, presenting the Polish territorial claims. The Polish delegation presented the so-called Dmowski Line (see figure 6 above) (Davies, 1981). In the east, this line included large parts of what is today western Ukraine and Belarus, as well as parts of Lithuania. To the west, the Committee hoped to annex large parts of Prussia and Pomerania from Germany, as well as most of the mineral rich region of Silesia. The Allied recommendation, presented by the British foreign secretary Lord Curzon fell far short of the Committee's demands. To the right is an illustration of the Curzon line. Curzon's proposal left most of Ukraine and all of Belarus beyond the Polish border. This included the large Polish cities of Lwów and Wilno. In the West, Curzon conceded Poznan and a narrow corridor to the Baltic Sea, but most of Prussia would remain German. Furthermore, only a small part of southern Silesia was conceded to the Poles. As this line did not reflect the actual military realities at the time, the Curzon line was discarded (Biskupski, 2018).

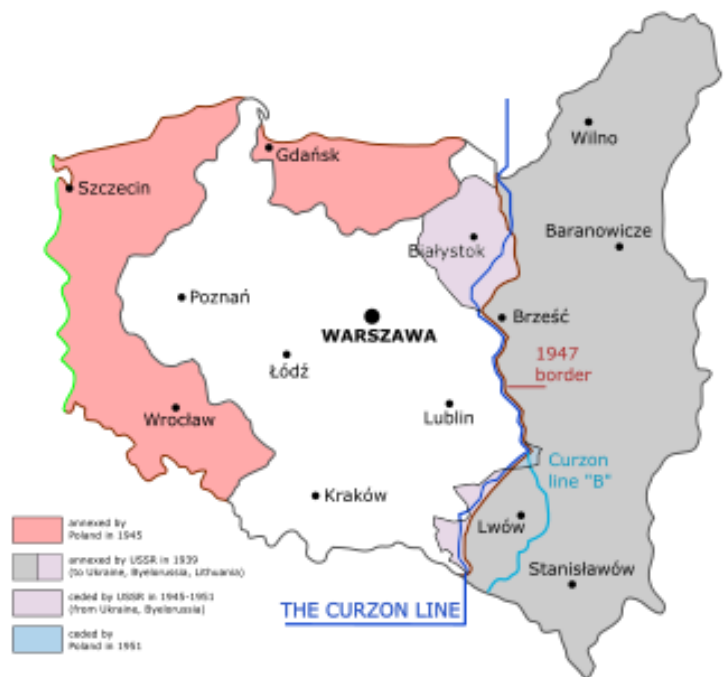


Figure 7: Curzon Line superimposed over Poland's post-WWI and post WWII borders

So, what were the military realities? While Dmowski was negotiating in Paris he claimed to represent the legitimate Polish government. However, Dmowski and his committee was far from the homeland. On November 11th, 1918, Pilsudski arrived in Warsaw. He was summarily handed the stewardship of the new Polish state by the German collaborationist government. Pilsudski was named Chief-of-State and Commander-in-Chief (Eventually First Marshal of Poland), simultaneously heading a new civil government and being handed supreme command of the armed forces. He set about organizing the Polish armed forces from his own Legion and the remnant German-, Austrian-, and Russian-Polish formations. Pilsudski then used his new army to expand the Polish border in all directions. This led to small scale border clashes between Polish forces and its other neighbors. Skirmishes ranged along the frontier with retreating

Germans, Czechoslovaks, and Lithuanians, as well as the myriad Russian factions in the east (Davies, 1972).

By the time of the Versailles negotiations in mid-1919, the Poles held more or less the areas demanded by Dmowski and the Committee. This presented an awkward situation for every party involved. While Dmowski and the National Committee claimed to be the legitimate Polish government, they had no actual control over Poland. While substantial Polish army forces loyal to Dmowski, remained in France, Pilsudski controlled Poland and did not recognize the Committee's authority. Furthermore, Pilsudski was distrusted by the Allies as a former German collaborator. The allies subsequently recognized the legitimacy of the National Committee. Civil war was averted when the formal head of the National Committee, Ignacy Jan Paderewski convinced Dmowski and Pilsudski to set aside their differences. Pilsudski was confirmed as Chief-of-State, while Dmowski was confirmed as the foreign minister. Paderewski was sworn in as prime minister of the new government. The Dmowski-Pilsudski compromise allowed for the passage of Polish soldiers and war materiel to Poland.

3.4 The Polish-Soviet War

With the internal Polish political situation temporarily stabilized it is time to review the larger political picture in the Intermarium in early 1919. By the time of the November Armistice, the whole of the Intermarium was under German occupation. This formation, Oberkommando-Ostfront (Ober-Ost) held a thin line running from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. The continued German occupation of the Intermarium was initially tolerated by the Allies as a necessity given that Ober-Ost was the only ordering faction holding the region in check. The liberation of Poland and disarming of German forces there, left Ober-Ost in a tenuous situation. With the only line of communication back to Germany now running through East Prussia, the leadership of Ober-Ost set about evacuating its forces back to the Fatherland. The retreat of Ober-Ost left a vacuum that every interested party readily exploited. Bolshevik forces marched into Belarus and Lithuania. These forces started probing westward and eventually made contact with Polish forces. A sharp skirmish took place between the Red Army and Polish irregulars. The Polish-Soviet War had begun. By mid-1919, Polish forces had pushed the Bolsheviks back towards a line roughly including most of Belarus and eastern Lithuania. This included the city of Vilnius, Pilsudski's hometown. The Marshal took the field himself to eject the Bolsheviks from the city. The Polish offensive succeeded, and the Bolsheviks pulled back to a line roughly corresponding to the Dmowski line (Davies, 1975).

The liberation of Vilnius highlights the strength and weaknesses of Pilsudski's leadership. Vilnius was to be the first step of the Intermarium project. Pilsudski proclaimed that the city was to have free elections based on universal suffrage. He intended for Vilnius to be incorporated into a Lithuanian state in close union with Poland. The problem for Pilsudski was that a Lithuanian state already existed. To the west, the government of the Lithuanian republic had in fact cooperated with the Bolsheviks to some extent in order to reclaim Vilnius. The Lithuanian provisional government proclaimed Vilnius as its capital. However, the city itself was predominantly ethnically Polish at the time and Pilsudski refused to hand the city over to a Lithuania that was not aligned with Poland. Pilsudski's reasoning was both military and sentimental. Militarily, Vilnius was a vital rail link for the northern front. The city was Poland's northern fortress facing the Bolshevik lines in Belarus. Control over Vilnius was simply indispensable for Polish security. The other reason, the sentimental reason, was that Vilnius was Pilsudski's home. The Polish-Lithuanian dispute over Vilnius would sour relations between the two states and sow a permanent rift between the two historical sister nations. The Polish-Lithuanian rift was the first blow for the Intermarium project. This highlights the two contrasting features of Pilsudski's leadership. He was a brilliant commander who always prioritized a favorable military situation. However, his insistence on military priorities left him unable or unwilling to consider political questions. His dismissal of Lithuanian demands would only be the first of several similar mistakes (Wandycz, 1969).

The winter of 1919-1920 was one of calm on the front between the Poles and the Bolsheviks. Neither side had sufficient strength to attack the other. The Polish borderlands especially was devastated from five years of almost continuous war. Pilsudski needed time to arm and organize his army for what he viewed to be an inevitable confrontation come spring. The French trained Polish army arrived in Poland as well as shipments of crucial military materiel. The Polish army of 1920 cut an eclectic figure. The military traditions of the Polish regiments betrayed their imperial origins. One cavalry division was composed of regiments from the German, Austrian and tsarist Russian armies, all with different equipment, uniforms and *esprit de corps*. Polish patriotism, Pilsudski's leadership and the organizational skills of chief of staff Kazimierz Sosnkowski held this army together (Davies, 1972).

On the other side of the lines, the Bolsheviks were distracted, fighting the armies of the Whites in the Russian Civil War. For the time being, the Russians were forced to look inwards. Lenin, however, kept a continuous eye on Poland. The conventional thought of the Bolsheviks at the time was that the communist revolution could not survive if it was confined to Russia. The

Bolsheviks had to break out west to make contact with similar revolutionary movements towards the west. Poland was to be the bridge to carry the revolution to Europe (Carr, 1951). Pilsudski meanwhile was content to leave the Russians to kill each other. As a former socialist revolutionary himself, Pilsudski had little sympathy towards the cause of the Russian Whites, seeing them as the successors of the oppressive Tsarist regime. At the same time, Pilsudski had long since abandoned the concept of class struggle in favor of the Polish national struggle. Thus, he felt no ideological kinship with the Bolsheviks. Therefore, to Pilsudski, it didn't matter who sat in the Kremlin. Russia, red or white, would always be a threat to Poland (Davies, 1972). Pilsudski however did recognize that as the civil war in Russia turned in the Bolshevik's favor, then they would inevitably turn west towards his country. Pilsudski agreed to exchange diplomats with the Bolsheviks in order to reach some understanding. He had little faith in these thoughts, however, and planned a preemptive strike to neutralize the Red Army marshaling on the front line (Wandycz, 1969).

3.4.1 *The Ukrainian Offensive*

Pilsudski's planned strike again highlights the Marshal's brilliance and shortcomings. In order to fully understand Pilsudski's plan, we must turn our attention to Ukraine. Ukraine was occupied by German forces until November 1918, when their retreat left the country in a perfect state of power vacuum. The full scope of Ukrainian internal conflict is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a cursory glance is necessary to understand Pilsudski's intentions. Following the German retreat, a virtual kaleidoscope of fighting groups emerged in Ukraine. One can roughly divide these groups into four categories: white, red, green and black. The whites were a *mélange* of Ukrainian nationalists and those sympathetic to or aligned with the Russian whites. The reds were broadly socialist groups, usually (but not always) aligned with the Bolsheviks. The greens were broadly local groups fighting for themselves and their local areas. Finally, the blacks were anarchist loosely aligned with the Bolsheviks out of convenience (Chodakiewicz, 2012). Of particular note in this conflict is the Ukrainian reds and whites. Following the collapse of Russian resistance in 1917, western Ukraine rose in rebellion against the Kerensky government. They proclaimed the Ukrainian People's Republic in Kyiv, headed by the Rada. Meanwhile, a red government was formed in Kharkiv which received support from Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks in Moscow. With Bolshevik aid, the reds pushed west and forced the Rada to evacuate Kyiv. The Rada turned to Germany for aid and allowed German and Austrian forces to push the reds out of Ukraine. The last red forces were ejected from Ukraine in April 1918. The Germans reinstated the Rada in Kyiv and tasked a former Ukrainian general of the Russian

army Pavlo Skoropadsky to lead the new government. Skoropadsky was known as the Hetman, and so this government is called the Hetmanate. Following the retreat of the Germans, the Hetmanate was overthrown by a new government called the Directorate. The Directorate was eventually led by Symon Petliura. The Bolsheviks invaded Ukraine in January 1919, simultaneously with the push west that took Vilnius for the Reds. The Directorate was unable to defend all of Ukraine and lost the capital of Kyiv to the Bolsheviks. Petliura continued to defend what territory he held from both the Red and White Armies for the rest of 1919 before finally withdrawing to Polish lines in December (Wandycz, 1969).

Pilsudski's plan was then to invade the territory of Ukraine and force a regime change by installing Petliura in place of the Bolshevik-backed government. Davies argues that this plan was largely prompted by military realities as the Bolshevik forces in Ukraine were weaker than the forces in Belarus (Davies, 1975). By assaulting Ukraine, Pilsudski hoped to turn the flank of the Bolshevik armies facing Poland and drive the Russians out of the Intermarium. The offensive kicked off on April 25th, 1920, and was initially successful. Kyiv was captured by May 7th, paving the way for Petliura's triumphant return. Polish forces then turned north and almost broke the back of the Bolshevik armies in Belarus. The last-minute reinforcements by Bolshevik commander Mikhail Tukhachevsky turned the tide of the war, forcing the Poles and Ukrainians to abandon Kyiv and retreat west. The Red Army drove west into the territory of Poland. The Bolsheviks hoped to use Poland as the springboard for exporting the revolution west, into the heart of Europe. The Red Army stormed west through Poland, approaching Warsaw by August. However, in their haste, the Bolsheviks neglected their flanks, leaving them dangerously exposed to a counterattack. Pilsudski planned this counterattack at the gates of Warsaw.

On August 16th, the Poles counterattacked, and the results were dramatic. The momentum of the Red Army was shattered, and the Bolsheviks were sent reeling backwards. This decisive battle turned the tide of the war. In subsequent historiography, the Battle of Warsaw in 1920 is called the "Miracle on the Vistula." Pilsudski immediately capitalized on his success, driving the Bolsheviks from Polish soil. Through August and September, the front was back at the starting lines of April. With no effective resistance in front of him, Pilsudski was ready to recapture Ukraine and Belarus over the fall and winter. A no lesser authority than Lenin himself admitted later that there were little in the way of halting Pilsudski from marching on Moscow and present peace terms at the point of his saber. However, this when the unexpected happened, or rather perhaps, the highly calculated. On October 18th, a ceasefire was announced between

the belligerents (Davies, 1972). In subsequent peace negotiations, Poland agreed to recognize the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet Republics. In exchange the Bolsheviks confirmed significant portions of modern western Ukraine and Belarus as Polish. Ukraine and Belarus entered into union with Soviet Russia in 1922, creating the Soviet Union. This left the eastern half of the Intermarium firmly within the Russian sphere, and forever ended Polish designs for an Intermarium union (Wandycz, 1969).

The narrative I have presented here is from the perspective of Pilsudski. Theoretically, Pilsudski acted in a way that neorealists would expect. He had correctly identified the greatest threat to Polish security and set about ensuring Poland's security by defeating the Red Army and establishing the Intermarium Union by way of the bayonet. Since Pilsudski was head of state and supreme commander, he assumed that his countrymen would obey his commands and fulfil his designs. But Pilsudski's authority was not absolute, and many of his countrymen did not share his vision. Chief among Pilsudski's opponents were, of course, Dmowski and the Endecja. In the moment of political weakness before the Battle of Warsaw, the Endecja seized upon the opportunity to subvert the Marshal's designs and achieve their own political goals. So let us rewind the clock back to the beginning of the war and examine how the Endecja won the Polish-Soviet War, not on the battlefield, but in the cabinet room and the conference chamber.

3.5 The Peace of Riga

This section concerns the domestic factors of the Polish state during the Polish-Soviet War. Poland was ruled by a divided executive and a chaotic legislature where factionalism reigned supreme. In other words, Poland had low elite cohesion. Therefore, the foreign policy executive played a huge role in how Poland would capitalize on the victory in the war with the Bolsheviks. While I have presented Pilsudski as the autocrat of Poland, he was in fact politically weak. Since his split from the Polish Socialist Party over a decade earlier, Pilsudski was essentially a nonpartisan. Save for personal associations and informal agreements between various political leaders, Pilsudski had no political base to speak of. He had no ideology save for Polish patriotism (Lenkiewicz, 2002). Pilsudski's base was by the time of him assuming power, his legionary brigades. The apple of his eye remained the Polish army, which he saw as an extension of himself. In turn, his soldiers were fiercely devoted to their "Commander" as they called him. However, for all the mutual affection between Pilsudski and his men, the Marshal was a notoriously difficult man to deal with. Owing to his prewar work as a revolutionary, he was conspiratorial and secretive (Davies, 1972). He was a man who held his cards firmly close to his chest. While intelligent and eloquent in writing, he was laconic to a point many perceived

as rudeness. He inspired admiration and revulsion in equal measure. While formally the Polish head of state, it was the post of commander-in-chief that was his main priority to the neglect of everything political. His big picture analysis of Poland's situation was starkly clear and concise. He maintained that Poland must be great or be nothing (Ištók, et al, 2021). He surmised that if Poland could not achieve an appropriate level of power in relation to its rivals, then the country was doomed to be destroyed. In essence, Pilsudski's thoughts were that of a realist. His federalist hopes to create an Intermarium Alliance was the solution to Poland's inherent geographical problems. It was this single-minded goal that drove him, but it also blinded him.

To understand how the Treaty of Riga came to be, we must understand the governing coalition of Poland at that time. By early April 1920, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, the composer turned prime minister, was no longer in office. Dmowski himself held no official position in the government at the time, taking a seat in the Sejm. However, as leader of *Endecja*, Dmowski held considerable influence over Polish politics. A cursory overview of the Polish political scene is necessary for understanding the following events. Reflecting the geographic and political divisions of Poland in the 19th century, Polish post-independence politics was extremely fractional. A bewildering array of political parties were formed from various disparate groups across Poland. In the election to the Sejm in July 1922, eighteen different political parties gained seats. A full overview of these parties is both beyond the scope of this thesis and completely unnecessary for this analysis. At any rate, the extreme factionalism of Polish politics in this era serves to highlight the difficulties of managing internal affairs, especially for a relatively disinterested party like Pilsudski. For the sake of simplicity, one can group Polish political parties into four broad categories: right, center-right, center-left and left. The right was exemplified by Dmowski's *Endecja* and promoted Polish ethno-nationalism and Catholic supremacy. The center-right was exemplified by the *Piast* faction of the Polish People's Party (henceforth *Piast*). Taking their name from the first Polish dynasty of kings, the *Piasts* were social conservatives and agrarians, promoting the interests of landowners. The center-left was exemplified by the *Wyzwolenie* faction of the Polish People's Party (henceforth *Wyzwolenie*). Roughly translated as "emancipation" the *Wyzwolenie* was agrarian like their former *Piast* comrades but championed the interests of the poor peasants. Finally, the left was exemplified by Pilsudski's former party the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Traditionally Marxist, the PPS championed the industrial workers of Poland. As Pilsudski's singular obsession was defending his country at all costs, he more or less fluidly associated with most parties as long as it suited him. This was with one major exception. Pilsudski and *Endecja* would never cooperate as

Dmowski, and his comrades were explicitly, and actively, working against Pilsudski's Intermarium project (Wandycz, 1969).

Paderewski was succeeded as prime minister by Leopold Skulski, a Piast, in November 1919. Skulski and Pilsudski were close associates and the prime minister worked closely with the Marshal to realize his military campaign. Skulski's political position mattered only as much as his alignment with Pilsudski. While Skulski was prime minister and he remained in alignment with Pilsudski, the latter was politically secure. As stated above, April 1920 saw the kickoff for the Ukrainian offensive, bringing the Polish-Ukrainian army within a hair's breadth of a quick victory. As the Pilsudski's military fortunes turned in June, so did his political fortune. As Polish forces retreated, Skulski was forced to resign as prime minister. A new cabinet was formed by Dmowski associate and Endecja member Wladyslaw Grabski. Grabski's only serious achievement was to ensure an agreement for more aid by the Western Allies. Grabski's cabinet did not last, however, and as the Polish army was pushed back towards Warsaw, he was forced to resign after barely a month in office. Late July 1920 saw two major developments on the Polish political scene. The first was the formation of a new government by Piast politician Wincenty Witos. The second was the formation of the Council of National Defense. Chaired by Pilsudski, the Council was an extraordinary measure intended to make decisions more expediently than the Sejm in the critical summer of 1920. The Defense Council included prime minister Witos, the Marshal of the Sejm (president of the assembly), and the leaders of the political parties, including Dmowski. The Council was given extraordinary legislative power, and its decisions were implemented with immediate effect. The Council would end up becoming another highlighter of Pilsudski's lack of political power at the time (Davies, 1972).

Pilsudski insisted on continuing the war and not seek a negotiated peace before conditions were favorable for Poland. However, as the war turned increasingly against Poland in July and August, a majority of the Council vote in favor of seeking a negotiated peace. As Pilsudski's political star fell, questions were raised on his competence as head of state and commander-in-chief. The Marshal received scathing criticism from both Witos and Dmowski, leading to a fateful confrontation in the Council. Pilsudski, knowing his indispensability at this critical hour, called for the Council to rule on his fitness for command. The majority of the Council quickly backed down, leading to Dmowski resigning from the Council all together. This victory did not stop the Council from sending peace negotiators to Tukhachevsky's headquarters in Minsk in August (Dabrowski, 1960). The Polish delegation received harsh demands from the Bolsheviks. The Polish eastern frontier was to be set at the Curzon Line, the Polish military was to be

reduced to 50.000 personnel, and worker's militias were to be formed to ensure the compliance and respect for workers' rights by the Polish government. In essence, Poland would become little more than another Soviet Republic attached to Moscow (Wandycz, 1981). The Polish delegation was naturally unable to acquiesce to these demands without consultation with their government, which proved impossible as the Poles were treated as virtual prisoners by the Bolsheviks in Minsk. However, events came ahead of the negotiations with Pilsudski's spectacular victory in front of Warsaw. At one stroke, the Bolsheviks could no longer make demands from a position of strength. Negotiations were broken off altogether as the Polish counteroffensive neared Minsk in September. An agreement was made to continue negotiations elsewhere. The Republic of Latvia offered to host Polish-Soviet negotiations in Riga. Both sides reconvened there in late September.

This is the moment where everything hung in the balance. As Pilsudski's political power was directly relational to his military successes, his counteroffensive was a significant threat to Dmowski's vision for Poland. Remember, the Endecja wanted a homogenous Poland, and only wanted to incorporate those parts of the eastern borderlands that were possible to polonize. Pilsudski stood on the precipice of presenting everyone a fait accompli. By continuing the offensive into winter, Pilsudski had the chance to throw the Bolsheviks out of the Intermarium. He could then force Moscow to concede to a free Ukraine and Belarus, aligned with Poland, as well as forcing his own politicians to go along with his designs (Davies, 1972). A victory of such magnitude would furthermore make Pilsudski's political position unassailable. The primary objective now for the Endecja was to stop the war before it was too late. The Bolshevik precondition for further negotiations was an immediate ceasefire. With Polish forces back on the Dmowski Line by October, this preliminary armistice came into effect. Pilsudski protested in the strongest possible terms that halting the offensive at that point was the wrong decision. He was, however, outvoted in the Defense Council. Forced to concede, Pilsudski reluctantly stayed his hand as the armistice came into effect. The Endecja had effectively seized control over the foreign policy executive as they were able to negotiate with the Bolsheviks and force Pilsudski to accept their conditions. Now, in all fairness, there were other compelling reasons for seeking peace at this point. The first and major reason was the obvious fact that the whole Intermarium had been at constant war for six years. Entire regions were depopulated, fields lay burnt or fallow, and industry was in ruins. Poland, indeed, all Russia, Ukraine and Belarus desperately needed peace. While the Red Army was thrown back in disarray, it was not

destroyed. Only the momentum of Pilsudski's counteroffensive kept the Bolsheviks off balance. There was no telling how much steam was left in the Polish advance (Davies, 1972).

As mentioned above, the Bolshevik preliminary for negotiations was an immediate ceasefire. The Poles were happy to oblige. This is an appropriate time to introduce the relevant players in the negotiations, their political allegiance and their goals. First, I will introduce the chief negotiators of both sides and then I will follow up by introducing the leading members of the Polish delegation and how they influenced the course of events. The leader of the delegations were Jan Dabski and Adolph Joffe from the Poland and Soviet Russia, respectively. Dabski was undersecretary of foreign affairs while Joffe was a member of the Politburo. Within the large Polish delegation there are two more members that are relevant. These members were Stanislaw Grabski (brother of former prime minister Wladyslaw), and Leon Wasilewski. Grabski, like his brother, was a member of Endecja. He was a staunch Polish nationalist and a loyal supporter of Dmowski. Wasilewski was on the other hand a Pilsudski supporter. Wasilewski supported the Marshal's federalist vision for Intermarium, while Grabski favored Dmowski's national state solution. Dabski, the head of the Polish delegation, was increasingly in favor of the Endecja solution for future Polish borders (Wandycz, 1969b).

As the respective delegations reconvened in Riga, Joffe maintained the Bolsheviks harsh demands for a Polish frontier on the Curzon line. Military realities made this demand increasingly ridiculous, so Joffe was forced to change his stance. Crucially, Joffe insisted on excluding Petliura, and his Ukrainian Directorate, from the negotiations. The negotiations were to be made exclusively between Soviet Russia and Poland. On the settlement of the borders, Joffe tried to strike a hard bargain along the Ukrainian border. Dabski successfully insisted on keeping the frontier along the same line as Pilsudski negotiated with Petliura. Galicia would remain Polish. Further north, in Belarus, Joffe was also willing to concede considerable ground, including Minsk, to the Poles. Here, Dabski was influenced by Grabski that including Minsk into the Polish state would increase the Belarus minority to an intolerable level. The Endecja feared the Minsk could be a center for Belarusian nationalist movements in Poland. Wasilewski and his associates, including Dabski's secretary, pushed for an independent Belarus aligned with Poland. However, the Endecja members of the delegation successfully impressed upon Dabski that true Belarusian sovereignty could become a long-term threat to Polish territorial integrity. It was assumed that a Belarus state would have irredentist designs on the Belarusian regions in Poland. Pilsudski wished for a Belarus state in close union with Poland. The

compromise solution was for Poland to recognize the Ukrainian and Belarusian Soviet Republics (Wandycz, 1969b).

In principle, recognition of these countries' independence was in keeping with Pilsudski's vision. It was a twisted image of free Intermarium, however, as recognizing the Soviet Republics would inevitably turn them into appendages of Soviet Russia. While the Bolsheviks were willing to sacrifice Belarus, they were under no circumstances to concede Ukraine without a fight. On the question of Ukraine, a somewhat perfect confluence of developments proved to turn Pilsudski's vision to ashes. In the West, Britain and France had changed their stance on Soviet Russia. The Entente support of the White Armies dried up and the allies started to divest themselves from Russia altogether. The British were anxious to settle the territorial questions on the continent in order to reintegrate Germany into the international economy. The French were angling for a reestablishment of the prewar Franco-Russian alliance. As the Russian Civil War turned increasingly in the favor of the Bolsheviks, the French made their peace with this outcome and started establishing relations with Soviet Russia. The continuing hostilities between Poland and Soviet Russia placed the French in an awkward situation. The official Franco-Polish alliance was an obstacle for further Franco-Soviet relations as long as the former were at war. As such, pressure was mounting from the West for a speedy conclusion of the war. (Wandycz, 1962)

Though media coverage of the negotiations in Riga did not play a meaningful role in the outcome of the negotiations, Western media was generally sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. Bolshevik propaganda emphasized that the war with Poland was a war of peasants and workers against Polish landlords and capitalists. The general opinion was that the Polish demands for the Dmowski line were unjust, in keeping with the post-Great War principles of national sovereignty. The Bolshevik propaganda played a part in the generally unfavorable reputation of Poland during the Interwar period. Joffe skillfully used propaganda to engender sympathy for the Bolshevik plight during the negotiations in Riga (Wandycz, 1969b). Additionally, if Pilsudski and Petliura wanted to liberate Ukraine, the campaign would drag on into the winter of 1920-1921. The prospect of continued warfare after six consecutive years of war was not appetizing to either the Poles or the Bolsheviks. Since the vast majority of Ukraine lay in Bolshevik hands, and the Endecja were generally uninterested in liberating the country, Grabski successfully influenced Dabski to recognize the Ukrainian Soviet government (Dabrowski, 1960).

The abandonment of the Pilsudski-Petliura pact was the final straw that broke the Intermarium project. The remaining preliminary negotiations in Riga more or less finalized the eastern frontier of Poland for the Interwar period. The Soviets would cede additional land north and east of Vilnius, creating a corridor attaching Poland to Latvia. Lithuania was then cut off from Soviet Russia. The shape of Poland would then somewhat resemble that of a funnel. A long border in the east with its northern and southern borders narrowing as they moved westward. If one were to judge the merits of a peace treaty with the equal dissatisfaction of all parties, then the Peace of Riga was an almost perfect peace treaty. Nobody got exactly what they wanted. On the Bolshevik side, the treaty meant that Soviet Russia was permanently cut off from the west. Any chance to export the revolution into the heart of Europe was extinguished at the gates of Warsaw. The Soviets would settle into a period of relative isolation as they crushed the last remnants of resistance to Bolshevik rule in Russia. The Soviet defeat in their war with Poland set the stages for the "Socialism in One Country" policy in the Interwar period (Dabrowski, 1960). To the Poles, the treaty of Riga presented what is in retrospect something of a disaster. Pilsudski's vision of an Intermarium union received an irrecoverable blow. The Marshal's dream of Ukraine and Belarus in union with Poland was forever crushed. To say that Pilsudski was furious would be an understatement. Even for Dmowski and the *Endecja*, the Peace of Riga represented a marred victory. While Poland received most of its projected eastern lands, significant portions of territory marked by the Dmowski line remained beyond Polish control. Plebiscites in Silesia, coinciding with the signing of the Treaty of Riga, in March 1921, also left large parts of that province to the Germans. Demographically, Poland was also far from the homogenous state the *Endecja* wanted. A full third of the population were non-Poles. The largest minority groups were Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanians, Germans and Jews. Religiously, significant parts of the eastern regions were primarily Orthodox, not to mention the large Jewish character of the major Polish cities. The Poland that emerged from the Great War and the Wars for the Borders, was politically fractious, demographically too diverse, and economically ruined. In the words of one French scholar: The Polish Republic was too weak to project power, yet still strong enough for its neighbors to view it as a threat (Wandycz, 1969a).

3.6 Sejmocracy and Sanacja

This section is a summary of Polish domestic and foreign policy during the period 1922-1939. This period can be divided into three periods. The first period is the Sejmocracy. So called because Polish domestic politics was dominated by the fractious national assembly, the Sejm. This period was marked by political and economic chaos with a high rate of governmental

turnover. This period lasted until May 1926 when Pilsudski emerged from retirement to lead a successful coup. This is the second period of Polish Interwar history and lasted from 1926 until Pilsudski's death in 1935. The regime Pilsudski established is called the Sanacja. This authoritarian regime mixed elements of civilian rule and military dictatorship. Domestic unrest subsided in this period as the economy stabilized. With internal politics under his control, Pilsudski was able to pursue his own foreign policy. Unfortunately, the result of the Peace of Riga permanently crippled the Intermarium project. As an alternative, Pilsudski started to pursue a policy of balancing between Germany and the Soviet Union, while improving relations with surrounding lesser powers. The third, and final, period of Polish Interwar history is the Colonels' Regime, which lasted from Pilsudski's death in 1935 until the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 (Kozon, 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, I argue that the best possible opportunity for realizing the Intermarium project. The Treaty of Riga forever closed this window of opportunity for Intermarium. Polish foreign policy for the remainder of the Interwar period was therefore tailored towards carving as much room for maneuver as this difficult position would allow. The domestic incoherence that had torpedoed the Intermarium project during the Polish-Soviet War was largely worked out as Pilsudski gained absolute control over the foreign policy. However, with the Interwar European order solidifying, Poland was no longer in a position to realize Intermarium (Cienciala, 2011).

3.6.1 *Sejmocracy*

Following the end of the Polish-Soviet War, the provisional Sejm approved the new constitution on March 17th, 1921. The constitution codified the supremacy of the Sejm, with a weak executive government. This proviso was partially the result of Endecja influence as they feared Pilsudski would run for president. The most glaring restriction on the presidency was that the president was not allowed to act as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Rothschild argues that these provisions were made *ad personam* against Pilsudski (Rothschild, 1963). At any rate, Pilsudski did not stand for the presidency and briefly held the post of Inspector General of the army before retiring in 1922. Pilsudski endorsed his close friend and associate Gabriel Narutowicz, who promptly won the presidency in December 1921. Narutowicz was subsequently assassinated by an Endecja radical a mere five days later. The Endecja had worked hard to make it impossible for Pilsudski to exercise power. Ironically, they too made it impossible for themselves to exercise power within the parliamentary system they created. In the parliamentary elections in July 1922, a total of eighteen different parties gained seats. With no single bloc majority, cabinet overturns and reshufflings were frequent. Cabinets in this

period would be largely made up of center-right coalitions dominated by the Piasts and the Endecja. From November 1918 to May 1926, Poland had a total of fourteen different governments (Rothschild, 1963). Elite cohesion remained low in democratic Poland. Because of the primacy of the Sejm over government, this period is known as the Sejmocracy (Kozon, 2015).

This unstable regime was laden with the singularly difficult task of rebuilding a ruined nation. Various interventions were made to rectify the national issues. A national bank was founded and a new national currency, the zloty, was implemented to deal with hyperinflation. However, parliamentary control was undermined by party politics. Due to the fractious nature of the Sejm, party leaders exercised significant control over cabinet members. Dmowski, in this period, held far more power than his position would intend. He never held a parliamentary seat and served only briefly as foreign minister in the cabinet of Wincenty Witos for a month in 1923. However, as head of the Endecja he held sway over all party policies, as he had done previously. While large scale corruption was not widespread within the Sejm, the constant governmental turnovers and continued economic malaise did not engender much faith in the parliamentary system among the public. With Polish universities producing a new, dynamic generation of administrators and bureaucrats, the political lethargy became increasingly intolerable (Rothschild, 1963). 1926 opened with a significant crash of the Polish zloty, resulting in skyrocketing unemployment and radicalizing the left towards decisive action against the center-right government.

On the issue of the armed forces, Pilsudski kept a keener eye from retirement. Throughout the Sejmocracy, Pilsudski was a vocal critic of the army being subordinated civilian control. He reasoned that given Poland's precarious strategic position that the army required a large amount of autonomy to quickly react against foreign threats. The political instability of parliamentary rule made this provision doubly important according to Pilsudski (Rothschild, 1962). The minister of war was invested with significant command authority in the event of war. The question of who were to be invested with supreme command in the event of war, either the civilian minister of war or the chief of the general staff was still an unsolved question in 1926. This confluence of economic crisis and political-military conflict brought a broad coalition of leftists, centrists, and militarists to side with Pilsudski on ousting the government by coup d'état. In May 1926, Pilsudski took control over the Polish state and initiated a new, authoritarian regime (Davies, 1981).

3.6.2 *Sanacja*

Pilsudski's rule took the shape of a hybrid regime mixing civilian rule with military supremacy. Pilsudski regained his former position as head of the army and instituted a puppet civilian government. This new regime is called the *Sanacja*, meaning "national healing." Political parties were either banned or forced to enter into a governmental support bloc to create a veneer of parliamentary rule over Poland. The *Endecja* were effectively broken as a political force following the May Coup and Pilsudski gained supremacy over the state. As de facto dictator, Pilsudski left most administrative affairs to the civilian government and concentrated on military and foreign affairs. This marks the point in Polish history where elite cohesion was finally achieved, if only by one party eliminating all of its opponents. Pilsudski, with the foreign policy executive firmly in his hands, set about safeguarding Poland's international position. His policy, and that of his successors, were to balance Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, maintain the alliance with Western powers, particularly France, to deter aggression, and build relations with Poland's neighbors. Kozon argues that Pilsudski and the *Sanacja* led a largely successful foreign policy given the difficulties of Poland's Interwar situation (Kozon, 2015). In response to increasing Western flipflopping regarding German rearmament, Poland assumed an increasingly independent stance in order to safeguard its own interests. Pilsudski sought to extract guarantees and rapprochement with the Germans. As such, Poland was willing to act increasingly independent from France (Wandycz, 1988).

The new, stable leadership in Poland was able to establish workable relations with Germany and the Soviet Union. By 1932, Poland and the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact. A similar pact was concluded between Poland and Germany in 1934 (Kozon, 2015). These pacts marked a hoped-for normalization for relations between the Poles and their neighbors. However, the pacts would ultimately not prevent the attack on Poland in 1939. Polish diplomacy in the Interwar period also failed to normalize relationships with Poland's southern and northern neighbors, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania. The longstanding territorial disputes between Poland and these two countries soured relations and prevent cooperation. During the Sudeten Crisis in 1938-1939, Poland did not attempt to aid Czechoslovakia, but capitalized on Czech weakness to annex the disputed territory of Teschen (Cienciala, 2011). Ultimately, Poland's Interwar foreign policy failed. While the *Sanacja* was able to wage an effective foreign policy, Poland's strategic weakness left a very small margin of error. Polish foreign policy was unable to prevent German and Soviet collusion because Poland did not have sufficient power to present a credible deterrent against attack.

4. Discussion

The continuing strength of the realist tradition is its continued accuracy of result. The overarching principles of international anarchy, self-help and statism are solid foundations that explain why the international system functions the way it does. However, as sound as the theoretical foundations are, the neorealist argument that domestic conditions have no impact on a state's actions in the international space simply does not hold. The neoclassical realist theory therefore does not try to explain away the deficiencies of the realist theory, but rather tries to systematize these apparent deficiencies into a coherent theoretical framework. Within a state, knowing who holds power over the foreign policy, and what their agenda is, is crucial for understanding why nations can make potentially disastrous mistakes. With that being said, during most of the Interwar period, Poland was forced to rely on other nations in order to ensure its security. This policy directly led to the greatest disaster in Polish history. Polish culture and society were almost driven to extinction and when the dust settled, Poland was forced to accept the overlordship of a foreign, ideologically hostile power.

The federalist policy of Intermarium presented an alternative route that could have drastically weakened the Soviet Union and possibly deter Germany from ever attempting to infringe on Polish sovereignty. The truth is that we can never be certain of the actual ramifications of a successful Intermarium policy. What we can be certain of is that the pursuit of the Intermarium policy is consistent with the realist theory. Furthermore, the states of the Intermarium coming together to protect their own sovereignty from outside powers has historical precedent. In fact, if we remove all context and reduce the political situation of the Intermarium to its barest elements, that is several lesser states being threatened by two greater states, it is intuitive to think that the lesser states will come together as a matter of course. The cooperation between Pilsudski and Petliura is evidence that such a constellation was, in fact, possible (Davies, 1975). The neorealist theory does not explain why Intermarium failed, so we must apply the neoclassical realist theory instead. I will discuss why Intermarium failed by applying the three main principles of neoclassical realism: elite cohesion, foreign policy executive, and perception.

Firstly, we must address the matter of elite cohesion. When Poland finally obtained its independence in November 1918, Pilsudski was appointed provisional head of state. Pilsudski represented the federalist vision of Poland's future. He envisioned a grand alliance, from sea to shining sea, that could independently protect itself from outside powers. This vision emphasized the common social, political, cultural and historical ties of Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, and other peoples in the Intermarium. Pilsudski's face and name will forever be

associated with this vision. His rival Roman Dmowski and the Endecja envisioned an ethnically homogenous Poland, consistent with the commonly held vision of the nation-state at the time. Dmowski viewed attaching the other peoples of the Intermarium to Poland as a weakness. The Endecja thought that the heterogeneity of the pre-partition Polish society as the root cause of its downfall (Davies, 1981). These two visions were necessarily incompatible. This incompatibility among the leading elements of the Polish state was detrimental to how the foreign policy was handled. The result of incompatibility must be struggle.

The Achilles heel of the Intermarium vision was that it did not have a unified political faction that could pursue it. Pilsudski was the obvious leader of this possible faction. However, Pilsudski was many things, but he was never a politician. Pilsudski was above everything a soldier. In some ways he represents the actions of a realist theoretician. Once in charge, he pursued foreign policy as he saw fit. He did not adequately consider that his domestic enemies could sabotage him. He did not organize a political faction around himself that could work towards realizing his vision of Intermarium until it was too late. In short, the Intermarium vision had a leader, but it did not have a unified party. As far as Pilsudski was concerned, all Poland was the Intermarium party. In contrast, Dmowski and the Endecja was such a unified faction that actively pursued its goal of a homogenous Poland. Consistently, from 1918 to 1922, the Endecja were above everything concerned with achieving the Dmowski line and prevent the Intermarium vision to become reality. The Endecja had therefore both the political structure to achieve their goals as well as a defined leader. However, as outlined in the analysis above, the power of the Endecja was far from monolithic. The emergence of the myriad political parties in Poland after independence, each with their own narrow interests, sapped the early state apparatus of efficiency. As argued by Lobell, elite consensus on foreign policy will lead to more timely reaction to threats and thus an appropriate level of balancing (Lobell, et al, 2009). The Endecja had not only to sideline Pilsudski, but also deal with the other parties who had their own divergent interests. The ability of the Endecja to partially achieve their goals was their control over the negotiations in Riga. This segues us to the next component of the neoclassical realist theory, the foreign policy executive.

Foreign policy is merely an academic term if it is not able to be executed. Once state elites agree on a direction of foreign policy it is the duty of the state apparatus to execute the policy. This apparatus is the colloquial foreign policy executive. Theoretically, this is the domain of the foreign ministry, but this category includes those representatives whose duty it is to carry out the minutia of foreign policy on the ground. The negotiation of the Treaty of Riga is a perfect

example to illustrate the importance of the foreign policy executive. As Polish fortunes looked dim in the summer of 1920, the Endecja was able to wrestle control over the negotiations with the Bolsheviks from Pilsudski. The Polish delegation initially sent to Minsk was headed by Stanislaw Grabski, an Endecja member. Following the dramatic reversal of the Battle of Warsaw, negotiations moved to Riga and Grabski remained in control of negotiations. Pilsudski, still formally head of state and the actual commander of the army, was prevented from participating actively in the negotiations. Similarly, his associates who shared his federalist aspirations were sidelined as negotiations turned into direct person to person discussions between Grabski and Joffe. Any attempts by Polish delegation members to broach the federalist designs was clamped down upon by Grabski. The Poles was even offered Minsk, the Belarusian capital, but Grabski refused because Endecja did not want a larger Belarusian minority in Poland. The resulting peace treaty achieved the goals of the Endecja. Poland received as much of the eastern borderlands as the Endecja desired, and the federalist aspirations were scuttled permanently (Wandycz, 1969a). The takeaway here is the importance of controlling how foreign policy is conducted in practice. By controlling the peace negotiations, the Endecja were able to achieve their goals, independent of Pilsudski's. In turn, the Endecja set the course of Polish foreign policy for the remainder of the Interwar period. This course would ultimately lead to Poland's near destruction. The question then remains, why? Why did the Endecja set this course. What was their rationale? This leads us to the final leg of this discussion: perceptions.

Neorealism proports to transcend ideology. Neorealism is the analysis of hard factors. As such, soft factors, like ideological concerns, have no place in the neorealist analysis. However, the flip side of this argument is that neorealism cannot account for ideological concerns, but neoclassical realism can. In the case of Poland, ideological concerns, those of political perceptions, are paramount for understanding the failure of Intermarium. The Endecja vision of Poland was one of homogeneity. The Endecja desired that Polish language and cultur would be supreme in Poland. The Republic's substantial minorities were to be assimilated into the Polish majority. The federalist designs of Poland in close union with a Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian state was, as mentioned above, necessarily incompatible with the Endecja designs (Groth, 1969). Furthermore, the Endecja and the federalists had sharply different perceptions of who was Poland's primary enemy. Pilsudski and the federalists were wholeheartedly opposed to Russia. Russia's imperial control over the Intermarium meant that Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Balts, could never be free. To stem the tide of Great Russian

chauvinism the peoples of the Intermarium had to come together. The Endecja did not have the same apprehensions over Russia as the federalists. The Endecja had participated in the Russian State Duma before the Great War and were confident that Poland the new Russian Bolshevik regime could come to a permanent understanding (Wandycz, 1969b). The Endecja were more apprehensive over Germany because of the significant portions of former German territory ceded to Poland following the Great War. The Endecja distrust over Pilsudski and his associates was further fueled by the Marshal's war record of fighting on the side of the Central Powers. Pilsudski's past was further used to discredit him in the face of the Western Allies. The long-term strategy of the Endecja was that Poland would cooperate with the western allies in order to contain Germany. Poland was therefore one of the primary advocates for retaining the Versailles Treaty's restrictions on Germany (Wandycz, 1962).

At the time, aligning with the western allies and endorsing European cooperation made perfect sense. However, the Versailles framework was eventually abandoned by France and Britain, who sought rapprochement with Germany to the detriment of their eastern allies. Seeking alliances is only rational, but completely depending on them is a mistake. And nailing the colors to the mast of France during the Interwar period, is positively disastrous. Germany would spend this entire period chipping away at the Versailles framework (Carr, 1951). France was Poland's most important ally on the continent to contain Germany. However, France was embroiled in significant political unrest throughout the period. The 1926 Locarno treaties secured for France guarantees for the Franco-German frontier. In exchange for Germany recognizing its western frontiers, Germany was not required to recognize its eastern frontier. The behavior of Poland's western allies throughout the Interwar period goes a long way for explaining Polish policy (Wandycz, 1988). Consistently, Poland's interests were either not accounted for or completely disregarded. This treatment of Poland by the Western Allies left the Poles with the impression that they could not rely on their allies. The response by Pilsudski and his associates was to lead a foreign policy independent of, and sometimes in contradiction to, the Western Allies. Pilsudski's original federalist goals of achieving an Intermarium alliance with Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine is the first example of this policy direction. When Pilsudski's opponents, chiefly Dmowski and the Endecja, foiled Pilsudski's plans, the Marshal would not make the same mistake twice. It is evident that the political power of the Polish right during the height of the war in 1920, deprived Pilsudski of control over the foreign policy. Endecja members led negotiations with the Bolsheviks at Riga. Pilsudski had no say in the negotiations. Endecja control over the foreign policy executive led to the failure of the Intermarium project.

Furthermore, the Polish right took control over the drafting of the constitution. Fearing that Pilsudski could remain in power (which he did not desire), the *Endecja* ensured that the presidency was a weak office, separate from the Marshal's beloved army. The result was Pilsudski's temporary retirement and the initiation of the *Sejmocracy* (Rothschild, 1962).

When Pilsudski returned to power in 1926, he ensured that the conditions that led to the Treaty of Riga were removed. Pilsudski took personal charge of Poland's foreign policy. After the Marshal's death, the foreign policy executive was firmly controlled by Pilsudski's protégé, Józef Beck. Beck had influenced Pilsudski's aggressive foreign policy approach and continued in this direction after the Marshal's death (Cienciala, 2011). The foreign policy of the *Sanacja* benefitted from clear elite cohesion and strong control over the foreign policy executive. The *Sanacja*'s foreign policy throughout the time of the regime successfully maintained Polish interests. In the long run however, Polish foreign policy would come to naught as the Second Republic was destroyed in 1939 (Sakwa, 1973). The question of whether or not a policy is successful depends on the end result. By that metric, Polish foreign policy in the Interwar period was a disastrous failure. However, the Second Republic's destiny was not entirely its own to shape. Given Poland's conditions, being surrounded by hostile states, it had to depend on aid from the West to maintain the balance of power. But Poland could not subordinate itself to western demands at the expense of its own interests. During the negotiations in Versailles in 1919, and the fateful summer of 1920, the West consistently opposed Poland's eastern policies. Later, during the mid- to late 1920s and 1930s, France took a defensive stance in relation to Germany and Britain sought to divest itself from continental affairs (Wandycz, 1988) (Wandycz, 1981). Pilsudski's goals of achieving some sort of *Intermarium* alliance must be viewed in this context. It is therefore important to point out the obvious shortcomings of Polish policy and leadership.

First, we must discuss the Polish territorial disputes with its Czech and Lithuanian neighbors. Polish occupation of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius soured relations between the two states permanently. During the wars for the borders 1919-1921, Lithuania aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks in order to recover their territory from the Poles (Wandycz, 1969b). Poland would not let go of Vilnius until Lithuania agreed to a federal union with Poland. The inconsistency of Polish ethnic policies in the Interwar period made this solution unfavorable to the Lithuanians (Bernhard, 1998). As Lithuania was an integral part of the *Intermarium* project, Polish policy regarding Lithuania must be considered a failure. The Czech occupation of the primarily Polish region of Teschen also became a sore point between the two states. However,

Teschen was not the only deal breaker for cooperation between the two states. Polish and Czech foreign policy diverged sharply on the issue of Russia. Czechia as one of the origin points of pan-Slavism had a favorable attitude towards the Soviet Union. Poland, whose recent history was (and is) marked by Russian subjugation and oppression, did not (Wandycz, 1962). The Czechs even halted western shipments of arms to Poland during the crucial summer of 1920 (Davies, 1972). When the Munich Diktat was handed to the Czechs and the rump state occupied, the Poles seized the opportunity to occupy Teschen. The Poles left the Czechs to their fate, a fate that the Poles would join in in due time. The lack of understanding between Poland and Czechoslovakia during the Interwar must be considered a failing on both parts. The disunity between Poland and several of its neighbors gave Germany and the Soviet Union the opportunity to pick them apart one at the time.

Polish leadership throughout this period was, furthermore, far from perfect. Józef Pilsudski, and his leadership, feature prominently in this thesis. It is fair to say that he was the most influential Pole in the Interwar period, and perhaps the most influential Polish statesman of the 20th century. Militarily, the Marshal was a brilliant leader. He successfully led his forces to victory against the Bolsheviks and stood poised to realize his goals as the autumn of 1920 approached. However, his aptitude on the battlefield did not translate to proficiency in the field of politics. Since leaving the Polish Socialist Party, Pilsudski was essentially nonpartisan. He identified himself as a Polish patriot and a soldier. The Marshal had little concern, understanding or patience for politics. Not until the coup of 1926 would he lend his personal gravitas to any political movement (Groth, 1969). As such, he was outmaneuvered by his political opponents. When handed the reins of state in 1918, Pilsudski did not take the opportunity to build a political base or align himself officially with any political movement. Consequently, the federalists had no central organ to organize themselves through. The result was the ideological supremacy of the Endecja and their nationalist vision of Poland.

5. Conclusion

So, why did Intermarium fail, and, more importantly, what can we learn from its failure? Intermarium failed because of poor Polish elite cohesion. While presenting the logical approach for Polish foreign policy, Intermarium presented a threat to the nationalist vision of the Endecja. The Endecja thus seized control over the foreign policy executive, and brought an end to the Intermarium project before it could be realized. This case shows the practical limitations of neorealism. While neorealism provides an excellent systemic framework for understanding the logic of international relations, it cannot explain why states might sabotage their own foreign policy from within. While it is of course impossible to generalize theory based on a single case, this study provides some interesting starting points from which further studies may be conducted. First of all, the neorealists purports that states form their foreign policy response solely on systemic stimuli. Second of all, this assumption is predilected on state actors acting unitary. This ignores the internal cohesion of government, or ideological concerns that may motivate them.

In the Polish case, one faction within the government, led by Pilsudski, sought to establish a federation of nations that could withstand the pressure of east and west. Theoretically this is logical and feasible as all newly independent states in the region had a vested interest in collective security. Just as how the Poles and Lithuanians had come together to defeat the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald in 1410, Pilsudski and his men thought that the peoples of Eastern Europe would come together to defeat the power of Germanic and Russian imperialism in 1920. However, this was not the 15th century, this was the 20th century, and Pilsudski, unlike Jagiello, did not enjoy the full support of his countrymen. Important ideational factors need to be considered to understand the failure of Pilsudski's initiative. For while Pilsudski represented the old Polish gentry that looked back at the Commonwealth as the heyday of the Polish nation, Dmowski and the Endecja looked ahead to a Polish nation-state of the future. To them, including the many peoples of Intermarium into a union with Poland was folly. According to the Endecja, the presence of large non-Polish peoples in the Commonwealth was what caused the destruction of the Polish state (Davies, 1981). Therefore, the Endecja sought to create a homogenous Polish state on the model of the nation-states of Western Europe. The non-Poles within its territory was to be assimilated and Polonized. The future of Poland, according to Dmowski, was a united, homogenous state where the only language was Polish, and the only religion was Catholicism. It was in the towards this goal that the Endecja worked tirelessly.

Pilsudski's vision of a united Intermarium was based on ideational and practical concerns. The Intermarium project, as argued in this thesis, was the vision of Poland more in keeping from what one would expect based on the neorealist theory. A constellation of nations in union with Poland would provide the best possible security for not only the Polish state, but also those of its union partners. The reason Intermarium failed was not the infeasibility of its cause, but the machinations of its enemies. While the theoretically optimal course of policy for Poland's future security, Intermarium represented a threat to the Endecja vision of Poland. The Endecja achieved their goals by seizing control of the foreign policy at the crucial moment. In the summer of 1920, Pilsudski and the federalists were politically weak as the Red Army marched on Warsaw. The Endecja gained effective control over the National Security Council, which held effective executive power at the time (Davies, 1971). It was the initiative of the Endecja to send peace negotiators to the Bolsheviks. When Pilsudski turned the tables at the Battle of Warsaw, the Endecja position was still powerful enough to continue negotiations. When the Polish Army approached the frontier, the Endecja moved quickly to broker a ceasefire, pending a final peace treaty. The Polish Army was poised to advance further into Ukraine and Belarus, but the ceasefire prevented this from happening. During the peace negotiations at Riga, the Endecja maintained control and marginalized the federalists. Pilsudski, though still officially head of state, was prevented from participating in the negotiations (Wandycz, 1969b). In the resulting peace treaty, Polish negotiators secured most of the land that the Endecja desired. The Soviet Governments of Ukraine and Belarus were recognized by the Poles. In so doing, the Endecja permanently torpedoed the envisioned Intermarium federation of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine.

There are two important lessons to be learned from this case. The first lesson is how ideological concerns affects foreign policy. Polish independence was achieved in the golden age of nationalism. During the Great War, powerful nation-states had defeated the autocratic, multinational empires. The Treaty of Versailles was intended to provide every nation with a state. The new world order was to be dominated by treaties and agreements. War and coercion were to be dispensed with in favor of diplomacy. In this context, every state was to fit in a sort of family of nations where every people were to be free. The Endecja believed in this future world order. Pilsudski, and the federalists, did not (Biskupski, 2018). Pilsudski believed that Poland had to create its own security. That is why the Poles embarked on expansion in the years 1919-1921. This Polish expansion, to achieve Intermarium, was lambasted by Western observers as aggressive and lawless. Poland, under Pilsudski, was perceived to be a rogue state

that threatened the fragile peace in Europe. British and French policymakers consistently tried to get the Poles to settle for the Curzon line as the eastern frontier of the Polish state. It is important to point out that given this context, the actions of the Endecja were perfectly rational. The Endecja capitalized on Polish military success to bring a swift end to the conflict and secure the Polish eastern frontier roughly along the Dmowski line. The Western response to the Treaty of Riga was, generally, that the Poles had received far more than they deserved (Wandycz, 1969b). This reflected not only the general lack of understanding by Westerners of Eastern European conditions, but also the general sentiment, at the time, of bringing peace to Europe along national and ethnic lines. In the ideological battle, it was the nationalist vision of Dmowski that prevailed over the federalist vision of Pilsudski.

The second important lesson to be learned from this case is how the elite cohesion affects foreign policy. In the first years of Polish independence, 1918-1926, the executive was divided, and the legislature was chaotic. Polish internal politics were sharply divided along those factions advocating the nationalist vision or the federalist vision for the Polish state, as well as the myriad venal interests of peasants, workers, landowners, and ethnic groups. In this internal struggle, whoever managed to get on top were the ones who could dictate foreign policy. Pilsudski possessed the necessary gravitas to lead but lacked sufficient political acumen to control the state. He had no party allegiance, and consequently no formal political support structure. His only concerns were that of the military. He viewed politics as a nuisance and his position as head of state as a cumbersome burden (Davies, 1972). He merely assumed that his authority was absolute and that his leadership should not be questioned. In short, Pilsudski thought he was the kind of leviathan that neorealists assume the state is, powerful, absolute and of a single mind. But this was not the case. Since he linked his position to that of the military, when the fortunes of war turned against the Poles, Pilsudski's political opponents outmaneuvered him and brought his federalist visions to an end. In the Polish internal political struggle, the Endecja came out on top, took control over the foreign policy executive, and tried to bring about their own vision of Poland's future. Ironically, the Endecja failed in their goals and was unable to take control over Polish politics during the Sejmocracy. In another layer of irony, when Pilsudski returned to power in 1926, he was unable to bring realize the Intermarium project. In 1920, Pilsudski had the opportunity, but not the means. After 1926, he had the means, but not the opportunity.

My concluding remarks are that while neorealism provides a powerful analytical tool for understanding the actions of states in international relations, neoclassical realism fills crucial

gaps in the neorealist analysis. The neorealist dismissal of all internal factors on external policy is simply not applicable in this case. The three factors of elite cohesion, foreign policy executive control, and ideological perceptions, are important for understanding the failure of Poland's Intermarium project. While it is impossible to generalize from this single case study, the neoclassical realist theory fits remarkably well to explain this case. In future research on similar cases of suboptimal pursuit of foreign policy, the neoclassical realist theory can provide an appropriate analytical tool for explaining the failure of foreign policy. In this one case, there is merit for the neoclassical realist's argument that their theory provides a good analytical alternative for cases that the neorealist theory cannot explain. It is important to recognize that internal cohesion of a state, and ideological goals, affects how a state conducts its foreign policy.

6. Literature

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Illustrations:

Figure 1: From the book cover of *Intermarium*, Chodakiewicz (2012)

Figure 2: A neorealist model of foreign policy, from Ripsman's *Neoclassical Realism* (2017)

Figure 4: Intermarium, Green Zero (2019) Wikipedia Commons

Figure 5: Pilsudski's Intermarium, GalaxyMaps, (2020) Wikipedia Commons

Figure 6: Pologne et pays limitrophes Szumański (1919)

Figure 7: Curzon Line, radek.s (2007) Wikipedia Commons

