

Czop - IWP update from 2

who were in charge of the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939). Why, I asked Professor Lenczowski, does today's Polish elite NOT have a contingency plan to defend their country from an invasion coming from the east.

Professor Lenczowski responded that before any country can elaborate a plan for its defense there must be a consensus on what is worth defending. This is why strategy is an afterthought. First there must be a will to sacrifice to defend a nation's core values. Throughout the West there is a cultural civil war under way.

On one side stand those who have become indifferent or hostile to the inherited creeds of our civilization. They hold that each individual must decide for himself what, if any, values are important. In this sense each man becomes his own God in a spiritual vacuum. This leads to relativism and moral confusion, then to a failure of political will. If all values are equivocal because all men are in charge of making their own values, then there is no consensus on what values are worth defending. As a matter of practical politics this means that no values are worth defending, nothing is worth sacrificing for, and therefore there is no common purpose that unites a country. If there is no common purpose, then a country or national community ceases to exist. At this low point questions of national defense are an afterthought. There is no need for a national defense because there is no common good to protect.

Lenczowski then recalled the insight of Livy (Titus Livius, 59 BC-17 AD), who lamented the collapse of the Roman Republic and wrote, during the first years of the Roman Empire, a history of Rome from its origins to his own times, in which he showed the importance of moral virtue as the driving force which underlies a successful republic. On the negative side, Livy taught that the best way to defeat your foe is to spread among your enemy's population love of luxury, selfishness, and hedonism, which attenuate the spirit of willingness to sacrifice to defend common values. Today, in the West, the emphasis on enrichment for the sake of hedonism undermines public virtues because too many are living their material lives for the sake of their personal pleasures. If too many in contemporary Poland accept the worst aspects of today's hedonistic and materialistic Western culture, then, according to Lenczowski this is a form of progressive cultural suicide. Poles will find it impossible to agree on their values and principles. The idea of a common good will vanish and national defense will be irrelevant.

I then asked Professor Lenczowski to describe the other side in the cultural civil war in contemporary Western civilization, but by this time the evening's event was already under way and many guests wanted to talk with Professor Lenczowski. At the cocktail hour and during the delicious buffet many discussed why the Bąk Foundation's fund raiser was not held as planned at the Kościuszko Foundation House.

Mr. Adam M. Bąk, who made the evening possible, delivered a brief and forceful speech calling on us all to do a better job of selling Poland to American public opinion. The Adam M. Bąk Foundation contributed \$100,000 to endow the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies at IWP, and this leadership contribution was praised by THE CHESTERTON REVIEW (published by Seton Hall University) in its Spring 2009 issue.

John Lenczowski then delivered the key note speech of the evening. He began by observing that those at the event believe in values that go beyond the satisfaction of their personal pleasures. Those who so believe are the hope of our Western civilization which is now divided between those who firmly stand for traditional moral and political values versus those who prefer cultural and moral relativism. This is the larger meaning which underlies the presence of Americans of Polish

descent at this fund raiser to help flood victims in the land of their ancestors.

The keynote speaker next observed that the importance of Poland for Western civilization is not taught in American schools. The defense of the values of Western civilization on Europe's Eastern Marches by Poland and the Poles is poorly known by our fellow Americans and this is a cause of sadness for Polish Americans. He underlined Mr. Adam Bąk's exhortation that we must do a better job of selling Poland to the American public.

The way to do this is by emphasizing the common civilizational values to which both Poles and Americans are committed. Thomas Jefferson was keenly aware of these shared republican values based on limited government that bound together Poles and Americans. The American volunteer aviators who fought for Poland in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1920 were also aware of the common values that unite Poles and Americans. We need to revive this perception that Poles and Americans are strongly committed to the core values of Western civilization. This task is particularly urgent today because there are many in Poland, America, and other western countries who are relativizing and minimizing our civilization's key values and principles.

Professor Lenczowski stated that he is optimistic about the future of Poland and the Poles, because over a long period of time Polish culture has developed a strong immune system. The origin of the immune system was the effort to preserve Polish culture from Russification and Germanization when Poland was partitioned and stateless from 1795 to 1918.

The second component of Poland's strength is devotion to the moral and political principles of the constitution of 1505 based on nihil novi, or nothing new without our consent. This is the Polish version of the American principle of no taxation without representation. The abiding Polish suspicion of powerful executive powers unchecked by parliamentary oversight threatened the Communists from 1918 to our times.

Professor Lenczowski concluded that Polish commitment to the core values of Western civilization is what makes Poland one of the strongest countries in the West. This intellectual and moral conviction shared by the majority of the Polish people is what binds together Poland and the United States in a system of shared values. Our job is to raise awareness of this truth.

The Adam M. Bąk Foundation's fund raiser was a success. Ava and Adam Bąk and their guests bought all of the paintings and sculptures donated by the artists to the auction for the benefit of the victims of the floods in Poland. □

Investments - Retirement from 3

- Government 457(b) plans
- 403(b) plans

Consolidating Your Retirement Savings Is Easier Than You Think

Depending on the types of retirement assets you want to consolidate, there are several ways to combine them into a single account.

IRA-to-IRA transfers:

Ask the IRA custodian where you will be establishing your account to help you complete their IRA-transfer paperwork. Once you've set up your IRA, the custodian will do the rest, including contacting your previous IRA custodian(s) to get your assets moved over. There's no limit on the number of IRA-to-IRA transfers that you can complete in any given year. (However, please note that a Roth IRA can be consolidated only with another Roth IRA.)

IRA-to-IRA rollovers:

You can ask your current IRA custodian to send you a check for the amount invested in your IRA. You will then have 60 days to deposit the funds into another IRA without incurring any current tax liability. Note that your former IRA custodian will report the amount as a distribution on IRS Tax Form 1099-R; your new IRA custodian will report the rollover contribution on IRS Tax Form 5498. If you miss the 60-day time period, taxes and penalties may apply. IRA-to-IRA rollovers are restricted to one every 365 days per IRA.

Direct rollover from qualified plan to an IRA:

Ask your previous employer(s) about the paperwork needed to complete a direct rollover of your qualified retirement plan assets to your IRA. The assets will be transferred once you complete the paperwork. Note that your former employer's plan will report the amount as a distribution on IRS Tax Form 1099-R; the IRA custodian will report the rollover contribution on IRS Tax Form 5498.

Indirect rollover from qualified plan to an IRA:

Like the IRA-to-IRA rollover, you can ask your previous employer(s) to send you a check for your vested plan balance and then redeposit those funds into an IRA or other qualified retirement plan within 60 days. However, the plan trustee will be required to withhold 20% of the taxable portion of the distribution as mandatory federal withholding. You will need to make up that 20% when you redeposit the funds into an IRA or the amount withheld will be subject to taxes and possibly penalties if you are under age 59½.

Speak with your tax advisor about these and other rules that may apply when consolidating retirement plan assets.

Some Final Thoughts about Consolidation

Notwithstanding the many benefits to consolidating your retirement accounts, there are also some caveats to keep in mind. For example, while many qualified plans allow for loans, you cannot take a loan from an IRA. Thus, once you rollover a qualified plan into an IRA, the ability to take a loan is no longer available. **Note:** Few qualified plans allow loans to be taken out by former employees.

Another consideration is required minimum distributions. Upon reaching age 70½, owners of a Traditional IRA must begin taking required minimum distributions or face stiff IRS penalties. If the plan permits, qualified plan participants can delay taking required minimum distributions if they are still working after attaining age 70 1/2.

That said, combining your retirement assets in a single IRA can help you take control of your financial future. Your tax and financial advisors will be able to assist you in determining if consolidation makes sense given your specific circumstances and goals. But don't wait any longer to find out. Your retirement will be here sooner than you think.

Articles are published for general information purposes and are not an offer or a solicitation to sell or buy any securities or commodities. Any particular investment should be analyzed based on its terms and risks as they relate to your specific circumstances and objectives. Clients should always check with their tax and legal advisor before engaging in any transaction involving IRAs or other tax-advantaged investments.

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The Kościuszko Chair needs your help

It costs \$2 million to endow the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies at THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD POLITICS (IWP) in Washington, DC. \$1 million needs to be raised by the end of this year in order to match the \$1 million challenge grant donated to IWP by Lady Blanka A. Rosenstiel's American Institute for Polish Culture. If \$1 million is not raised by the end of this year, then the challenge grant will be withdrawn. This is why we must act now.

Please visit the IWP's web site and learn more about how you can help to endow the Kościuszko Chair in Polish Studies.

Be skeptical of those who suggest that IWP harms Polonia and Poland without explaining their point-of-view, because the opposite is true. IWP and Polonia are perfect together because both share the same traditional Polish moral and political values.

The present incumbent of the Kościuszko Chair, Professor Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, is a precious asset for Polonia. Ideas drive politics, and thanks to Professor Chodakiewicz we Polish Americans have the clarity of vision to take purposeful action for Poland in the American political system.

Support IWP today!

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