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Ethnic Conflict in Central Europe and the Balkans

A Framework and U.S. Policy Options

Thomas S. Szayna

Arroyo Center

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Prepared for the United States Army

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PREFACE

This Report provides an analytical framework for examining the potential for militarized ethnic conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. It offers some ways for anticipating the likelihood and the probable intensity of ethnically based competition and its potential as a source of interstate conflict, and it proposes some policies the United States in general and the U.S. Army specifically might adopt to deal with the problem. The framework should serve to pinpoint the future flashpoints, and it may result in the adoption of certain policies that can prevent potential conflicts from becoming actualized. This Report was published in draft form in March 1993 and was updated in September 1993.

The research reported here was performed as part of a larger project, "After the Warsaw Pact; The Revolution in Military and Political Affairs in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: Implications for the U.S. Army," conducted within the Arroyo Center's Strategy and Doctrine Program and sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army. The broader project assesses the security outlook in the former communist countries of Europe since the end of the bloc system. This Report should be of interest to policymakers and analysts concerned with post-communist Europe and the overall transformation of the former communist states.

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James Quinlivan is the Director of the Arroyo Center. Those interested in further information about the Arroyo Center should contact his office directly:

James T. Quinlivan
RAND
1700 Main Street
P.O. Box 2138
Santa Monica CA 90407–2138

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SUMMARY

The emergence of open ethnic tensions in the central part of Europe and the Balkans has its origins in long-term structural issues that are latently present in most European countries: (1) the dominant form of nationalism that emphasizes centralization and homogeneity as the preferred model of a state, and (2) the view of the state as largely a tool of the specific majority ethnic group. The nationalisms in central Europe and the Balkans tend to be more exclusive and xenophobic, because of stronger perceptions of ethnicity based on lineage (or "blood"), frustrated national aspirations, and the conscious manipulation of nationalism by the communist regimes in their attempt to gain a modicum of legitimacy. However, ethnic nationalism formed only the necessary but not the sufficient prerequisite for the recent emergence of ethnic tensions. The spiral of ethnic tensions and open ethnic strife in central part of Europe and the Balkans was triggered by the feelings of insecurity that accompanied the discarding of the communist model of organization and its replacement by the liberal model in all of the polities in the region, combined with the breakdown of rules and norms that had existed in these societies. In other words, the crucial variable that has caused the flare-up is the fundamental political and economic restructuring of the polities.

Thus, far from being irrational, the ethnic strife that has emerged in the former communist countries is an understandable, and even a rational, reaction by individuals to the systemic breakdown in the region. Moreover, the problem also is neither intractable nor unique to the region; in fact, the spiral of ethnic tensions represents a break in the long period of accommodation between ethnic groups in the

region. The implication is that the problem can be addressed by U.S. policy and that U.S. policy can play an important part in its solution. While such an assessment is based on the generally accepted scholarly understanding of nationalism, many policymakers and analysts have embraced the false model of looking at the ethnic tensions as some form of irrational and unsolvable phenomenon. That image needs to be discarded.

CATEGORIZING THE POTENTIAL FOR ESCALATION OF ETHNIC TENSIONS

Only a few of the ethnic minorities in the central part of Europe and the Balkans have the potential to serve as catalysts for a border or regional war by taking up arms to deal with perceived discrimination and the insecurity accompanying the regime change. Generally, these minorities have strong organizational capabilities and their claims are backed by an outside power—usually a neighboring nation-state of coethnics of the same minority group. The situation becomes especially dangerous when the outside nation-state faces few constraints against making the treatment of its coethnics a primary foreign-policy goal. Even more problematic, ethnic and irredentist issues tend to fuse when it comes to the issue of treatment of ethnic groups with kinsmen organized into a nation-state; the groups claiming discrimination present the problem in terms of human rights, but the states against which the claims are made perceive the problem as the questioning of borders. As a cycle of tensions begins to acquire a life of its own, conditions may develop in which it takes only a spark to set off a border war. The spark may take the form of an ethnically based riot and a crackdown in a country where the perceived discrimination occurs, to which the leaders in the neighboring country react militantly in order to stay in power, after they have painted themselves into a corner by making the cause of their coethnics a top priority.

Having identified these dynamics, it is possible to distinguish between the three main types of ethnic tensions that can escalate to armed conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans: (1) If a minority ethnic group becomes mobilized for political action but

lacks substantial outside backers, the situation remains a domestic problem that can lead to low-intensity conflict but is likely to remain contained within the specific country; (2) if a minority ethnic group becomes mobilized for political action and is backed by a neighboring nation-state of ethnic kin, then what was a domestic problem becomes the cause for an international dispute and a possible cause of a border war; (3) the breakup of federal states made up of ethnoterritorial administrative units can escalate to a hybrid between a civil war and a war for national independence that may in turn lead to a larger regional war.

The distinctions also can lead to the categorization of the countries in the central part of Europe and the Balkans in terms of their potential for involvement in armed conflict stemming from support for their ethnic kin abroad. In other words, this is a categorization of the countries in the region according to the strength of their status quo or revisionist inclinations. Hungary, with its highly mobilized population in support of ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries and lacking in any offsetting constraints, has the fewest status quo inclinations. Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Albanian revisionist tendencies are checked by potential counterclaims against them by other countries, making them conditional or reluctant status quo powers. Slovakia and the Czech Republic represent committed status quo powers, in that they are beneficiaries of previous international settlements, they have few coethnics living in neighboring countries, and their foreign-policy goals are aimed at consolidating present borders rather than changing them.

The breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia has accentuated the ethnically based interstate tensions in the region because the breakup of multiethnic states, by its very nature, tends to lead to the questioning of borders. The questioning of borders also contains the most likely seeds of escalation to a regional war because the entire regional balance of power is threatened by territorial adjustments. Macedonia and perhaps Slovakia present problems in this respect. The lack of any international security organization in the region also increases the insecurity, for there is no institution that can moderate interstate friction and ease the sometimes exaggerated fears about borders.

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

Since a substantial and persistent rise in the overall standard of living seems difficult to achieve in the region in the short term (especially in some of the Balkan countries), there is little prospect that the current internal instability that has led to open ethnic tensions will change any time soon. The extent of instability probably will range from mild cases like the Czech Republic to more severe cases in the Balkans. In any event, heightened tensions based on ethnic allegiances are the link between internal instability and international disputes in the region, and they appear likely to be the most important source of conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans for at least the next few years.

The form of ethnic demands in the central part of Europe and the Balkans is shifting. The stage of rapid and relatively unimpeded secession of ethnoterritorial administrative units seems to be over, for the simple reason that, with the breakup of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, there are no more such administrative units in the region. However, the continued fundamental restructuring of polities is likely to continue, fueling further attempts at political mobilization along ethnic or regional lines. As a result, during the next few years, demands in the region are likely to emphasize autonomy rather than outright secession. Since the most pressing demands for autonomy (in southern Slovakia, Transylvania, Voivodina, and Kosovo) are unlikely to be met, the resulting impasse will be unstable and prone to occasional crises.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

Since the ethnic tensions that have emerged in the formerly communist part of Europe are likely to persist at least until the new system takes root and shows progress in eliminating the social disruptions that came with the regime change, the challenge for the United States is to limit the spread of ethnic tensions, prevent the escalation of tensions into militarized conflict, and contain any incidents of militarized ethnic conflict so that they do not lead to border wars or regional war. One of the major U.S. foreign-policy goals is to encourage a favorable transition from communism, so there is a clear U.S. role in limiting the escalation of conflict in central Europe and the

Balkans. Moreover, the United States is uniquely qualified to play such a role because it is widely perceived as a neutral and well-meaning party.

Addressing Long-Term Causes

Ultimately, the only long-term solution to the problem of ethnic strife in the region is to undercut the sources of support for political leaders who exploit insecurity and social disruptions by appealing to ethnic cleavages. In practical terms, that can be achieved only by the attainment of relative prosperity and the imposition of an effective international security regime on the region. The former would reduce ethnic tensions to the level of occasional nuisance that they had been (and still are in parts of western Europe), while the latter would stop the formation of ad hoc coalitions and the cycle of insecurity that can lead to war despite the intentions of all sides to avoid it.

The integration of the former communist states into Western economic and security organizations is the only viable way of advancing both goals. While the process may be lengthy, at some point the conditions and the time frame for eventual membership need to be specified clearly. The goal of eventual membership will act as a means of moderating activism on behalf of ethnic minorities abroad; in other words, it will result in a de facto behavioral regime in the region. Indeed, the existence of the European Community (EC) and the potential for entry of such states as Hungary and Poland into the organization is already probably the single most powerful source of moderation on the policies of these former communist states in the pursuit of national aims, as defined by ethnic nationalists in these countries. If the moderation is to continue, the prospects for entry into the Western organizations must be credible and realistic.

Dealing with Current Symptoms

The more immediate manner of coping with the problem revolves around preventing the escalation of ethnic tensions and, should such tensions erupt into armed strife between two countries, maintaining the potential to intervene with multilateral forces. Preventing ethnically based tensions from escalating entails addressing the

grievances and claims of discrimination of the ethnic groups in the region. Specific steps include the following:

- *A major role for the United States in mediation efforts and in strengthening enforcement of international legal human rights provisions.*
- *Establishing clear and far-reaching disincentives to any serious contemplation of border changes by officials in the central part of Europe and the Balkans.*
- *Careful assessment of the impact of the development of U.S. security contacts with one country in central Europe or the Balkans upon the perceptions of power shifts among the neighboring countries.*
- *The threat of force and the selective use of force by the United States that can make the costs of turning to violence by the various groups in central Europe and the Balkans too great.*

Implications for the U.S. Army

The U.S. Army has a role in the larger U.S. policy for addressing both the long-term causes and the current symptoms of the open emergence of ethnic conflict in central Europe and the Balkans. Perhaps most important, it is necessary to reject the false paradigm of ethnic tensions as an irrational—and therefore insoluble—phenomenon.

In addressing the underlying causes, the U.S. Army can assist larger U.S. foreign-policy goals through the continued expansion of bilateral and multilateral (through NATO) contacts with the militaries of the former communist European countries. The U.S. Army's extensive and growing links and exchanges with the militaries of the former communist countries can contribute to moderating the latter's behavior in regional crisis situations, by making them cautious about putting the extensive links at risk through any bellicose behavior. Military-to-military exchanges and cooperation seem especially important in the former communist countries, since civilian control over the militaries in those countries remains weak. Thus the U.S. Army constitutes one of the most important channels that can influence constructively the actions of the former communist militaries.

In terms of addressing the current symptoms, the U.S. Army would play a crucial role in the implementation of any U.S. decision to resort to armed intervention. In this sense, there is a need to realize the limits on the suitability of the use of outside force in the region, with important distinctions between the potential U.S. military roles in moderating various types of ethnic strife. Ethnic strife that is unlikely to escalate (i.e., among ethnic groups without outside backers) should not warrant the consideration of U.S. military reaction. Ethnic strife that carries strong potential for escalation (between ethnic groups with outside backers, or intervention during a breakup of a state) may call for pressure on the outside backers, greater attempts at conflict resolution, and perhaps, in certain cases, a military response.

The important principle to keep in mind is that a threat of armed intervention (whether in support of one side or for peace-enforcement purposes) is more effective during the early stages of a conflict and in conflict situations between two states looking for a face-saving way out (probably the case with most governments in central Europe and the Balkans with a stake in future integration into larger West European organizations) than it is in conditions of low-intensity conflict where battle lines are not clearly drawn and identification of combatants is a problem. Conditions in Yugoslavia are a hybrid of the two, which should make consideration of armed intervention a more distant possibility but should not necessarily argue against any armed intervention altogether. Indeed, armed intervention should not be rejected outright. What is called for is preparation of a set of responses to potential crisis scenarios that makes early intervention a real possibility. The very fact of such preparations will have a conflict-deterrent impact, for it makes early U.S.-led intervention more credible.

The other role for the U.S. Army in addressing the current open ethnic tensions in central Europe and the Balkans is in carefully considering the regional impact of expanding U.S. security ties with any one country in the region. Subject to overall strategic calculations that may favor some countries, such as Poland or Hungary, the U.S. Army needs to be careful that expanding links with one state is not seen as directed against another state. The U.S. Defense Attaché Offices in general, and the U.S. Army Attachés specifically, in the various coun-

tries, may need to keep other countries' officials abreast of U.S. ties with neighboring states. Such actions would be welcomed; they would disperse any suspicions about the thrust of U.S. policies; and they would reinforce the image of the United States as a fair and reliable partner in the region.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Soviet control over several countries in the central part of Europe and the Balkans (an area known as "Eastern Europe" during the East-West division of the continent) broke down in 1989.[1] The regaining of sovereignty by the former Soviet vassal states precipitated far-reaching shifts in their internal and external policies and fundamentally altered the political situation in Europe. Internally, the various states moved from communism to liberalism—the creation of representative political institutions and a change toward a market economy—at differing paces. Externally, any serious and immediate security threat to the NATO countries disappeared as the Soviet-dominated alliance structure fell apart and the former Soviet allies openly began to court NATO membership. Far from heralding a new era of tranquillity in Europe, the fundamental realignment has led to massive internal instability in the former communist countries; it also threatens to bring about some of the worst prognoses made by adherents of the realist school in international politics, who pre-

[1]The term *Eastern Europe,* in reference to the non-Soviet former members of the Warsaw Pact and Albania and Yugoslavia, was a political term appropriate during the Cold War. Following the breakdown of the East-West division of Europe, the term has lost relevance. The geographical terms *central Europe* and *the Balkans* are more accurate and preferable in the post-Cold War era. As Robin Remington put it, "The Eastern Europe we knew after World War II has disappeared. In a geographic sense, it never existed. When scholars and policymakers talked about Eastern Europe, they used an ideological shorthand for political and economic boundaries that divided Europe into two blocs." (Robin Allison Remington, "Eastern Europe After the Revolutions," *Current History,* November 1991, pp. 379–383.)

dicted a great deal of conflict and the unraveling of the Cold War-era security structures in general.[2]

The lack of any functioning international security organization in the central part of Europe and the Balkans following the collapse of communism has added external insecurity to the internal instability in all of the countries, and it has spurred the rapid formation and dissolution of international coalitions involving those countries. The problem is ingrained in the nature of the transition in the region. Soviet hegemony meant that the individual non-Soviet members of the Warsaw Pact did not have national security policies of their own; the USSR outlined the nature of the threats for which the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members had to prepare. Then, suddenly, the newly sovereign countries had to face basic security questions as the entire post-World War II order dissolved. A renationalization of security orientations took place in all of the former satellite countries. Since the Soviet domination did not solve, but only covered up, some tensions between the former satellite countries, a number of disputes either sharpened or appeared suddenly.

Unlike the previous threat of a massive, global war, future armed conflicts are likely to be regional and fought for limited goals. Moreover, the sources of potential armed conflict in the part of Europe emerging from communism and Soviet domination do not stem from a messianic supranational ideology but are related to distinctly national interests and ethnic issues. The formation of new states that accompanies the disintegration of multiethnic federations, such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, only accentuates the ethnic problems. One security threat is low-intensity conflict, perhaps abetted from abroad. A more serious danger comes from ethnically based tensions erupting into border wars, then escalating to regional war due to shifting international coalitions in a situation of a security vacuum. The danger for the United States is that such intraregional

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[2]The debate was framed by John J. Mearsheimer, in "Back to the Future: Instability After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Summer 1990, pp. 5–56. For some arguments against the thesis, see the correspondence by Stanley Hoffman, Robert O. Keohane, Bruce M. Russett, and Thomas Risse-Kappen and Mearsheimer's replies to them in "Back to the Future, Part II: International Relations Theory and Post-Cold War Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Fall 1990, pp. 191–199; "Back to the Future, Part III: Realism and the Realities of European Security," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Winter 1990–91, pp. 216–222.

conflicts have the potential of involving—directly or indirectly—the European NATO countries, perhaps triggering U.S. alliance obligations. There is significant potential that Greece or Turkey may be drawn into any potential war in the Balkans.

This is not the only set of scenarios for potential conflict. Given the instability in Russia, the residual possibility of Russian resurgence and the consequent potential for a major war with sweeping war aims certainly exists. A return to autarky and renewed expansionist tendencies in Russia would probably envelop Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states in any armed conflict. Moreover, the former communist countries in the central part of Europe and the Balkans would find it difficult not to become involved (at least indirectly) in such a conflict. However, the most immediate potential for conflict in the near future in the non-Soviet ex-communist part of Europe stems from intraregional issues. Such conflict could sidetrack the process of transformation to liberalism and could saddle the western part of Europe with increased refugee flows and economic disruptions that would encourage fringe political movements.

This Report addresses the question of U.S. policy for dealing with the sources of conflict in central Europe and the Balkans. The initial step in forming specific policies aimed at preventing militarized ethnic conflict in the former European communist countries is to understand the causes and motivations for the recent apparent spread of ethnically based tensions in the region. Toward that end, this Report provides an analytical framework for examining the potential for militarized ethnic conflict in the region. It offers some ways to anticipate the likelihood and the intensity of ethnically based competition and its potential as a source of interstate conflict. This framework should serve to pinpoint future flashpoints and should contribute to the adoption of certain policies that can prevent potential conflicts from becoming actualized. The Report proposes some policies for the United States in general and the U.S. Army specifically.

APPROACH

This Report places the problem in conceptual terms, rather than simply describing the present trends. In other words, it applies generally accepted explanations of the causes of ethnic strife, placed in the context of the evolution of nationalism and state development, to

the analysis of the current situation in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. Data on the ongoing developments have been gathered through a comprehensive reading of the indigenous media in translation and a selective monitoring of nontranslated indigenous media since the ouster of communist regimes in the region. The printed sources are supplemented by interviews conducted by the author with officials from most of the countries in the region. This Report was published in draft form in March 1993, and it was updated in September 1993.

ORGANIZATION

Chapter Two examines the two main reasons for the emergence of ethnically based strife in the former communist countries of Europe: (1) ethnic nationalism and (2) the regionwide systemic transformation from communism to liberalism. It is included here to present the assumptions on which the later conclusions are based, especially since the conclusions may seem controversial to some readers.

Chapter Three builds upon the assumptions presented in Chapter Two by presenting an analytical framework for examining the emergence of open ethnically based strife in central Europe and the Balkans. Chapter Four applies the framework to the current conditions in the former communist countries of Europe and draws some lessons and observations regarding the future evolution of ethnic tensions in the region. Chapter Five presents specific recommendations for U.S. policy.

Chapter Two

ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT IN THE FORMER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

In the many recent analyses of ethnically based fighting in the former communist countries, there is a tendency to describe the phenomenon as irrational, intractable, and inherent to the region. If the problem is portrayed as such, there are few options for its solution. But such a presentation of the problem is at least misleading, if not plain wrong. Far from irrational, the ethnic strife that has emerged in the former communist countries is an understandable, and even a rational, reaction by individuals to the systemic breakdown in the region.[1] Moreover, the problem also is neither intractable nor unique to the region; in fact, a spiral of ethnic tensions is the result of conscious manipulation by political figures (exploiting existing divisions within a society), and it represents a break in the long period of accommodation between ethnic groups in the region. The implication is that the problem can be addressed by U.S. policy and that U.S. policy can play an important part in its solution.

Although these conclusions are based on the generally accepted scholarly understanding of nationalism and the behavior of individuals in conditions of deep uncertainty and insecurity, they are far from being widely accepted in the policy community. Indeed, a great split has developed between scholars' interpretations of the causes of current ethnic strife in formerly communist Europe and those of policy analysts dealing with such issues. Compare the following ex-

[1] *Systemic breakdown* here refers to the collapse of the entire political, economic, and social system that had been built by the communists over the previous 45 years throughout the region.

planations to judge the depth of the differences. A U.S. policy analyst has described the problem as follows:

> [Ethnic conflict] is violent, ruthless and, most important to Western understanding, irrational. Ethnic violence is a release of long-suppressed hatreds awaiting the right spark to set them off.[2]

Another analyst offered the following explanation for the conflict in Yugoslavia:

> It is all too easy for Western Europeans or Americans to fall into the trap of expecting superficially similar, European, South Slavs to think and react in similar fashion to themselves. The slavic [sic] nationalities of former-Yugoslavia are tribal societies, governed more by their emotions than by their intellects. Moreover, these emotions are primitive, atavistic, and not those shaped by late twentieth century liberal values: concepts such as death before dishonor and the sacred duty to wreak personal revenge on those who have wronged oneself, one's family or one's country are still powerful motivators.[3]

In contrast, a political scientist who has focused on the study of nationalism has offered the following rejoinder:

> Most scholars of nationalism condemn the ancient hatred view. They argue that nationalism is primarily a modern phenomenon and that the intensity of ethnic conflict varies greatly with changing social and political conditions. Contrary to what some would have us believe, Serbs and Croats fought each other very little before this century. . . . Likewise, conflicts in this century between Azeris and Armenians were triggered not by festering feuds, but by the impact of outside forces—in particular, economic change and revolution. . . . Contemporary ethnic violence stems as much from deliberate government policies as from traditional communal antagonisms. In short, the widely invoked schema of ancient

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[2]Lt. Col. Timothy L. Thomas, "Ethnic Conflict: Scourge of the 1990s?" *Military Review*, December 1992, pp. 15–26.

[3]C. J. Dick, "Serbian Responses to Intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina," *British Army Review*, No. 102, December 1992, pp. 18–25.

> unchangeable, irrational hatred is an inadequate basis for public discourse on nationalism.[4]

An anthropologist who has dealt with the Balkans at great length goes even further:

> [The ancient hatreds theory] combines with an apparent view of the socialist period as, in every respect, an aberration whose end restores business as usual, a more normal order of "irrational tribal" passions in a part of the world long regarded as backward. Since to assert temporal distance, such as by calling something "ancient," is a classic means of establishing the thing so called as inferior, this and the imagery of "tribalism" and "irrationality" make the explanation immediately suspect as ideology, not analysis. . . . To see socialism as having "suppressed" national conflict is a mistake, as is an understanding of present conflicts that ignores the effects of dismantling of socialism. Although causes rooted in history have indeed been exceedingly important, . . . the organization of socialism enhanced national consciousness and . . . aspects of the supposed exit to democratic politics and market economies aggravate it further.[5]

Since the policy prescriptions in Chapter Five stand on what many policy analysts may see as a controversial understanding of the problem, this chapter explains the assumptions and traces the rationale for the view that ethnic tensions that have emerged in formerly communist Europe are neither irrational nor intractable.

The open reemergence of ethnic tensions in the central part of Europe and the Balkans has its origins in long-term structural issues that are latently present in most countries in Europe: (1) the dominant form of nationalism that emphasizes centralization and homogeneity as the preferred model of a state, and (2) the view of the state as largely a tool of the specific majority ethnic group. However, the tensions came out into the open in central Europe and the Balkans because of the breakdown of the ruling system in the region and the

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[4]Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 5–26.

[5]Katherine Verdery, "Nationalism and National Sentiment in Post-socialist Romania," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp. 180–203.

massive, regionwide regime change.[6] In other words, the crucial variable that has caused the flare-up is the fundamental political and economic restructuring of the polities. Any explanation of the scope, intensity, form, and pattern of ethnopolitical conflict in the region must take into account both aspects.[7] The term *ethnopolitical conflict* is preferable to *ethnic conflict* because the struggle is about access to political power (and thus, to resources) that runs along ethnic lines.

ROOTS OF ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT

Nationalism

Nationalism is the root cause of the ethnic strife that has emerged in parts of central Europe and the Balkans, though by itself it is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the strife. Since the term "nationalism" has come to convey so many disparate meanings, it is important to define its meaning here. Simply defined, "nationalism" refers to a "political ideal that views statehood as the optimal form of organization for each nation."[8] It is a political concept that emerged in the late eighteenth century as a humanist replacement for the multiethnic autocracies that prevailed until that time, and it turned

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[6] *Regime change* here refers to the fact that the changes in governments in the former communist countries in central Europe and the Balkans amounted to much more than just new individuals coming to power. The new individuals launched programs that actively promoted the replacement of the communist-inspired political, economic, and social structures with fundamentally new structures based on the principles of the market economy and representative democracy.

[7] The framework presented here has some parallels with Jack Snyder's view of the situation, although Snyder adopts slightly different categorizations of nationalism. (Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and Instability in the Former Soviet Empire," *Arms Control*, Vol. 12, No. 3, December 1991, pp. 6–16; "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State.")

[8] Alexander J. Motyl, *Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality: Coming to Grips with Nationalism in the USSR*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 53. A *nation* is a self-conscious cultural community in a specific geographical area. A *nation-state* is the sovereign political organization of a particular cultural community; the name does not imply an ethnically homogeneous polity. (Timothy M. Frye, "Ethnicity, Sovereignty and Transitions from Non-Democratic Rule," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Winter 1992, p. 602; Alexander J. Motyl, "The Modernity of Nationalism: Nations, States and Nation-States in the Contemporary World," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Winter 1992, p. 319.)

out to be a revolutionary doctrine that led to the creation of national groups out of ethnic attachments. It has caused countless people to be motivated enough to risk their lives, and it has led to the redrawing of boundaries as it destroyed a number of empires.

The Formation of a "Nation"

It is important to keep in mind that neither the currently existing states nor the nations in Europe are immutable. Instead, they are products of a series of historical accidents and purposeful processes of social construction. The most important task in the process of social construction is the shaping of a collective identity, with its most important dimension being the determination of whose language and culture is to be embodied in the public institutions of the society. The state then adopts policies aimed at creating a "nation" by promoting one, supposedly central, language and culture at the expense of the other cultures and languages existing in the given state. This is how the nations of modern Europe came into being.

Such centralizing tendencies have the consequence of elevating the status of one ethnic group within the given state above the others, and, in practice, they add up to the rejection of the existence of minorities within nation-states, since nationalists view monolithic cultural and linguistic centralism as the norm, and they see attachments other than national as retrogressive to the modern idea of a nation-state. Consequently, the nationalist outlook contains an inherent normative striving for national and political boundaries to coincide.

These tendencies have been clear, for example, in the French nationalist approach: Since the origin of the nationalist idea, successive French regimes have pursued policies aimed at transforming the heterogeneous French, Celtic, Germanic, Flemish, Basque, Spanish, and Italian-speaking people inhabiting France at the end of the eighteenth century into the relatively ethnically homogeneous French nation-state that exists today.[9] Known as the "Jacobin"

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[9]The process was quite lengthy and it is still far from over; in fact, claims of ethnic nationalists to the contrary notwithstanding, national consciousness in France (or Europe as a whole) emerged at the mass level only in the late nineteenth century. Evidence suggests that as late as 1870, most French citizens did not conceive of themselves as members of the French nation, opting instead for regional or local

model, the French approach has been copied in most of continental Europe.[10] Due to the special role of France during the nineteenth century as a model for nationalists in central Europe and the Balkans, the Jacobin model has had an especially profound intellectual influence in the region, so much so that it tends to be accepted today as a given.

In practice, the Jacobin approach has taken on sometimes brutal aspects, with European elites in one state after another pursuing policies of forcible assimilation or physical elimination of minorities over the past two centuries. The formation of a nation along these lines creates tensions, because some groups are difficult to assimilate and the process is quite lengthy. In addition, the very presence of a minority tends to be seen as an aberration that, at some point in the future, will be "corrected." Not surprisingly, minorities throughout Europe tend to be insecure about their status, for they often see the state institutions as tools of a nonsympathetic group, and they usually are fearful about their position in that state. Thus, latent and open ethnically based tensions have been and continue to be endemic in most of continental Europe, whether in Italy, France, Bulgaria, or elsewhere.

Lineage-Based Ideas of Ethnicity. These latent problems related to the Jacobin style of nation-building were accentuated in the central part of Europe and the Balkans because of the different paths to the formation of states in that region from those in the western part of Europe. Indeed, the most important difference related to the nature of nationalism in modern Europe appears to be that between nation-states that evolved in the sequence of "state first, nation second" and those that followed the sequence of "nation first, state second." Whereas the current nations on the western periphery of Europe started out with a state and then implemented policies to put into reality what was then the myth of a single nation inhabiting the terri-

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attachments and often speaking what were in effect different languages from French. (Walker Connor, "When Is a Nation?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 92–103.)

[10]The rather harsh French centralizing policies did not change until the accession of Mitterand to the Presidency in France. (William Safran, "The Mitterand Regime and Its Policies of Ethnocultural Accommodation," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 1, October 1985, pp. 41–63.)

tory of the state, the countries in the central and eastern parts of Europe—including Germany and Italy—evolved in reverse order: They started out with the nation first and then attempted to bring statehood to that nation.

Within the latter path, two diverse routes are discernible: The hybrid cases of Germany and Italy became states through one German or Italian state (Prussia and Piedmont, respectively) following the pan-German or pan-Italian nationalist ideologies and forcing unification upon the others, but the nations further east lacked statehood altogether and they gained a sense of national distinctness only in direct opposition to linguistically and culturally quite different people.[11] These different paths gave rise to different bases for inclusion in the national group. In the western periphery of Europe, such as France, territorial-administrative criteria (in other words, civic criteria) formed the basis for a nation, but an ethnic basis was the only common bond in the states that followed the "nation first, state second" sequence.

The "nation first, state second" path strengthened the ethnic basis for nationality and elevated it to the most important aspect related to a given individual; it also gave rise to the peculiar understanding of ethnicity in these countries—an understanding that is grounded in myth and that associates ethnicity with the racial dimension, traced by lineage (or "blood"). Such an understanding is wrong, for ethnicity is not predetermined. Simply defined, "ethnicity" is a subjectively held sense of shared identity stemming from any number of objective cultural criteria, such as religion, language, group patterns of values, and social customs.[12] Attaining ethnic awareness and internalizing ethnic attachments—for example, becoming a Serb rather than a Croat—is a learned process. Nor is ethnicity a constant; it is malleable, and individuals continually undergo processes of ethnic reidentification.

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[11]For a further elaboration on the currents of nationalism, see Ernst B. Haas, "What Is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It?" *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 3, Summer 1986, pp. 707–744.

[12]Timothy M. Frye, "Ethnicity, Sovereignty and Transitions from Non-Democratic Rule," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Winter 1992, p. 602.

Nevertheless, although ethnicity is not inherent or derivative from lineage, it is treated as such in much of Europe,[13] especially in the countries that followed the "nation first, state second" path. Hitler's views were based precisely on such pseudoscientific views, which were prevalent in Vienna around the turn of the century.

The Result: Exclusivism Based on Ethnicity. The combination of ethnic rather than civic criteria as a principle for inclusion in a national group and a lineage-based understanding of ethnicity caused the centralizing tendencies inherent in a nationalist outlook to take on a highly exclusive form. The idea of a nation-state for such national groupings became identified with the attainment of an ethnically pure polity, with ethnicity traced by ancestry (or "blood"). Although the concept is founded on a myth of unattainable ethnic homogeneity and stems from a false understanding of ethnicity, it has been and continues to be widely accepted. Generally speaking, the more exclusive views tend to be stronger among the European groups that achieved statehood later (central Europe, the Balkans), a seeming indication of the formative importance of the distinction between civic and ethnic criteria of inclusion. Whereas a nation-state based primarily on civic criteria tends to be inclusive (individuals of various ethnic groups may become its citizens), a nation-state based primarily on ethnic criteria tends toward exclusiveness (by definition, it discriminates against or excludes from citizenship individuals from different ethnic groups).[14] In the following section,

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[13]The idea that ethnicity "is in the genes" seems accepted as a given, not only in central and eastern Europe, but also by spokesmen for ethnic groups striving for statehood in the western part of Europe. For example, Jos Vinks, a Flemish nationalist refers to ethnic attributes as "pre-individual, unchangeable, undestructible [sic] factors." ("Some Considerations on the Rights of Minorities," *Plural Societies*, Vol. 21, 1990, pp. 37–41.)

[14]Although post-World War II Germany tends toward the civic national tradition, it has retained some policies that stem from the continued relevance of nationality based on ethnic lines. For example, Germany has retained exclusivist policies regarding the acquisition of citizenship, stemming from the joining of ascriptive (lineage- or "blood"-based) views of ethnicity and an ethnic criterion for inclusion. This shows up in German policies toward ethnic Germans in Russia. Many of the ethnic Germans are descendants of German settlers invited by the Russian czars in the mid-eighteenth century; few of these ethnic Germans know German and, for all practical intents and purposes, culturally, most of them are Russians with Germanic-sounding surnames. However, due to the prevalent perception of ethnicity in Russia and in Germany as stemming from lineage, the ethnic Germans continue to be considered a "foreign" element by many Russians and somehow a part of the "German

I apply the concepts presented above to the specific circumstances of central Europe and the Balkans.

Ethnic criteria of inclusion predominate in the current states in the region. This means that the majority of the population accepts the vision of ethnically homogeneous nation-states. In practice, this amounts to highly exclusive ideas on who is perceived to be a full-fledged and loyal citizen of a particular state, and it often leads to the view that other languages or cultures in the state are a challenge to its unity. Thus, the conclusion that ethnic nationalism—a term that implies less tolerance and more exclusiveness than civic-based nationalism—dominates in the region is crucial. The greater emphasis on ethnic criteria as the basis for inclusion in a "nation" represents probably the most significant difference between the type of nationalism in central Europe and the Balkans and that in the western part of Europe.

Frustrated Nationalism

The exclusivist tendencies inherent in ethnic nationalism in the central part of Europe and the Balkans took on a special poignancy and strength because of the perceptions dominant in the main national group that other peoples were culprits in preventing them from achieving their nationalist aspirations. Reasons for such a development are embedded in the fact that the countries in this region are relatively new and insecurity about the finality of the borders of the state—and even about the permanence of the achievement of statehood—persists. In other words, the ethnic nationalism has been amplified by frustrated nationalist aspirations.

Most of the countries in the region became fully sovereign states either toward the end of the nineteenth century (as a result of the gradual disintegration of the Ottoman Empire) or at the beginning of the twentieth century (with the defeat of Germany and the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires at the end of World War I). Thus the modern states in central Europe and the Balkans have had only a brief period of full sovereignty, as little as twenty years in the case of

volk" by many Germans. These "Germans" are entitled to a quick acquisition of German citizenship (and,until recently, there were no annual quotas on the number of ethnic Germans allowed to emigrate to Germany from the former USSR).

Poland and Czechoslovakia and only a little longer for the Balkan countries. The outside domination of the region strengthened the perception that true independence could be achieved only when the given state became ethnically homogeneous. The end result was a growth of peculiar xenophobic tendencies, with almost all neighboring national and ethnic groups perceived as enemies or potential enemies.

Even after the states actually emerged in the region (and the Versailles Treaty endorsed the idea of nation-states in central Europe and the Balkans), most of them were actually small multiethnic empires.[15] Because ethnic nationalist views remained dominant in these countries, the various regimes attempted to implement sometimes harsh policies of forcible ethnic assimilation during their brief early stage of full sovereignty. In other words, the various countries tried to make the political and national boundaries coincide—a difficult feat to accomplish in a region inhabited by a variety of diverse ethnic groups. The result was that internal ethnic tensions and territorial disputes with neighboring countries characterized the history of the region throughout the period between the two world wars, with ethnic and national grievances forming the core of the problem. The irredentist powers of Germany and the USSR took advantage of the situation in the late 1930s, remaking the political map of the region to suit their interests.

The events of World War II and its immediate aftermath made the central European and Balkan states more ethnically homogeneous, a fact that strengthened the ethnic nationalist tendencies. German policies toward the area during the war resulted in the physical elimination or severe contraction of several ethnic groups inhabiting the region, especially Jews and Romanies (Gypsies).[16] In addition, the local authorities in the German ally states, such as Croatia, launched programs of elimination or deportation of ethnic minorities. For

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[15]For a fuller treatment of the striving for statehood or full sovereignty in the central part of Europe and the Balkans, see Raymond Pearson, "The Geopolitics of People Power: The Pursuit of the Nation-State in East Central Europe," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Winter 1992, pp. 499–518.

[16]The Romanies, or the Roma, also known by the more pejorative term, *Gypsies*, should not be confused with ethnic Romanians (though many Romanies who live in Romania are also Romanian citizens).

their own part, the Soviets deported large numbers of people (often minority populations in the territories) into the Soviet Asian interior. Finally, at the end of World War II, the Soviet, Polish, and Czechoslovak authorities instituted massive forced population transfers, eliminating most of the ethnic German presence (and some of the ethnic Hungarian presence, in the Czechoslovak case) in their states. Similarly, population transfers took place during the territorial modifications between Bulgaria and Romania and between Hungary and Romania in 1940, and the Hungarian populations in Romania and Slovakia concentrated their area of settlement in hopes of greater protection. Together, all of these moves amounted to "ethnic cleansing" that had the effect of at least containing geographically the immediate sources of internal ethnically based political conflict.

Persistence of Ethnic Nationalism Under Communism

Communist domination of the region did not result in the elimination of the exclusivist ethnic nationalist tendencies. In fact, communist domination actually strengthened these leanings, because, paradoxically, they formed the core of the opposition to the communist rule and were used by the communist regimes in an attempt to establish a modicum of legitimacy.

The political order imposed on the central part of Europe and the Balkans at Yalta following World War II kept the previous national-administrative units, but imposed a semicolonial status on the countries in the region, explained by Soviet officials as a new form of international relations based on class solidarity, but seen in countries such as Poland and Hungary as simply a form of justification for Russian domination. Ethnic nationalism formed the core of the opposition to the imposition of supranational communist ideology on the region throughout the Yalta period, preventing the Soviet-sanctioned regimes from gaining any but the most tenuous form of legitimacy and forcing them to rely, in the final analysis, on the threat of Soviet intervention to stay in power.[17] Indeed, the individual

[17]This is an important point to remember, for, ironically, ethnic nationalism in the region served U.S. goals during the communist era. Its persistence after the ouster of the communists tends to present problems for international stability. It is also important to remember that some of the opposition figures were intellectuals who

communist regimes had to turn into "national communist" regimes to achieve a measure of legitimacy.[18]

In almost all cases, the communist regimes, composed of the dominant national group in each of the Soviet satellite states, attempted to strengthen their own base of power by appealing to a sense of national pride and by tolerating far-reaching discriminatory practices toward the ethnic minorities inhabiting those states. In many ways, the communist regimes continued (and even strengthened) prewar discriminatory and exclusivist practices, with the effect that the forced assimilative tendencies went on and even accelerated. The regime abetment of exclusivist forces, combined with the persistence of the institutions that socialized individuals into the dominant ethnic group (for example, in schools, the history of each country continued to be presented in terms of a myth of a long struggle against a variety of foreign "oppressors" and their puppets), meant that ethnic nationalist forces remained vital and strong in the communist countries of Europe. The communist regimes attempted to coopt these forces for their own ends, but they were only partially successful. The Soviet-imposed facade of ideological uniformity on the region as well as the Soviets' more practical military-oriented need to keep a viable alliance led to the suppression of disputes between the countries of the Warsaw Pact. Thus, many Hungarians, even those in official positions during the communist era, never ceased to rail privately against Romanian policies toward the ethnic Hungarians in Romania, but in public they proclaimed "fraternal friendship" with the Romanians. The recent regaining of full sovereignty broke down the censorship barriers and brought ethnic nationalist feelings out into the open.

The xenophobic leanings have reemerged in a multitude of ways. The tendency commonly adopted by fringe central European or Balkan ethnic nationalists in the postcommunist era of trying to ex-

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embraced the idea of liberalism (in its Lockean form). Many of these opposition figures, including Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia and Adam Michnik in Poland, came to occupy influential posts in the post-communist era. However, Lockean liberalism did not motivate the masses of people demonstrating against the communist regimes. Those people were motivated by ethnic nationalist causes.

[18]James F. Brown has referred to this dynamic in the Soviet-East European relationship as the dilemma between cohesion and viability. (James F. Brown, *East Europe and Communist Rule*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988.)

plain the communist rule by claiming that the communist leaders were in fact "outsiders" (usually Jews or East Slavs) provides one example (ethnic nationalists cannot accept the fact that a "true" member of their national/ethnic group could have served the foreigners, so they accept it as a given that those leaders must have had "Jewish blood," "Ukrainian blood," etc.). Such claims, while absurd, have emerged in every country in the region, ranging all the way to allegations in Romania that Ceausescu was Tatar, Turkish, Armenian, or even a Gypsy.[19]

THE POST-COMMUNIST RESTRUCTURING

Frustrated ethnic nationalism, with its exclusive and xenophobic tendencies and perceptions of ethnicity based on "blood," formed the necessary but not sufficient prerequisite for the recent emergence of ethnic tensions. The spiral of ethnic tensions and open ethnic strife in the central part of Europe and the Balkans was triggered by the feelings of insecurity that accompanied the discarding of the communist model of organization and its replacement by the liberal model in all of the polities in the region, combined with the breakdown of rules and norms that had existed in these societies. The transition from communism to liberalism involves fundamental institutional restructuring, a process that produces a new set of winners and losers and heightens insecurity. For example, the regime change means a whole new form of property rights, which provides opportunities for some individuals to enrich themselves overnight. In other words, through privatization, massive amounts of previously state-owned assets are up for grabs.

With the loosened or eliminated constraints on expression and organization that accompany democratization, the political realm reflects the internal social and economic turmoil. Furthermore, the countries under discussion are emerging from many decades of authoritarian rule, and their political sphere is characterized by the absence of any widely respected or even established norms for the manner of political appeals. For example, openly anti-Semitic appeals for political purposes are widely considered not acceptable in the West, but

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[19]Steven Sampson, "Towards an Anthropology of Collaboration in Eastern Europe," *Culture and History*, Vol. 8, 1991, p. 116.

they are not seen as unacceptable in the countries emerging from communism. Where previously authoritarian regimes, acting through censorship, established the norms for public discourse, a vacuum now exists. The circumstances invite political elites to exploit the insecurity and the open or latent cleavages and grievances in those societies by using ethnically based appeals to mobilize political action. Ethnicity is one of the most effective issues around which elites can mobilize the population for political action, and the high level of ethnic awareness and ethnic polarization in many of the countries emerging from communism makes the point especially true for the region under discussion. In other words, populist appeals based on scapegoating one ethnic minority or standing up for "repressed" ethnic brethren abroad provide easy issues around which to rally public support.

Once a population is mobilized for political action along ethnic lines, it becomes difficult to stop the cycle of escalating ethnic tensions, for the heightening of ethnic animosities has the potential to start a dangerous chain of events that may become difficult to control (even by those who may have actively encouraged it at first) and may take on a life of its own. The examples of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Franjo Tudjman in Croatia represent perhaps the best recent cases of such chains of events. Moreover, scholarly literature documents a large number of cases of ethnic competition in regions with a lineage-based understanding of ethnicity that has a special intensity and a tendency to turn into a lifelong struggle for many individuals—for it is based on traits that the individual feels he cannot change.[20] As the sides become polarized, priority and then exclusivity become the goals of the ethnic groups in competition because the struggle is not waged in an absolute but in a relative manner (a gain for one group can come only at the expense of another group). In other words, the process is essentially zero-sum. The final exclusivist aim is homogeneity, and any means may be used to achieve it, including destruction of evidence of diversity, forced expulsions, or even the physical elimination of ethnic minorities.

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[20]Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985.

Chapter Three

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Using the assumptions in Chapter Two regarding the origins of ethnic conflict, this section presents a framework to enable U.S. policy analysts to determine which ethnic groups in the formerly communist countries of "Eastern Europe" are likely to take up arms to deal with perceived discrimination and the insecurity accompanying the regime change in the region. Table 1 lists the minority ethnic groups and their sizes; Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of ethnic minorities in Central Europe and Hungarian minorities in the Danube Basin, and Figure 3 shows the ethnic makeup of the former Yugoslavia. There are two crucial factors to be considered: (1) the organizational capabilities of a given group and (2) the presence of outside backers for the group.

Perceived discrimination on the basis of ethnicity forms a precondition for ethnic mobilization for political action.[1] The rich history of ethnic discrimination in all of the formerly communist European countries (stemming from the desire to implement a single language and culture in a given nation-state, for reasons discussed in the previous chapter) indicates that these preconditions are easily satisfied. Every minority group in the region has ample evidence of discrimination, from drastic forms, such as the denial of the existence of ethnic groups (for example, Germans in Poland or Ruthenians

[1]The perceptions need not match reality, according to outside observers. For example, because of a previous privileged position or due to dominant feelings of cultural superiority, an ethnic minority group may perceive discriminatory practices in conditions that may be fair and equal by outsiders' standards. The perceptions of superiority by Hungarians toward Romanians, by Germans toward Poles, and by Poles toward the East Slavs are just a few examples of this phenomenon.

Table 1

Conflicting Estimates of Minority Populations in Eastern Europe (from media reports and official publications, 1977–1992)

	1[a]	2[b]	3[c]	4[d]
Albania				
Greeks	25,000	50,000	200,000	500,000
Southern Slavs	3–10,000		15–30,000	100,000
Vlachs	10,000		100,000	
Macedonians				80,000
Bulgaria				
Turks	700,000		900,000	1,250,000
Roma	450,000		800,000	1,000,000
Pomaks	170,000		300,000	
Vlachs				400,000
Czechoslovakia[e]				
Roma	400,000		800,000	
Hungarians		590,000	700,000	
Ukrainians (and Ruthenians)	45,000		300,000	
Germans	55,000			150,000
Hungary				
Roma		35,000	400,000	1,000,000
Germans		35,000	175,000	200,000
Slovaks		30,000	120,000	
Southern Slavs		40,000		
Jews			80,000	100,000
Poland				
Belarusians	200,000			400,000
Ukrainians	150,000			400,000
Germans	4,000	100,000	1,000,000	2,000,000
Roma	16,000			5,000
Jews	3,000		15,000	
Romania				
Hungarians		1,700,000		2,500,000
Germans	30,000	60,000		200,000
Roma	200,000	230,000	760,000	7,000,000
Ukrainians	60,000	350,000		600,000
Bulgarians	12,000	30,000		130,000
Lipovans	12,000			100,000

SOURCE: Andre Liebich, "Minorities in Eastern Europe: Obstacles to a Reliable Count," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 20, May 15, 1992, pp. 32–39.

[a]Lowest available figure; generally not credible.

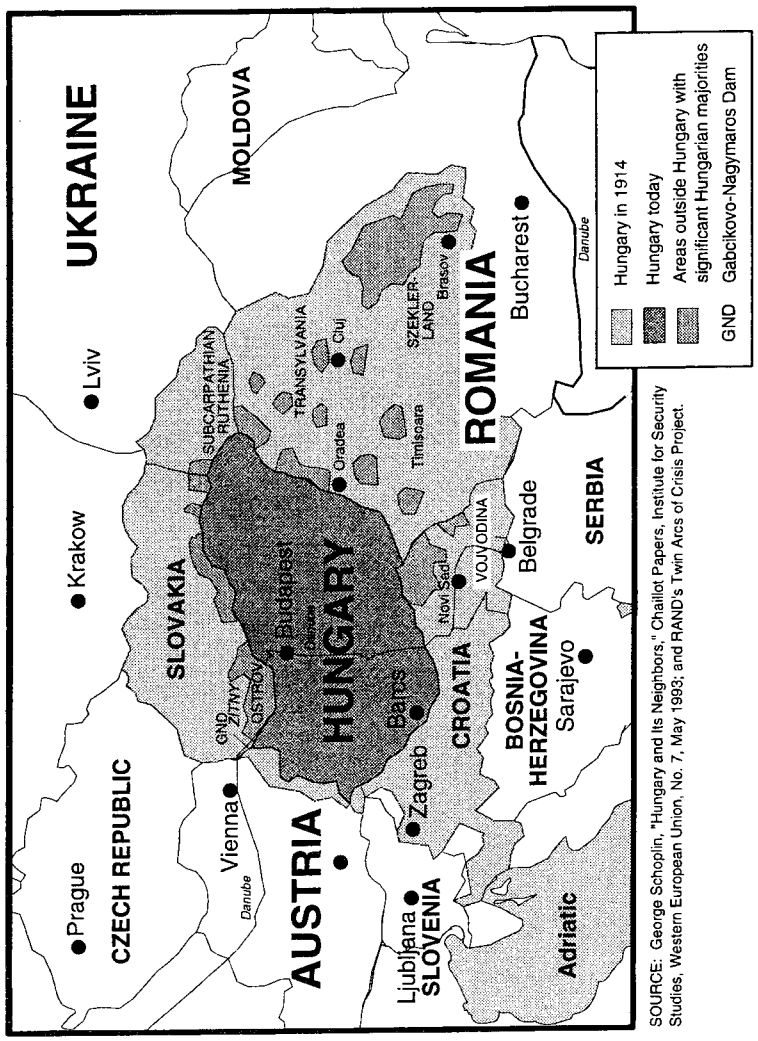
[b]Official or semiofficial figure; of variable credibility.

[c]Highest credible figure.

[d]Highest available figure; generally not credible.

[e]Almost all of the Hungarians and Ukrainians (and Ruthenians) inhabit Slovakia. Germans inhabit the Czech Republic. The Roma inhabit both parts of the former Czechoslovakia.

Figure 1—Ethnic Minorities in Central Europe and the Balkans



SOURCE: George Schoplin, "Hungary and Its Neighbors," Chaillot Papers, Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, No. 7, May 1993; and RAND's Twin Arcs of Crisis Project.

Figure 2—Ethnic Hungarian Minorities in the Danube Basin

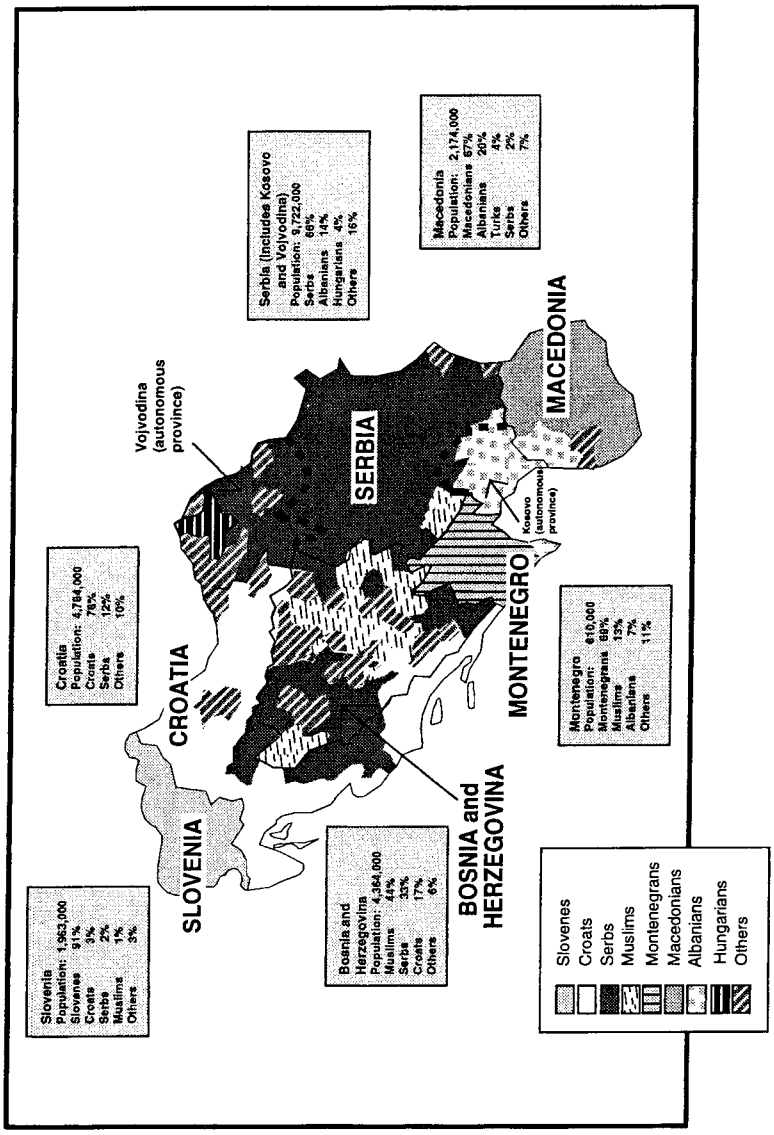


Figure 3—Ethnic Makeup of the Former Yugoslavia

in Czechoslovakia) or attempts to "homogenize" the population through forced name changes and expulsions (for example, Pomaks and Turks in Bulgaria) to more mundane forms, such as the tacit toleration of discrimination at the local level. The effects of discriminatory practices have been personally experienced by a great many members of every minority ethnic group.

Discrimination by itself does not necessarily lead to conflict. Some of the ethnic groups that have experienced the most discrimination have been the most quiescent. The development of a cycle of escalating ethnic tension depends, rather, on the extent to which the minority ethnic group becomes mobilized for political action (that is, the extent to which the ethnic group makes the discrimination a political issue). The crucial variable on this point is the ability of the ethnic group to organize itself for political action.

No matter how well organized an ethnic group is, any ethnic tensions that result from making discrimination an issue can be contained within the state—leading at most to a civil war—unless a third party (another state) becomes involved in the conflict on the side of the minority ethnic group. When a third party takes an interest, the ethnic tensions internal to a state can easily become a subject of an international dispute, possibly leading to a war. The presence and power of outside backers for a minority ethnic group appear as the crucial variables on this point.[2]

Some factors that may intuitively appear to be significant do not seem to play much of a role in the emergence of ethnic tensions. The similarity between ethnic groups in a multiethnic state appears to have little relevance in determining the potential for ethnic conflict. For example, the fact that Slovaks and Czechs or Serbs and Croats are hard to tell apart even by members of those ethnic groups has not prevented ethnic tensions from emerging between them. Past animosities are only a partial indicator, and their importance seems to lie in the provision of ammunition for political figures attempting to mobilize them by focusing on the "historic enemy." However, ethnic

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[2]The importance of these two factors (organization and outside support) for the success of a movement is discussed in Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

animosities can disappear into the background quickly if they are not continuously inflamed.[3]

Finally, it is important to remember that many kinds of subnational and regional attachments exist in most countries, and the former communist countries are no exception. The condition of extreme flux, the breakdown of established order, and the dissolution of various states—as in the former communist countries—encourage the activation and growth of all kinds of subnational attachments that develop into "new" ethnic attachments. Regionalist movements can quickly develop an ethnic dimension and fuel the further splintering of states. Political mobilization, demands for autonomy, and the self-registration of over 1,360,000 people as being of Moravian "nationality" in Czechoslovakia during the 1990 census represent the best example of this phenomenon. The case of the Silesians in Czechoslovakia and Poland is another example.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

What role do organizational capabilities play in the emergence of ethnopolitical conflict? Effective mobilization depends on the ability of the elites to reach the members of the ethnic group, which in turn implies the existence of organizational channels. During the communist era, ethnic minorities could not mobilize effectively against open state discrimination because of the state monopoly on media, censorship, severe limits on the ability to organize independently, and harsh sanctions for any activity judged as dissident. The official minority organizations generally served as tools of the regime. The regime changes in the region meant that genuine institutions representing specific interest groups could finally form. Moreover, the ability to organize independently came simultaneously with a massive restructuring of the polities. The previous history of discrimination (and often the very real continuation of discriminatory measures by post-communist regimes) gave the minority ethnic groups good

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[3]The rapid disappearance of anti-Russian feelings in Finland is a good example of how seemingly deeply ingrained negative perceptions of another national or ethnic group can disappear if they are not actively encouraged. (Heikki Luostarinen, "Finnish Russophobia: The Story of an Enemy Image," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1989, pp. 123–137.)

reason to fear that the transformations would further hurt them at a collective level and institutionalize the discrimination. In the climate of general insecurity that came with the turn from communism to liberalism, elites of an ethnic minority could easily appeal to the self-preservation instinct of a group by bringing up the specter of the group's elimination. The move toward democratization and the accompanying lessening of controls on expression and organization allowed these fears and grievances to be channeled into political action.

Since a minority ethnic group is often at a disadvantage in terms of access to resources, its mobilization for political action may not be an easy task. In extreme cases, where discrimination combined with cultural proclivities results in the virtual absence of an educated elite, there may be no mobilization of the minority ethnic group despite severe discrimination (the Romanies represent the best case of such a group in all of the countries under discussion). Similarly, an ethnic group's sense of solidarity along ethnic lines must outweigh its subethnic rivalries, or subethnic divisions will make mobilization ineffective (the Romanies, divided into clanlike groups and lacking any great sense of common ethnic awareness, again represent the best example of such a group).

In the former communist countries in central Europe and the Balkans, several factors should be considered in assessing the mobilization potential of minority ethnic groups.

Level of Existing Ethnoterritorial Status

Territorial administrative units that correspond roughly to the geographical area inhabited mainly by a minority ethnic group provide a ready-made administrative machinery that can be quickly harnessed by elites attempting to mobilize the ethnic group to seek greater autonomy or outright secession. States federated on the basis of ethnoterritorial provinces (such as the republics of former Yugoslavia, each supposedly the "homeland" of one ethnic group) are especially susceptible to breakup in time of fundamental crisis for the federal state. It is not a coincidence that the three communist federal states in Europe—the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia—have broken

up. Quite simply, there was an administrative structure in place that provided an opportunity for groups to advance their secessionist agendas by exploiting ethnic cleavages and playing upon a general sense of insecurity.

The extreme importance of organizational machinery to push through ethnic mobilization for political ends and for secession from the federal state is illustrated by the fact that even embryonic ethnic groups can be successful. The success of Macedonia in achieving sovereignty shows that even weak ethnic attachments can be exploited to the fullest where there is organizational strength. It is also not coincidental that Serbia dissolved the autonomous status of Voivodina and Kosovo to prevent the Hungarians and Albanians, respectively, from using the administrative machinery in the two provinces for their own ethnic mobilization agendas. In other words, the Serbian regime diminished the organizational capabilities of the Hungarians and the Albanians to push through any potential separatist agendas.

Level of Organization Along Ethnic Lines

The general rule is that the more organizationally coherent an ethnic group is, the easier it is to mobilize for political action. Ethnic groups that have organizations whose membership is based on ethnicity have the organizational channels in place through which elites can make their mobilizing appeals. Such organizations may have either explicit or implicit ethnic criteria for membership. For example, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania is an explicitly ethnic organization. However, an association of Catholics in Cluj-Napoca is an implicitly ethnic organization because religion forms one of the cleavages between the Hungarians and the ethnic Romanians in Transylvania. In this sense, associations or clubs whose membership is restricted to specific language knowledge or religious affiliation often act as organizations for only one ethnic group. In overall terms, the Hungarian communities in the Danube basin provide the best example of highly organized minority-group ethnic communities in the region under discussion. In contrast, the Romanies' level of organization is low.

Geographical Concentration

Groups that are geographically concentrated are in a better position to become mobilized for political action than groups that are dispersed. A certain threshold of geographical concentration appears to be necessary for a group to be mobilized at all. For example, the compact German and Hungarian communities in Romania are far better suited for mobilization than are the Romanies, who—although more numerous than the Germans—are dispersed throughout the country. This fact should help in predicting where ethnic conflict will emerge: Overall population presence in a country is not as important as relative population presence in a region or a substate administrative entity. Although there are probably three times as many Romanies as Ruthenians in Slovakia, the Ruthenians' level of ethnic assertiveness is higher due to their concentration in one region.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT

How does outside support contribute to the success of ethnically based political mobilization? Minority ethnic groups that perceive discriminatory policies against them generally have less access to resources than the dominant national group. To compensate for the disadvantage, they seek allies. In multiethnic polities, the search for allies may involve the forming of a coalition against the dominant group (for example, the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia attempted to form the Coexistence Group—a Hungarian-dominated political organization uniting all the non-Czech and non-Slovak minorities). However, in many cases, minority ethnic groups look for allies abroad. The issue then becomes international and assumes the potential for an interstate conflict. The allies may be forthcoming for a variety of reasons, though in the case of the countries in central Europe and the Balkans, several aspects related to ethnic kinship and frustrated nationalist aspirations (discussed in the preceding chapter) appear most important.

The Existence of a Nation-State of Ethnic Kin

Groups that have ethnic kin abroad who are organized into a nation-state are in a far better position than ethnic groups without such po-

tential backers. Because of the prevalent notions of ethnic nationalism and the lineage-based understanding of ethnicity, the ethnic kin who are organized into a nation-state tend not to distinguish greatly between themselves and their coethnics in a neighboring country. The bond that results from such ties is extremely strong. After all, the matching of ethnic/national and political boundaries is a basic tenet of a nationalist outlook, and "unification" of all the lands inhabited by a given ethnic/national group is its logical extreme.

Consequently, elites in the nation-state may find it effective to make political appeals on the basis of support for their coethnics in a neighboring state. The case of the ethnic Hungarians is most illustrative: Hungarian political leaders in Hungary have mobilized their population around the cause of the ethnic Hungarians in the neighboring countries to such an extent that no Hungarian political party can hope to become a significant political force without pledging an active policy of support toward ethnic Hungarians abroad. The case of Serbia shows a similar pattern, while some Polish elites (generally associated with the Christian-National political groups) have attempted to launch the same process in relation to ethnic Poles in the former western Soviet republics.

The centrality of external support in raising the significance of an ethnic movement is best illustrated by the case of Romania. The ethnic Hungarians in Romania have a great deal of support in Hungary, whereas the Romanies in Romania have no such backers. Thus, even relatively mild and informal discriminatory measures against the ethnic Hungarians provoke a powerful reaction by the Hungarian government, making for international disputes and the raising of the issue at CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), the Council of Europe, and other international institutions, whereas the often severe and open discrimination against the Romanies provokes no international dispute and tends to be of concern to only a few independent human-rights groups, such as Amnesty International.

Support by outside actors is by no means limited to nation-states of ethnic kin. Elites in states that have an interest in promoting the rights of minorities of their own ethnic kin in neighboring countries may support another state in such endeavors, hoping to gain reciprocal support. For example, Hungary had gained some German sup-

port on certain issues related to minority rights. Somewhat surprising to many observers, Hungary and Russia (which generally agree on very little) also have reached an understanding and a similarity of views on the issue of ethnic minorities; undoubtedly, the presence of millions of ethnic Russians who face sometimes severe discrimination in the now independent former republics of the USSR has played a role in this turn of events, for Russia and Hungary now find themselves in similar situations regarding ethnic kin abroad. Support on the basis of perceived close ethnic kinship is unlikely to wane, while support on the basis of tactical considerations may waver, depending on other issues.

Geographical Proximity of a Nation-State of Ethnic Kin

Mobilized ethnic groups inhabiting areas adjoining a nation-state of coethnics are far more likely to elicit support from their coethnics across the border than are ethnic groups inhabiting more distant areas. Radio and television broadcasts and cross-border traffic make contacts easy. While the communist regimes were able to close off borders and cut cross-border contacts to sometimes negligible levels, such actions would be difficult, if not impossible, under the new post-communist conditions. Thus, numbers aside, political mobilization and appeals for assistance by the ethnic Turks in Kurdzhali are more likely to elicit a response from Turkey than are the actions of the Turkic communities in Romania and Moldova. Similarly, ethnic Germans in Silesia have been more effective than the much bigger ethnic German communities in Russia in gaining German support.

Irredentist Agendas

The key factor in eliciting outside support, and one that partially subsumes the two factors presented above, is the intertwining of minority rights with irredentism. An ethnic nationalist interprets history in a teleological manner: That is, almost all the events that took place in the region for the past thousand years (or more, in many cases) are portrayed as a long struggle of the particular ethnic group for na-

tional liberation.[4] This view treats the formation of a nation-state for the given ethnic group as an important milestone, while the ultimate end—still to come—is the formation of an ethnically homogeneous polity as a result of the "unification" of all the lands inhabited by the ethnic group—lands that are portrayed as having been seized illegally by another state.[5] The problem is the delineation of which lands "belong" to the particular ethnic or national group. Since the emergence of the current states in central Europe and the Balkans, the boundaries of these states have changed on a number of occasions, so much so that many areas inhabited by a given ethnic minority group could probably be claimed by the nation-state of that ethnic group on the basis that the area had recently been a part of that state. Moreover, all of the existing states in central Europe and the Balkans claim to be successor states to various pre–modern-era kingdoms, and some of these entities, such as the Hungarian kingdom and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, covered much of the region under consideration. The problem is that many ethnic nationalists tend to view the historically greatest expansion of the predecessor state as the natural and "inalienable" lands to which the modern successor state is entitled.

Minority settlement in a given area and previous control of the region by a predecessor state can lead to all kinds of peculiar claims, such as the claim advanced by some Germans that Gdansk (Danzig in German) is a "German" city, that Vilnius or Lvov (Wilno or Lwow in Polish) are "Polish" cities, or that Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvar in Hungarian) is a "Hungarian" town. After a while, the very terminology assumes an irredentist connotation; for example, Romanians view the fact that Hungarians refer to Cluj-Napoca as Kolozsvar as a sign of a lack of acceptance of the Romanian possession of the town, or a nationalist slight at the very least. Some terminology, such as the reference by many Hungarian spokesmen to Slovakia as "upper

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[4]Of course, such a view is based not on fact but on the myth of continuity with some people inhabiting a given area a millenium ago.

[5]For a fascinating example of the twisting of history in Romania to suit the ethnic nationalist orientation, see Dennis Deletant, "Rewriting the Past: Trends in Contemporary Romanian Historiography," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 1991, pp. 64–86. For another study, see Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Hungary," has an unambiguous irredentist ring to many Slovaks. The end result is a fusion of ethnic and irredentist agendas based on myths of the past.

One of the key points to keep in mind is that a symbiotic relationship exists between the elites of the mobilized minority ethnic group and the political leaders in the neighboring state (where the coethnics are dominant) who use irredentist appeals to mobilize political action: The mobilized minority ethnic group finds a supportive champion for its grievances, while the very mobilization of the ethnic group provides ammunition to the irredentists, who point out that the oppressed ethnic kin must be "liberated" or "unified" with the mother country. Each one fuels the other. Serbia and Hungary are the prime examples of this phenomenon, but elements in Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania also fit in this category. Extremist forces in most of the countries of the region advocate "unification." Some political forces in the Czech Republic (the Assembly for the Republic–Republican Party of Czechoslovakia) even pressed for the "return" of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, and they are unlikely to come to terms with the separation of Czechoslovakia into two states.

The combination of minority grievances and irredentist sentiments can only fuel the insecurity of the dominant ethnic group in a state against which irredentist claims are made and force the group to doubt the loyalty of the ethnic minority even further. A cycle of escalating tensions starts—since the dominant ethnic group is likely to adopt further discriminatory measures in response to the perceived irredentist threat and the "fifth column" inside the country—and it becomes difficult to stop.

Chapter Four

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

The framework presented in Chapter Three enables us to distinguish three main types of ethnic tensions that could escalate to armed conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans:

1. If a minority ethnic group becomes mobilized for political action but lacks any substantial outside backers, the situation remains a domestic problem that could lead to low-intensity conflict, but it is likely to remain contained within the country.
2. If a minority ethnic group becomes mobilized for political action and is backed by a neighboring nation-state of ethnic kin, a domestic problem can become a cause of an international dispute and possibly of a border war.
3. The breakup of federal states made up of ethnoterritorial administrative units often escalates to armed struggle that is a hybrid between a civil war and a war for national independence; such a conflict may escalate into a larger regional war.

The following discussion sets out the probabilities of ethnically based tensions in these three categories in central Europe and the Balkans.

WHICH ETHNIC GROUPS DESERVE MONITORING?

Every country in Europe contains some ethnic minorities, and the countries emerging from communism are no exception. The relative

share of ethnic minorities varies from low in Poland and Hungary to substantial in Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria.[1] Establishing reliable estimates for the size of the minority populations in the former communist countries is no easy matter. The usual problems of any census regarding an accurate count, such as taking into account the number of people missed in the census, are magnified because the discriminatory and assimilationist policies practiced by the communist regimes caused ethnicity to become politicized and created incentives at the individual, local, and state levels to skew the census figures. As a result, there is good reason to view the census figures from the communist days with a great deal of skepticism, recognizing that figures for minorities were underestimated (sometimes grossly), while figures for the majority group were inflated.[2] Several countries in the region have held censuses since the ouster of the communist regimes, and some of the results appear more believable, though still far from accurate. Rather than becoming bogged down in calculating the specific numbers for each ethnic group in each of the countries in the region (a task of dubious value, since the size of a given minority by itself provides little indication of the propensity of that minority to become mobilized along ethnic lines for political action), we shall discuss the problem as it relates to the potential for interstate conflict. Rather than looking at the multitude of minorities inhabiting the nation-states in the central part of Europe and the Balkans, it is possible to narrow any analysis aimed at forecasting possible armed conflict in the region to those few minorities that have the potential to serve as catalysts for a border or regional war.

Category 1: No Neighboring Ethnic Backers

Because they present little interstate-war potential, the ethnic groups without neighboring-state support will not be considered here. This is not to say that such ethnic groups do not represent a problem. In-

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[1]For an overview of the minorities inhabiting each of the former communist countries in the central part of Europe and the Balkans, see the special issue entitled "A Survey of Minorities in Eastern Europe," *Report on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 2, No. 50, December 13, 1991.

[2]For an outstanding elaboration on the obstacles to an accurate count, see Andre Liebich, "Minorities in Eastern Europe: Obstacles to a Reliable Count," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 20, May 15, 1992, pp. 32–39.

deed, the integration of groups such as the Pomaks, the Romanies, or the Gagauz presents one of the most serious long-term social problems for the various states in the region, but these ethnic groups generally do not pose the danger of escalation of tensions to interstate conflict on their own. At most, conflict involving these groups can lead to domestic instability; no international disputes are likely to follow. Spain and France, for example, have experienced serious problems for decades with terrorism from various indigenous minority ethnic groups that call for autonomy or independence; however, these problems have been contained and have not led to any major interstate disputes, because the groups lack outside backers.[3] The only way tensions revolving around unsupported ethnic groups may become significant in the international sense is if they become entwined with another ethnic conflict; for example, Slovak treatment of the Ruthenians may become caught up in the larger issue of Hungarian-Slovak tensions over the Magyar minority in Slovakia, with Hungary acting in support of the Ruthenians in order to weaken Slovakia.

Category 2: Ethnic Backers Abroad

The groups worthy of monitoring are minorities that have ethnic kin organized into a neighboring nation-state. The situation becomes especially dangerous when the nation-state of ethnic kin has few constraints on making the treatment of its coethnics in a neighboring country a primary foreign-policy goal. Even more problematic, ethnic and irredentist issues seem to fuse when it comes to the treatment of ethnic groups that have kinsmen organized into a nation-state; the groups claim discrimination, presenting the problem in terms of human rights, but the states against which the claims are made perceive the problem as a questioning of borders (the cases of the Hungarians in Slovakia and in Romania provide two examples). The cycle of tensions may begin to acquire a life of its own, and conditions may arise that need only a spark to set off a border war. The spark may take the form of an ethnically based riot and a crack-

[3]Of course, some of the ethnic secessionist movements in the western part of Europe have received support from international sponsors of terrorism, such as Libya, but the point remains that no neighboring state has made the minority an issue in bilateral relations.

down in a country where the perceived discrimination occurs, followed by the elite backers in the neighboring country having to react militantly to stay in power, having painted themselves into a corner by mobilizing the population in support of the coethnics in the neighboring state. In this sense, the Hungarians residing in the Danube basin present probably the most acute source of tension and potential conflict in the region.

The specific national groups in central Europe and the Balkans and their propensity to support ethnic kinsmen abroad in their demands are discussed below, to gauge the potential for international conflict in the region. The countries are categorized according to the strength of their status quo or revisionist orientations, based on the constraints against or incentives in favor of exploiting the cause of ethnic kinsmen in neighboring countries. Hungary, with its highly mobilized population in support of ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries and lacking any offsetting constraints, has the fewest status quo inclinations. Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Albanian revisionist tendencies are checked by potential counterclaims against them, making these countries reluctant, or conditional, status quo powers. Slovakia and the Czech Republic are not discussed in great detail below because they are committed status quo powers, in that they are beneficiaries of previous international settlements, they have few coethnics living in neighboring countries, and their foreign-policy goals are aimed at consolidating present borders rather than changing them.

Poland. The case of ethnic Poles in the westernmost portion of the former USSR represents a problem with some potential for escalation to interstate conflict. However, the danger of escalation is lessened by mitigating circumstances: The potential support by a Polish regime for its coethnics in neighboring countries is offset by the vulnerability of Poland to counterclaims against it by Germany in the realm of minority treatment tinged with a measure of irredentism. In any situation where the Polish regime aggressively supports the cause of ethnic Poles in Lithuania, Belarus, or Ukraine, it becomes vulnerable to German claims for special status for ethnic Germans in western Poland. Under conditions where Poland needs German support for larger political purposes (such as integration into West European international institutions) and where it would be difficult for any Polish regime to reject German demands, the best policy for

Poland to follow is to moderate its support for the ethnic Poles in the western portion of the former USSR and not even raise the possibility of similar German demands on Poland.[4]

Bulgaria and Romania. Bulgaria and Romania show some similarities, in that both have potential claims to neighboring territories (Macedonia in the case of Bulgaria, Moldova in the case of Romania) on the basis of ethnic kinship mixed with irredentist agendas, but they are also vulnerable to counterclaims on the same basis from Turkey and Hungary, respectively. The difference between the Bulgarian and Romanian cases on the one hand and Poland on the other is that the main targets of Bulgarian and Romanian ethnic and irredentist policies are sovereign or semisovereign entities that could freely choose to become incorporated into the two established Balkan countries (Moldovan desire for incorporation with Romania is more likely than the presently weak Macedonian desire for incorporation with Bulgaria). Nevertheless, Bulgarian and Romanian support for their ethnic kin is moderated by simultaneous vulnerabilities on the same issue. Romania has followed a careful policy regarding Moldovan-Romanian unification because of the perception that changing the Romanian borders de jure will bring the issue of Transylvania into the open. Bulgarian spokesmen have been relatively subdued in defense of the ethnic Bulgarians in Moldova and in pressing for better treatment of ethnic Bulgarians in Serbia. In other words, Romania and Bulgaria have been careful in their support for ethnic kin inhabiting the neighboring countries because of a general wariness of raising an issue that may backfire on them.

Albania. The Albanian position in terms of support for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and its simultaneous vulnerability to Greek counterclaims is similar to that of Romania and Bulgaria. However, Albania faces a tougher "partner" in Kosovo, because the territory's autonomous status had been revoked by Serbia, and any meddling invites a strong Serbian response. This stands in direct contrast to Serbian action vis-à-vis Macedonia: Whereas Serbia allowed Mace-

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[4]This has been the policy of every post-communist government in Poland so far. Many ethnic Poles in the western part of the former USSR bitterly resent these policies, which they see as an "abandonment" by Poland. (Interviews by the author, Lithuania and Belarus, May 1993.)

donia greater leeway, it curtailed Kosovo's sphere of independent action. Moreover, Greek pressure on Albania for an autonomous status for the Greek-inhabited Vorio Epirus has risen commensurately with Albanian pressure on Serbia to return autonomous status to Kosovo. The situation has become dangerous in that outside backing for coethnics striving for autonomy has led to international coalitions forming and relations hovering on the brink of war in the region. The extreme level of destitution and isolation in Albania has acted as a brake on Albanian actions so far, but such considerations may not be sufficiently offsetting if a larger Balkan war breaks out.

Hungary. In contrast to the cases given above, Hungary's ethnically homogeneous nature makes it relatively invulnerable to counterclaims. Indeed, the Hungarian regime has exploited its relative invulnerability on the point of minority treatment by adopting highly liberal minority legislation and calling for other states in the region to emulate such actions. However, the Hungarian moves only incite further animosity from the neighboring countries because they bring up the memories of Hungarian foreign policy in the interwar period, when Hungary used minority rights as a cover for its irredentist goals. The setting up of a ministerial-level "Office for Hungarians Abroad" has been widely perceived in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia as the creation of a center for Hungarian direction of the various Hungarian ethnic movements in the neighboring countries. Although Hungarian spokesmen claim that the office serves only in a liaison role, its very existence and activity provide ammunition to those ethnic nationalists in Slovakia or Romania who claim that the Hungarians there constitute a disloyal "fifth column." The lack of a moderating force on Hungarian militancy in support of the ethnic Hungarians inhabiting the Danube basin has been evident in Hungary's foreign policy since the ouster of the communists, and only the prevalent West European norms against the open questioning of current borders, combined with Hungary's overall goal of becoming a member of West European international organizations, have acted to curtail the irredentist aspects of Hungarian foreign policy.

In this sense, the existence of the European Community (EC) and the potential for the entry of such states as Poland and Hungary may be the single most powerful source of moderation on the policies of the former communist states in the pursuit of national aims, as defined by the ethnonationalists in those countries. Indeed, the EC example

of long-term, successful, and extensive supranational cooperation that has led to prosperity and increased stature for its individual members has caused a fundamental change in the dynamics of international relations in central Europe and the Balkans. The example has forced states such as Hungary to moderate their policies on the minorities issue, lest their chances for joining the EC (and satisfying the national goal of increased individual strength as part of a larger community) be damaged. Of course, the moderating role of the EC on the behavior of states in central Europe and the Balkans will persist only if real chances for joining the organization exist. Should the chances of joining come to be perceived as unrealistic, more militant nationally oriented policies can be expected to follow.

Category 3: The Breakup of Federations

The breakup of multiethnic states has the greatest potential for escalation into a regional war. The breakup of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia has resulted in the disappearance of multiethnic federations in the region, so the current problem is in dealing with the consequences of the breakups rather than in anticipating any future breakups. The breakup of Czechoslovakia currently does not share many parallels with the situation in Yugoslavia. The lack of any substantial and compact Slovak or Czech minorities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, respectively, as well as the absence of any territorial claims against each other, provides the biggest difference from the Yugoslav case. However, the ongoing hybrid of civil war and a war of national independence in Yugoslavia is an especially brutal case of the chain of events that a secession may launch. The Serb-Croat-Muslim fighting is based mainly on the perception that members of one ethnic group will not be able to live on territory controlled by the other without facing extreme forms of discrimination or physical harm. Of course, the fact that such views have become dominant in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina stems from the elites, especially in Serbia, managing to scare the various ethnic groups with such a specter, perhaps as a way of fulfilling the elite's ethnonationalist ambitions (based on "unifying" all the lands inhabited by the members of the particular ethnic group). The escalation of the tensions to open fighting means that any moderating influences that might have existed at one time have largely disappeared, hardening the stances on both sides and making it likely that the

fighting (with occasional "truces") will persist for some time to come. Moreover, the open fighting has increased insecurity among all parties concerned, so that chances of any of them settling for less than a sovereign state of their own seem to be long gone.

The formation of new states out of the former multiethnic federations tends to accentuate the ethnically based interstate tensions, for a number of reasons. First, a multitude of cases have shown that a euphoric phase often follows the successful crowning of secessionist efforts.[5] During such a phase, the dominant ethnic group (the one that has led the secessionist effort) attempts to codify the supreme position for itself within the new polity by instituting measures that have the effect of discriminating against the lesser ethnic groups residing in the country. Members of the ethnic group dominant in the previous unified state often become the victims of such measures, since many of them occupied privileged positions under the old order. The discrimination then often sparks a reaction from the elites in the state that claims to be the successor to the unified state (for example, Serbia and Russia). The elites in the successor state are usually in a vulnerable political position because of the secession, and the cause of the "upstarts" discriminating against the coethnics is an easy issue around which to rally support. (The discrimination against ethnic Russians in Latvia and Estonia and the reaction it has provoked in Russia represents an especially acute example of this phenomenon.) Such a cycle of events is one of the primary reasons for the outbreak of fighting that often accompanies the breakup of states.

Second, the very nature of the breakup of a multiethnic state tends to lead to the questioning of borders, since members of the dominant ethnic group in the newly emergent state usually inhabit adjoining states. One chain of events leading to strife focuses on the ethnic group that achieves statehood for the first time. The very formation of such a state tends to have the effect of sparking ethnic mobilization among the coethnics in the whole region, for it is a case of ethnic nationalist aspirations finally coming true and it tends to have a euphoric effect on the particular ethnic group in general. The mobi-

[5]Some of the many examples include the case of India (1947), a number of African states (most of them under British colonial rule), and examples from the immediate aftermath of World War I in Europe.

lization also sparks pressure for the further redrawing of borders through the incorporation of other areas inhabited by the coethnics into the new state as a way of "unifying" the ethnic group.

Another chain of events that can lead to strife begins with members of an ethnic group dominant in an established adjacent state inhabiting the territory of the newly emergent state. The establishment of a new state provides an opportunity to question the validity of the state's borders based on demographic (ethnic) patterns of settlement, and it provokes moves on the part of the other established states to protect their coethnics in the new state.

Thus, during the emergence of a new state, pressure may arise to redraw borders (not stopping at the division of the old unified state) by incorporating the minority-inhabited areas of adjacent established states into the new state or by incorporating the minority-inhabited areas of the new state into the established adjacent state. Cases of the former were particularly evident during the initial state-formation stage in 1918–1921 in the region under discussion, whereas cases of the latter have appeared during the post-communist restructuring in the area. For example, the Hungarian Prime Minister's comment that Hungary signed agreements regarding its northern and southern borders with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and not with Slovakia and Serbia contained an implicit refusal to recognize the existing borders, and it represented a case of the possible beginning of the second chain of events described above. The rumors of Macedonia being carved up between Albania, Greece, and Bulgaria provide another example. Whatever the scenario, the formation of new states puts the issue of borders in the forefront.

The questioning of borders also contains the most likely seeds of escalation to a regional war because the entire regional balance of power is threatened by territorial adjustments. The lack of any international security organization increases the insecurity, for there is no institution that could moderate the interstate friction in the region under discussion and ease the sometimes exaggerated fears about borders. At present, many of the countries emerging from communism pay lip service to the CSCE norm that borders are not to be changed by force, but their policies show either thinly disguised hopes for border adjustments or fears of such adjustments. Rather than decreasing tensions, the current coalitions or ententes in the

central part of Europe and the Balkans often serve to increase them. The coalitions typify the insecurity of all the elites in the region, in that uncertainty drives the states to build international minicoalitions or understandings aimed against a specific country; that country, in turn, tries to counter with a coalition of its own. The Hungarian use of the Visegrad grouping to strengthen its position vis-à-vis Romania, the rumors of a Slovak-Romanian-Serbian coalition against Hungary, the potential for Hungarian-Bulgarian cooperation directed against Romania, and the myriad other proposals that have emerged so far in the region all have in common a specific limited threat they are meant to address. Usually, these threats are made more serious by attempts to counter them, because they evolve into self-fulfilling prophecies. A web of alliances also has the potential to lead to rapid escalation of a relatively minor border conflict to a major regional war.

CONCLUSIONS

The Persistence of Tensions

Tensions centering around ethnicity will persist for the foreseeable future in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. The immediate reasons for the open emergence of old national disputes and ethnic animosities are embedded in the transformation from communism to liberalism and the associated fundamental internal rearranging of the polities that has produced economic calamities and political uncertainty throughout the region. Deeper causes that add up to discrimination and latent friction stem from the prevalent form of nationalism in the region (with its ethnic exclusivism and strong xenophobic tendencies) and the assumption of ethnicity based on lineage.

Since a substantial and persistent rise in the overall standards of living seems difficult to achieve in the region in the short term (especially in the case of some of the Balkan countries), there is little prospect that the current internal instability that has led to the open growth of ethnic tensions will change any time soon. Its extent will probably vary from the mild instability in the Czech Republic to more severe cases in the Balkans. In any event, heightened tensions based on ethnic allegiances are the link between internal instability

and international disputes in the region, and they appear likely to form the most important source of conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans for at least the next few years.

Only certain types of ethnic tensions have the potential to lead to conflicts between states in the region. Although minority groups without ethnic kin organized in a nation-state often tend to be the most numerous minorities in a country and may suffer the worst forms of human-rights abuses, they do not pose the greatest potential for interstate conflict. Instead, minority groups backed by a neighboring nation-state of their ethnic kin pose the greatest potential for escalation to armed conflict between states. The breakup of multiethnic federations in the region under discussion presents the greatest potential for escalation to regional war, since a breakup by its nature raises the issue of borders.

The persistence of tensions does not necessarily mean that armed struggle will break out all over the region. So far, armed strife has accompanied the transformation from communism to liberalism in the central part of Europe and the Balkans only in portions of the former Yugoslavia. Other than occasional riots with ethnic overtones, the process has been relatively peaceful in the other countries. Indeed, the great relative difference between the previous superficial ethnic calm and the present seeming explosion of ethnic grievances may have caused an overreaction among some observers in the West regarding the extent of ethnically based conflict in the area. Except in Yugoslavia, ethnic groups are pursuing claims in a peaceful manner in the new conditions of pluralism. The central part of Europe, in fact, has less ethnic strife than many parts of western Europe that are experiencing ethnically motivated terrorism. The issue is how to prevent the present tensions from growing to the point where some of the ethnic groups decide to take up armed struggle. In terms of the potential for interstate conflict, the distrust and the persistence of tensions means that there is a relatively low threshold for the escalation of a dispute to a border or regional war.

Changing Demands

The form of ethnic demands in the central part of Europe and the Balkans during the past year appears to be shifting, in line with the striving for greater organizational capability. The stage of rapid and

relatively unimpeded secession of ethnoterritorial administrative units seems to be over, for the simple reason that with the breakup of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, there are no more such administrative units in the region. However, the continued fundamental restructuring of polities is likely to continue, fueling further attempts at political mobilization along ethnic or regional lines. As a result, during the next few years, demands in the region will increasingly focus on calls for autonomy rather than outright secession. In some cases, such as those of Voivodina, Kosovo, and Transylvania, the demands call for the restoration of autonomy (the restitution of the Polish autonomous districts in the Vilnius area also fits in this category). In others, such as southern Slovakia, the demands constitute blueprints for the formation of new administrative units based on ethnic demographic patterns.

The change from secessionism to more limited forms of separatism has both negative and positive aspects, from the standpoint of bringing a measure of ethnic calm to the region. On the negative side, separatist movements with limited goals (regional autonomy) have the ever-present potential to evolve quickly into secessionist movements—which almost always provoke crises and often escalate to open fighting. For that reason, most regimes fear granting an ethnic group special status (allowing it an ethnoadministrative unit), and such intransigence, when combined with a high enough level of ethnic mobilization, often leads to the hardening of positions and the radicalization of the ethnic group's demands. On the positive side, the demands of ethnic movements aspiring to less than full sovereignty can be satisfied without the breakup of a state, and thus they hold the seeds of a peaceful solution and a potential stop to the escalating spiral of ethnic tensions.

The most pressing demands for autonomy (in southern Slovakia, Transylvania, Voivodina, and Kosovo) center on territories that the regimes currently in control consider to be "inalienable" lands of an ethnic group; for example, Kosovo has special nationalist mythological associations for Serbs, while Transylvania holds similar symbolic significance for Romanians. Because of the symbolic meanings associated with these territories and the political vulnerability of any regime that would give in to such demands, the demands for autonomy are unlikely to be met. The resulting impasse will be unstable and prone to occasional crises because the seeds of the dispute will

remain unresolved. A dangerous situation now exists, as in each of the disputed cases the neighboring state has mobilized its own population along ethnic lines in support of its coethnics across the border, and the whole issue has become intertwined with irredentism and a heightened sense of insecurity about the state's borders. This is especially true of the Hungarians in many of the countries in the region under discussion, a situation that could lead to a chain of events ending up in an armed conflict. Albania and Kosovo present a similar situation.

Chapter Five

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

Since ethnic tensions that have emerged in the formerly communist part of Europe are the direct result of the regime change and the systemic transformation to liberalism that has followed, they are likely to persist at least until the new system takes root and shows progress toward eliminating the social disruptions that came with the regime change. What does the probable persistence of ethnically motivated conflict and tensions in central Europe and the Balkans mean for the United States? And should the United States care about it?

Framing the problem of ethnic tensions in formerly communist Europe in terms of a successful transformation away from communism, the policy problem for the United States is not how to eliminate the tensions, for that is a long-term problem tied to the nature of nationalism in Europe that even the prosperous countries in western Europe have failed to resolve fully, but how to control them. The challenge is to limit the spread of ethnic tensions, prevent the escalation of tensions into militarized conflict, and contain any incidents of militarized ethnic conflict so that they do not lead to border wars or regional war.

Since the United States has a great stake in moderating conflict on the European continent and in encouraging a favorable transition from communism to liberalism in the former communist countries of Europe, there is a clear U.S. role for limiting the escalation of conflict in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. Moreover, the United States is uniquely qualified to play such a role because it is widely perceived as a neutral and well-meaning party. At stake for

the United States is continued peaceful economic and political evolution on the European continent, not just its central part but also its western part, because if ethnic tensions involving Hungary or Poland escalate to the point of armed strife, NATO and EC members, such as Germany, will be drawn (indirectly at least) into the conflict. In turn, differences within Western organizations that would probably result from indecision and lack of agreement on policies in dealing with such conflict could easily lead to the unraveling of NATO and the EC.

U.S. policy may need to be assessed on two levels, one addressing the underlying long-term causes, and the other dealing with the symptoms currently at play. Each level is addressed below.

ADDRESSING THE LONG-TERM CAUSES

Ultimately, the only long-term solution to the problem of ethnic strife in the region is to undercut the sources of support for political leaders who exploit insecurity and social disruptions by appealing to ethnic cleavages. In practical terms, that can be achieved only by the attainment of relative prosperity and the imposition of an effective international security regime on the region. The former would move ethnic tensions into the background to its earlier level of occasional nuisance (the level that exists in parts of western Europe), while the latter would stop the formation of ad hoc coalitions and the cycle of insecurity that can lead to war, despite the intentions of all sides to avoid it.

The security dimension especially offers possibilities for action. A discussion about extending membership in Western security organizations to some of the former communist European countries may be seen in this sense. For a variety of reasons, argued in more detail elsewhere,[1] NATO remains the only functioning security structure in Europe, and the current situation warrants giving the organization a gradually enlarged role in central Europe and the Balkans. NATO may need to develop new forms of participation, such as associate memberships and partial security guarantees, to give the former

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[1]Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4, September–October 1993, pp. 28–40; Charles L. Glaser, "Why NATO Is Still Best: Future Security Arrangements for Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Summer 1993, pp. 5–50.

communist countries the incentives to follow a policy of accommodation with their neighbors. In addition, at some point, NATO needs to outline the conditions and the time frame in which the former communist countries could join the organization. Even if the time frame is lengthy and may be taken as insulting by officials of the former communist countries because it specifies more stringent requirements than those applied to Spain, the outlining of requirements will certainly present them with a set of specific goals they can strive to achieve. In contrast to the present situation, they will be given an incentive to uphold the system in the same manner that prospects of eventual EC membership have moderated the activism of some of the central European and Balkan governments on behalf of ethnic minorities abroad. To put it another way, the outlining of conditions for formally joining NATO and the EC will result in a de facto adherence to a behavioral regime in the region that will act to prevent the escalation of any ethnic tensions to armed conflict between two states.[2] Just as NATO has moderated the rivalries and antagonisms between the various West European countries (or, as some have phrased it, it has protected West Europeans against themselves),[3] the same outcome can be achieved in central Europe and the Balkans.

The association agreements between the former communist European countries and the EC provide a solid framework for extensive relations and eventual EC membership, and the same path seems advisable in the security realm. Steps such as the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) may have some use, but they are half-measures that are more important in the symbolic than the substantive sense. The potential consequences of U.S. policy inaction need to be taken into account in case the opening up of NATO and the EC to new members is not pursued, since failure to bring about a successful transformation to liberalism is entirely possible even in the countries that seem best suited for it; and if that indeed happens, at least it should not happen due to lack of foresight and

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[2]Substantial evidence exists that even the prospect of joining the Council of Europe has moderated considerably the behavior of most of the governments in the region toward ethnic minorities. For some examples, see Jenonne Walker, "International Mediation of Ethnic Conflicts," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 102–117.

[3]Ted Greenwood, "NATO's Future," *European Security*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 1–14.

courage on the part of the West. Given a more secure environment, investment is bound to flow in greater quantities to the region (especially to the Balkan countries that have so far not managed to attract much foreign investment),[4] thus ameliorating some of the disruptions that have come with the economic transformation. The goal is *relative* prosperity and a perceptible improvement in economic well-being, and that is far from unachievable.

DEALING WITH CURRENT SYMPTOMS

The most immediate challenge is to prevent the escalation of ethnic tensions and, should the tensions reach a point of armed strife between two countries, the potential need to intervene with multilateral forces. Preventing ethnically based tensions from escalating entails addressing some of the grievances and claims of discrimination by the ethnic groups in the region. More specific steps are described below.

Mediation Efforts and Enforcement of Human-Rights Provisions

The perception of the United States throughout the region as a trustworthy and neutral third party makes the United States uniquely qualified to take on a larger role in mediation efforts and in preventing the escalation of ethnic tensions. The western European countries do not enjoy a position of such trust, and the continued complaints by the countries of the region (Hungary, for example, is consciously trying to internationalize the issue of treatment of the Hungarian minorities by raising it in a variety of European forums, such as CSCE) tend to be counterproductive, since they only encourage suspicions of irredentist motives among neighboring countries. Independent or semigovernmental U.S. forums for the

[4]Survey research has borne out the fact that Western firms' choices of countries in which to invest in central Europe have been based on perceptions of security of the potential investment. A more secure environment will bring greater investment flows (and will stabilize the social-economic situation) in the Balkan countries. (Zhen Quan Wang, "Foreign Investment in Hungary: A Survey of Experience and Prospects," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1993, pp. 245–254.)

pursuit of tension-reducing policies already exist, for example, the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER), and these could be strengthened and given greater resources.[5] In view of the potential for conflict in the region and the importance of the region because of its proximity and contiguity to Western Europe, U.S. mediation efforts there deserve as much attention as similar efforts in the Middle East.

One way of dealing with all types of ethnic tensions in the region would be to increase U.S. efforts aimed at eliciting compliance with international norms (UN or CSCE) on the rights of minorities. Whatever the forum, U.S. policy need not automatically adopt the common continental European way of dealing with minority problems along collective lines. Indeed, there is much to be said in favor of U.S. support for the rights of ethnic minorities on the basis of individual rights and a civic basis for citizenship and U.S. rejection of collective rights and an ethnic basis for citizenship. Combined with U.S. support for decentralization of power in a given state (i.e., rejection of the highly centralized Jacobin model), increased local power and genuinely respected guarantees of individual rights (freedom of assembly and speech) could well be a better option than collective rights. In addition to the fact that the United States exemplifies the ideals of civic nationalism, only civic nationalism has the potential to diminish the tensions stemming from ideas of ethnic exclusivity. Calls for collective minority rights do not necessarily diminish ethnic tensions in the long run; in fact, collective-rights provisions may increase the tensions by reinforcing through legal provisions the idea of distinct communities with special rights, and the resulting impression of favoritism on the basis of ethnicity can worsen ethnic tensions. Finally, promotion of human-rights observance based on individual rights furthers the overall process of democratization in the region.

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[5]Conferences and other efforts at conflict resolution organized by the PER have been received with a good deal of interest in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. See the reports from the first two PER conferences: "Romanian-American Symposium on Inter-Ethnic Relations," Bucharest, June 17–18, 1991; and "The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Illusions and Reality," Stupava, April 30–May 2, 1992. The PER also has played an important role in attempting to bring about a reconciliation between Hungary and Romania. The Council of National Minorities, set up in Romania in March 1993—the most successful effort so far to defuse ethnic tensions in Romania—is due in no small part to the PER's efforts.

In that vein, any U.S. attempt at conflict resolution should be permeated by healthy skepticism about spokesmen's claims of persecution of minorities or claims of strict adherence to international norms on minority treatment.[6] Nor should the demands of the various minority groups be treated uncritically. It is also not at all a given that the direct participation of representatives of the "mother country" in negotiations between government and minority representatives is constructive. Indeed, a good deal of evidence so far shows that such participation makes the resolution of problems more difficult, for it elevates the negotiations and the problems to a level of interstate talks over an interstate dispute, rather than the internal matter that the problems actually are.

Preemptive Warnings Against Boundary Changes

In addition to more active attempts at mediation and conflict resolution, there is also a need to establish clear and far-reaching disincentives to any serious contemplation of border changes by officials in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. In other words, it should be made clear before a crisis breaks out that not only will any attempt to change the present borders by force result in the country making the attempt being treated as a pariah state, but even peaceful changes of borders (as stipulated by CSCE) should be subject to approval in a regional forum. There are ample precedents for keeping the present boundaries, no matter how "historically unjustified" they may seem to some of the partisan proponents of boundary changes in the region.

The most serious potential for border changes arises at times of dissolution of states, and the breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia has created especially dangerous conditions. The Serb-Croat-Muslim conflict defies any easy solutions, but at the very least, an effort should be made to contain it from spreading further by discouraging unilateral intervention by any of the established states on behalf of the individual components of the former Yugoslavia. The disputes centering on Macedonia, Kosovo, and Voivodina all

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[6]For a lengthier treatment of the need for skepticism, see Richard E. Rubenstein, "Dispute Resolution on the Eastern Frontier: Some Questions for Modern Missionaries," *Negotiation Journal*, July 1992, pp. 205–213.

contain the potential for such intervention, which could easily escalate to a regional war. The United States can strengthen the disincentives to outside intervention by issuing repeated and clear warnings of the severity of U.S. reaction before any armed strife or unilateral intervention takes place. The U.S. warnings to Serbia over Kosovo represent one type of preemptive warning that carries good deterrence value. Since all the countries in the region depend on U.S. good will and support for successful transformations, only in the most extreme circumstances will such warnings not be heeded. Serbia may be the only such extreme case in the region, and there is some reason to think that even there, a more resolute U.S. policy could have stopped the Serbian encouragement of aggression. In Hungary, Bulgaria, and perhaps Albania, the warnings, backed up by evidence of serious intent, may be enough to prevent escalation.

Consideration of Regional Impact in Expanding Security Ties

The United States may need to pay special attention to how its security contacts with one country influence the perceptions of power shifts among the neighboring countries. Hungary is in a special position, in that Romania (and Slovakia to some extent) treats any advantage for the Hungarian military as its own disadvantage. The worst thing the United States could do would be to cause an increase in perceptions of threat and stimulate a cycle of rearmament in the region. And yet, Hungary occupies a special place in U.S. policy toward central Europe (rivaled only by Poland) because of the early attempts at reform in Hungary and the trust built up over the history of already extensive U.S.-Hungarian contacts. However, Hungary's special status should not prevent a balanced consideration of the interests of other countries in the region. This is not to say that the United States should not expand security cooperation with countries such as Poland or Hungary, but it should analyze closely the regional consequences of such moves before taking the steps. It is not inconceivable that a Romanian-Slovak (and perhaps Serbian) entente could become a reality if any potential Hungarian statements regarding changing the borders in the region were accompanied by greater Hungarian military capabilities as a result of closer security ties with the United States. Nor is it wise to forget that each of the countries in the region looks to use its links with the United States (and the West

European countries) for its own purposes—to elicit small regional advantages for itself—which may or may not be in harmony with U.S. policy goals. A policy of gradual steps over a clearly delineated path (open to all countries in the region), an increase in organizational ties, and an emphasis on providing only nonlethal or strictly defensive weapons to countries in the region seems wise, given the current tensions and insecurity. The bottom line should be that any U.S. security aid to the former communist countries of central Europe must really advance U.S. security interests in the area, and it must not end up contributing to regional arms races and increasing regional instability.

Armed Intervention

As explained in Chapter Two, the circumstances of regime change in central Europe and the Balkans have driven people to embrace violence and independent ethnically based ministates as a rational alternative to the insecurity of remaining in a multiethnic state. It seems advisable for U.S. policy to strive to make the costs of turning to violence so great as to make the whole alternative irrational. The threat of force and the selective use of force play a major role in bringing about that goal. The application of U.S. armed force is an extreme step that seems unlikely, especially in the Balkans. However, an outright rejection of the application of force seems unwarranted, for knowledge of U.S. inaction could actually contribute to the outbreak of armed strife between two states.

The threat of multilateral armed intervention may need to be considered as an option in certain cases, especially when both sides appear to have stumbled into an armed conflict unwillingly—as a result of painting themselves into a corner through ill-thought-out actions and statements—and both appear to be looking for a face-saving excuse not to proceed further.[7] In such a case, intervention makes much more sense in the initial stage of the conflict. Multilateral coalitions are much easier to put together in the initial stage than

[7]The actions of Austria-Hungary in the summer of 1914 may serve as a model to keep in mind. Had the international community been more forceful in addressing the Austro-Hungarian desire to save face and stop the escalation of hostilities, World War I might have been averted.

they are later, when other interests become intertwined with the warring sides, and the United States remains the only country capable of putting together a coalition to intervene, under either UN or NATO auspices. While this strategy presents some inherent risks and uncertainty, it seems to be much better than waiting for a conflict to escalate to a full military effort on both sides. The cost-benefit ratio should be seen in terms of costs of nonintervention; more often than not, intervention in the initial stages is a much better option than risking the military and economic costs of a conflict that spreads into a regional war, probable intervention at a later stage, and the costs of reconstruction.

The demonstration effect of a forceful, preemptive, or early intervention should also be kept in mind. U.S. warnings to Serbia over Kosovo and the sending of U.S. troops for peacekeeping duties to Macedonia are two examples of such actions. Inaction until the conflict reaches an advanced stage invites the development of the issue into a self-fulfilling prophecy and becoming a pawn in larger relations between the United States and western Europe or the United States and Russia, making resolution that much more difficult.

The case of Yugoslavia illustrates the importance of preventing the escalation of ethnic tensions beyond the initial stage. Once fighting takes place and the ever-present rumors of cruelty by the combatants become validated by evidence, the cycle of increasing tensions progresses to a point where the chances for resolution of the dispute become slim, the conflict becomes more and more intractable, and it threatens to turn into a regionwide war. The spiral of conflict in what is in effect sectarian strife among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims has progressed so far that it is difficult to imagine how the warring ethnic factions will be able to live in the same territorial-administrative unit in the future. All three groups speak the same language, and, claims of specific ethnic nationalists notwithstanding, there are no racial differences between them. The differences between the three groups boil down to different religious traditions, and as such, the conflict bears many comparisons to those in Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon.[8] It is important to recognize that there is no conceptual

[8]Studies of the conflicts in Ireland and Lebanon provide probably the best lessons for predicting the future course of events in Yugoslavia. (John D. Brewer, "Sectarianism and Racism, and Their Parallels and Differences," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 15,

difference between the Serb-Croat-Muslim strife in Bosnia and what has been dubbed pejoratively as "tribal warfare" in Africa.[9] Just as there are no easy options for outside imposition of calm on a region undergoing tribal warfare in Africa, the same is true for Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, even in the case of Yugoslavia, the lack of any easy solutions does not mean a lack of means to deter conflict.

One potential solution to the problem of a seemingly intractable ethnic conflict lies in the separation of the warring groups. The transfer of populations to resolve conflict has been tried previously on a number of occasions in the Balkans,[10] and although it goes against the basic tenets of liberalism, it seems to be one of the few ways of stopping the cycle of increasing barbarism enveloping the former Yugoslavia. In a larger historical perspective, the relative lack of coerced (or at least "encouraged") migrations in the central part of Europe and the Balkans between 1948 and 1989 is an anomaly.[11] Members of the ethnic or national groups inhabiting the region have been forced to move on the basis of collective ethnic persecution on numerous occasions during the twentieth century, and democratic governments (for example, Czechoslovakia) have been just as responsible for initiating the migrations as authoritarian ones.[12] Without some form of massive outside intervention, the conflict in Yugoslavia is likely to persist until largely ethnically homogeneous

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No. 3, July 1992, pp. 352–364; Elizabeth Crighton and Martha Abele MacIver, "The Evolution of Protracted Ethnic Conflict: Group Dominance and Political Underdevelopment in Northern Ireland and Lebanon," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2, January 1991, pp. 127–142.)

[9]For an excellent elaboration, see Benyamin Neuberger, "On Dealing with Multiethnicity in Africa and Europe," *Plural Societies*, Vol. 15, October 1984, pp. 239–254.

[10]For one study, see Yossi Katz, "Transfer of Population as a Solution to International Disputes: Population Exchanges Between Greece and Turkey as a Model for Plans to Solve the Jewish-Arab Dispute in Palestine During the 1930s," *Political Geography*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1992, pp. 55–72.

[11]It is important to remember that even during the communist domination of the region, forced large-scale population transfers continued, with Jews, Germans, and Turks becoming special targets of these policies. For an overview of Bulgarian policies of expulsion, see Erhard Franz, "The Exodus of Turks from Bulgaria, 1989," *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 25, 1991, pp. 81–97.

[12]For a good overview of the long list of forced migrations, see Jerzy Tomaszewski, "International Migrations Connected with National Conflicts in East-Central Europe in the First Half of the XXth Century," *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, Vol. 9, 1991, pp. 1–31.

Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim states are formed, though it seems likely to cause a regional war first (for reasons discussed above).

The only other potential solution to the problem in Yugoslavia is to change the nature of its nationalism from ethnic to civic.[13] Under favorable conditions of prosperity, such a change is possible, but the current situation in Yugoslavia makes the task difficult, if not impossible. In the long run, the separation of warring groups and populations, combined with a decentralized governing structure (the rejection of the Jacobin model of state) may lead to an uneasy but lengthy period of peaceful cohabitation. Eventually, civic Bosnian nationalism may develop.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. ARMY

The U.S. Army has a role in the larger U.S. policy of addressing both the long-term causes and the current symptoms of the open emergence of ethnic conflict in central Europe and the Balkans. Perhaps most important in thinking about a U.S. Army role is the need to reject the false paradigm of ethnic tensions as an irrational—and therefore unsolvable—phenomenon. The use of irrationality by analysts and policymakers as an explanation for the tensions has already provoked open disdain among scholars of nationalism and even accusations of purposeful feigning of ignorance as an excuse for not taking any stronger action to solve the problem. As explained in Chapter Two, the phenomenon is understandable and the problem can indeed be addressed. Of course, the fact that ethnic tensions in formerly communist Europe are understandable and solvable does not mean that they are easy to solve.

The U.S. Army can address the underlying causes by assisting larger U.S. foreign-policy goals through the continued expansion of bilateral and multilateral (through NATO) contacts with the militaries of the former communist European countries. Any prospective integration of those countries into Western security organizations is a long-term process, and the intermediate step is to close the large gap

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[13]For one example of the change in the type of nationalism, see Raymond Breton, "From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism: English Canada and Quebec," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1988, pp. 85–102.

in contacts that still remains as a result of the Cold War. In other words, the U.S. Army's extensive and growing links and exchanges with the militaries of the former communist countries can contribute to moderating the latter's behavior in a regional crisis situation, since they may be cautious about putting the extensive links at risk through any bellicose behavior. Military-to-military exchanges and cooperation seem especially important in the case of the former communist countries, since civilian control over the militaries in those countries remains weak. Thus, the U.S. Army constitutes one of the most important channels that can influence constructively the actions of the former communist militaries.

In terms of the four specific U.S. policies that address the current symptoms, the U.S. Army would play a crucial role in any U.S. decision to resort to armed intervention. In addition, the U.S. Army needs to consider the regional impact of expanding ties with any individual country in central Europe and the Balkans. Regarding U.S. armed intervention, there is a need to realize the limits on the suitability of the use of outside force in the region, including the important distinctions between the potential for a successful U.S. military role in moderating various types of ethnic strife (as presented in Chapter Three). Ethnic strife that has little potential for escalation (i.e., among ethnic groups without outside backers) should not warrant the consideration of U.S. military reaction, though it may warrant stronger U.S. efforts at conflict resolution. Ethnic strife that carries strong potential for escalation (i.e., between ethnic groups with outside backers, or intervention during a breakup of a state) may call for pressure on the outside state backing the ethnic group, greater attempts at conflict resolution, and perhaps, in certain cases, a military response. For purposes of deterring conflict, armed intervention should not be rejected outright.

The important principle to keep in mind is that armed intervention (whether in favor of one side or for peace-enforcement purposes) is more effective during the early stages of a conflict and in situations where two states are looking for a face-saving way out of a conflict (probably the mode of most governments in central Europe and the Balkans with a stake in future integration into larger West European organizations) than it is in a low-intensity conflict where battle lines are not clearly drawn and identification of combatants is a problem. Conditions in Yugoslavia are a hybrid of the two, which should make

consideration of armed intervention a more distant possibility, but should not necessarily argue against any armed intervention altogether. Instead, there may be a need for the adjustment in the type of intervention (for example, selective intervention through concentration of forces in one area, taking into account the low training of the irregular forces and placing emphasis on the demonstration effect by applying overwhelming force in a display of power).

In terms of specific policies for the U.S. Army, there is a need for a far-ranging program of contingency planning for potential multilateral peacekeeping or, more likely, peace-enforcement roles in the central part of Europe and the Balkans. What is called for is the preparation of a set of responses to potential crisis scenarios, so that early intervention will become a real possibility. The very existence of such preparation will have a deterrent impact in the region, for it will make early U.S.-led intervention more credible. This does not mean that the United States will intervene, but only that the United States will not be dismissed as an irrelevant force in the calculations of militant leaders in central Europe and the Balkans. Given Western inaction during the fighting in Yugoslavia, the perception of continued U.S. relevance needs to be strengthened.

Central Europe and the Balkans are among the most likely places for the United States to use force in the near future, and the new missions and roles may necessitate changes in training or equipment. The problem in the region is unlikely to go away in the near future, and the possible use of force deserves extensive attention by U.S. Army planners. Other specific tasks for the U.S. Army in the region under discussion include preparing for refugee relief operations and medical assistance. Such missions might be undertaken in conjunction with peacekeeping intervention efforts, or they may be undertaken on their own.

Any intervention in the region should also advance longer-term U.S. policy goals, and putting together a multilateral reaction force with contingents from the countries in the central part of Europe and the Balkans that are perceived to be neutral to the given dispute would advance U.S. and NATO interests in building intermilitary ties with those armed forces. For example, Polish units might be earmarked for duty during any peacekeeping intervention between Romania

and Hungary, while Bulgarian troops might be earmarked for similar duties in any intervention between Hungary and Slovakia.

The other role for the U.S. Army in the larger U.S. policy for addressing the current open ethnic tensions in central Europe and the Balkans is the careful consideration of the regional impact of expanding U.S. security ties with any one country in the area. Subject to overall strategic calculations that may favor some countries, such as Poland or Hungary, the U.S. Army needs to assure that an expansion of links with one state is not seen as directed against another state. In this sense, the U.S. Defense Attaché Offices in general, and the U.S. Army Attachés, specifically, in the various countries may need to keep other countries' officials abreast of the development of U.S. military-to-military contacts with neighboring states. Such actions would be welcomed; they would disperse any suspicions over the thrust of U.S. policies; and they would reinforce the image of the United States as a fair and reliable partner in the region.

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