PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT IN EUROPE
Istituto affari internazionali
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
Ebenhausen, 22-23/XI/1996

a. Programme
b. Project report
1. "Conceptual problems and policy dilemmas of conflict prevention"/ Ettore Greco (14p.)
2. "Toward a framework for diagnosing and designing conflict prevention in Europe"/ Michael Lund (39p.)
3. "Preventing conflict in the Baltic States: a success story that will hold"/ Renatas Norkus (44p.)
4. "Potential for conflicts in post-war Georgia"/ Sopiko Shubladze (24p.)
5. "Dilemmas of domestic conflict"/ Bernard von Plate (8p.)
6. "Democracy building and conflict prevention"/ Renee de nevers (15p.)
7. "Regional cooperation as a tool for conflict prevention: feasibility and usefulness"/ Gianni Bonvicini (10p.)
8. "The role of military tools in conflict prevention"/ Dimitri Trenin (7p.)
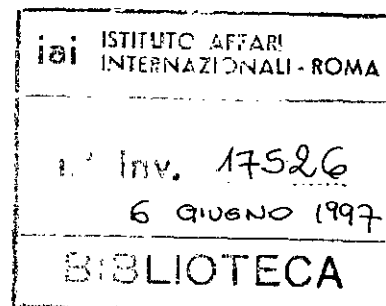
STIFTUNG WISSENSCHAFT UND POLITIK (SWP)
FORSCHUNGSINSTITUT FÜR INTERNATIONALE POLITIK UND SICHERHEIT

Joint IAI/SWP Project Conference
on
„Preventing Violent Conflict in Europe"

Ebenhausen, Germany
November 22-23, 1996

22 November 1996

12:00 pm	*Shuttle Service to SWP*
12:30-1:30 pm	*Lunch at SWP*
01:30-02:00 pm	Opening Remarks
	Gianni *Bonvicini, IAI & Reinhardt Rummel, SWP*
Session I	**Central Issues of Conflict Prevention in Europe**
	(Chaired by Reinhardt Rummel)
02:00-03:00 pm	Conceptual Aspects and Policy Dilemmas of Conflict Prevention
	Introduction: *Ettore Greco, IAI*
	Commentary: *Dieter Boden, OSCE*
	Discussion
03:00-04:00 pm	Toward a Framework for Diagnosing and Designing Conflict Prevention in Europe
	Introduction: *Michael Lund, Creative Associates Int'l*
	Commentary: *Bert Koenders, European Commission*
	Discussion
04:00-04:30 pm	*Coffee Break*
Session II	**Regional Case Studies: The Baltic States and the Caucasus**
	(Chaired by Gianni Bonvicini)
04:30-05:30 pm	Preventing Conflict in the Baltic States: A Success Story That Will Hold?
	Introduction: *Renatas Norkus, IAI Scholar in Residence/Lithuania*
	Commentary: *Olaf Knudsen, NUPI*
	Discussion

This project is sponsored by the Volkswagen Stiftung

05:30-06:30 pm	Potential for Conflicts in Post-War Georgia Introduction: *Sopiko Shubladze, SWP Scholar in Residence/Georgia* Commentary: *Liz Fuller, OMRI* Discussion
06:30-06:45 pm	*Refreshments break*
	Guest Presentation (Chaired by Bernard von Plate)
06:45-07:30 pm	The OSCE's Role in Conflict Management: A Case Study on the Caucasus *Dieter Boden, OSCE* Question and Answers
07:30 pm	*Dinner at SWP*
09:00 pm	*Shuttle to hotel*

23 November 1996

8:30 am	*Shuttle service to SWP*
Session III	**Conceptual Levels of Conflict Prevention Policy** (Chaired by Natalino Ronzitti)
09:00-10:00 am	*Diplomatic Level:* Dilemmas of Domestic Conflict Introduction: *Bernard von Plate, SWP* Discussion
10:00-11:00 am	*Systemic Level:* Democracy Building and Conflict Prevention Introduction: *Renee de Nevers, Harvard University* Discussion
11:00-11:30 am	*Coffee Break*
11:30-12:30 am	*Structural Level:* Regional Cooperation as a Tool for Conflict Prevention: Feasibility and Usefulness Introduction: *Gianni Bonvicini, IAI* Discussion

12:30-02:00 pm	*Lunch*
Session IV	**Instruments and Actors in Conflict Prevention** (Chaired by Marco Carnovale)
02:00-03:00 pm	Financial Instruments of Conflict Prevention Introduction: *Katherine Marshall, World Bank* Commentary: *Melanie Stein, EBRD* Discussion
03:00-04:00 pm	The Role of Military Tools in Conflict Prevention Introduction: *Dimitri Trenin, Russian Academy of Sciences* Commentary: *Espen Barth Eide, NUPI* Discussion
04:00-04:30 pm	*Coffee Break*
	(Chaired by Bernard von Plate)
04:30-05:30 pm	Non-governmental Organizations and Conflict Prevention Introduction: *Neil MacFarlane, Oxford University* Commentary: *Elizabeth Winship, Open Society Institute, Armenia* Discussion
05:30-06:30 pm	Council of Europe as an actor in Conflict Prevention Introduction: Jutta *Gützkow, Council of Europe* Commentary: *Natalino Ronzitti, IAI* Discussion
06:30-06:45 pm	Closing Remarks *Ettore Greco, IAI & Bernard von Plate, SWP*
06:45	*Shuttle to hotel*
07:15 pm	*Dinner at restaurant: Hotel Zum Alter Wirth*

Preventing Violent Conflicts in Europe, Joint Research Project of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)

Project Report of the First Year's Activities

I.   Working Group Meetings
II.   Conference

I.   Working Group Meetings

In 1996 three Working Group Meetings took place. The first Working Group Meeting took place at IAI, Rome on 22-23 February 1996, the second Working Group at IAI, Rome on 13 September 1996 and the third Working Group Meeting after the Conference on 24 November 1996.

The objective of the meetings was to discuss both theoretical and practical problems related to the project. At the meeting the participants exchanged views on discussion papers prepared for the meeting, agreed on a provisional book structure and Conference agenda, and settled on a division of labour with regard to research, organizational and data collection responsibilities.

Furthermore the decision was taken to publish two books instead of one. It was agreed that the following papers and authors will be or may be included in the first book:
Bloed, Lund, MacFarlane, de Nevers, Norkus, von Plate, Trenin, Ter-Gabrielian, Shubladze, Zullo.
All four project directors would be included as editors of the publication without making written contributions other than an introduction.
It was also agreed that the publishing of the first book should follow the following guidelines: 1) It would be published with Nomos probably. 2) Some figure less of the publishing budget would be earmarked for it. 3) The SWP would be responsible for editing. 4) No subsidy should be given to the publishing.

The following is the list of participants to the Working Group Meetings:
IAI: Gianni Bonvicini (Director of the project)
        Ettore Greco (Director of the project)
        Renatas Norkus (SiR 1996)
        Sonia Lucarelli (Research Assistant)
SWP: Reinhardt Rummel (Director of the project)
        Bernard von Plate (Director of the project)
        Sopiko Shubladze (SiR 1996)
        Claude Zullo (Research Assistant)

II.   Conference

The first Conference took place at SWP, Ebenhausen on 22-23 November 1996.

The overall function of the Conference was to present and discuss the initial results of the project. The first year of research has focused on understanding the dynamics of conflict as well as the instruments that have been implemented and the actors that have been involved in conflict prevention. The two focus areas of the Conference were the Baltic States and the Caucasus region (Georgia) according to the two 1996 Scholars in Residence, Renatas Norkus (IAI) from Lithuania and Sopiko Shubladze (SWP) from the Republic of Georgia. The Conference played a distinct, but connected, role in the overall objectives of the project. Moreover, it incorporated a balanced mix of both conceptual approaches and practical experience. The aims of the Conference were: First, to help to foster a better understanding of the art of conflict prevention; second, it should be used by the Scholars in Residence and other writers to help refine their research; and third, it should contribute to the development of the project's final report, which will analyze conflict case studies and suggest improvements for conflict prevention policy in Europe.

Overall the outcome of the Conference was very successful. The dialogue during the Conference, not only contributed to a very interesting discussion, but also proved valuable to the Scholars in Residence and other paper writers, commissioned by the project.

For the agenda of the Conference please refer to the annex.

The following is the list of participants to the Conference:

IAI:	Gianni Bonvicini (Director, IAI)
	Ettore Greco (Senior Researcher, IAI)
	Sonia Lucarelli (PVCE Project Manager, IAI)
	Renatas Norkus (1996 PVCE Project Scholar in Residence, IAI)
	Natalino Ronzitti (Scientific Advisor, IAI)
	Radoslava Stefanova (1997 PVCE Project Scholar in Residence, IAI)
SWP:	Marie Janine Calic (Senior Researcher, SWP)
	Beate Eschment (Senior Researcher, SWP)
	Winrich Kühne (Deputy Director, SWP)
	Bernard von Plate (Senior Researcher, SWP)
	Reinhardt Rummel (Senior Researcher, SWP)
	Peter Schmidt (Senior Researcher, SWP)
	Sopiko V. Shubladze (1996 PVCE Project Scholar in Residence, SWP)
	Claude Zullo (PVCE Project Manager, SWP)
External experts:	Dieter Boden (Ambassador, Head of OSCE Missionn to Georgia, German Foreign Ministry)
	Marco Carnovale (CEEC and Liaison Officer, NATO)
	Espen Barth Eide (Program Director, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs)
	Elizabeth Fuller (Senior Research Analyst, Open Media Research Institute)
	Jutta Gützkow (Adminsitrator, Council of Europe)
	Olav F. Knudsen (Senior Research Associate, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs)
	Bert Koenders (Directorate-General 1A, European Commission)
	Michael Lund (Consultant, Creative Associates International, Inc.)
	S. Neil MacFarlane (Professor, St. Anne's College, Oxford University)
	Katherine Marshall (The World Bank/IFC/MIGA)

	Renée de Nevers (Research Fellow, Harvard University)
	Melanie H. Stein (Principal Banker, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)
	Dimitri Trenin (Senior Fellow, Institute of Europe, Moscow)
	Elizabeth Winship (Country Director, Open Society Institute Armenia)
Observers:	Roberto Aliboni (Director of Studies, IAI)
	Giedrius Apuokas (Director, Division of the Americas, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
	Jeffrey McCausland (Colonel, George C. Marshall Center)
	Serkki Niitsoo (Acting Chief of Air Force HQ, Estonian Ministry of Defense)
	John Roper (Associate Fellow, The Royal Institute of International Affairs)
	Julianne Smith (Robert Bosch Stiftung Fellow)
	Hilde Stadler („One World" Department, Bavarian Television)

Presentations were given by: Dieter Boden

Gianni Bonvicini
Ettore Greco
Jutta Gützkow
Michal Lund
Neil MacFarlane
Katherine Marshall
Renée de Nevers
Renatas Norkus
Bernard von Plate
Sopiko Shubladze
Dimitri Trenin

Comments were given by:

Espen Barth Eide
Dieter Boden
Liz Fuller
Bert Koenders
Olaf Knudsen
Natalino Ronzitti
Melanie Stein
Elizabeth Winship

Annexes
Final activity reports by the two 1996 scholars in residence Sopiko Shubladze and Renatas Norkus
Conference agenda

Joint IAI/SWP Project Conference
on

"Preventing Violent Conflict in Europe"

Ebenhausen, Germany
22-23 November 1996

"Conceptual Problems and Policy Dilemmas of Conflict Prevention"

by
Ettore Greco
Istituto Affari Internazionali

CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS AND POLICY DILEMMAS
OF CONFLICT PREVENTION

by Ettore Greco

1. The new emphasis on conflict prevention

In the last few years conflict prevention has become not only a buzz word but also a policy component of key importance for the major international institutions dealing with security problems. They have all planned to strengthen their activity in the field, making it more systematic and comprehensive.

This is, in particular, the case of the United Nations, whose responsibilities in conducting conflict prevention on a global scale are clearly enshrined in its Charter. In the 1995 Supplement to his "Agenda for Peace", the UN Secretary-General has placed renewed emphasis on the subject, calling for the mobilization of increased human and material resources to allow the UN Secretariat to ensure wider and more effective coverage of conflict prevention needs all over the world.

Some important improvements have recently been made in the UN early warning system. The creation of both the Department of Political Affairs in 1992 and of the Policy Analysis Team, including officers from various divisions, in 1995 was part of this effort. However, the overall UN capacity of early warning and policy analysis as well as its actual conflict prevention activities in trouble spots remains quite limited especially if compared to growing expectations.

The instruments and policies aimed at the prevention of conflict in Europe are much more multi-faceted and structured than in other areas of the world. Recently there has been

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remarkable progress. A crucial element has been the emergence of a common 'conflict prevention culture', as developed in several European agreements and codes of conduct. Besides making a fundamental contribution to this codifying activity, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has specialized in both early warning and conflict prevention, by establishing an increasingly closer link between its human and security dimensions and by building up an articulated and flexible system of instruments for monitoring and intervention in hot areas.

Its involvement in the management of many tensions and disputes affecting European security has steadily increased. The record of these interventions, however, is mixed: although effective in some cases, the real impact of the OSCE presence and activity has been marginal, if not irrelevant in others.

The enhancement of conflict prevention capabilities is also high in the agenda of other European organizations. Worth mentioning ,in particular, is the effort undertaken by the European Union (EU), within the context of the development of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), to build up planning and analysis capabilities as a basic instrument of conflict prevention. As a matter of fact, the lack of specific conflict prevention assets has been a major obstacle so far to the utilization of the EU's considerable potential in the field.

A fundamental factor in feeding the current emphasis on conflict prevention has been the growing awareness of its greater cost effectiveness with respect to other policy options. In many cases late intervention has proved to be both costly and ineffective. The most telling example in Europe is provided by the high costs connected with the delay in the international response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Having failed to intervene effectively in the early stages of the conflict, the international organizations are currently engaged in a very difficult and costly post-conflict peace-building process.

More generally, both the theory and practice of

international interventions provide strong support for the widespread conviction that intervening in an early stage of the development of a conflict, that is, in a more permissive environment, allows for use of a wider spectrum of means and policies. Once the conflict has assumed a violent character, most of them become unaffordable or simply unusable. The intervener loses much of his room for action and his policy dilemmas grow more acute.

It must be added that the increasing interpendence makes a policy of mere non-intervention - which is certainly a distinct option - increasingly less viable, especially in Europe where the feeling of living in a "common space" has become widespread. By adopting a policy of non-intervention in an earlier stage of a conflict, the relevant international actors run the risk of losing their best opportunities to influence its course, while many factors can force them to act in a later stage when the situation is more compromised and hence less manageable.

In today's world conflict prevention has remarkably changed its nature. In the past it was mostly associated with inter-state conflicts. Its main purpose was to maintain a stable balance between the individual states or groups of states. Now it is focused much more on the risk factors emerging from the collapse of states or, in general, from domestic failures. Indeed, most ongoing conflict prevention activities concern more or less purely intra-state conflicts.

This reflects the fundamental change in the pattern of conflict that has occurred since the end of the Cold War. The number of inter-state conflicts has declined remarkably, while domestic conflicts have proliferated. According to SIPRI estimates, both in 1994 and in 1995 all the major armed conflicts were internal. With this trend in mind, several analysts have tried to utilize key concepts of the realist theory of conflict, such as "anarchy" and "security dilemmas", to improve the understanding of the dynamics of domestic conflicts and hence to increase the possibilities of preventing them.

However, current intra-state conflicts not only have various and considerable repercussions on the external environment, but have sometimes prompted the involvement of other states. In many cases the likelihood of their transforming into inter-state conflict is far from negligible. The prevention of internal conflicts is therefore of great relevance for the stability of the overall system of inter-state relations. In his "Agenda for Peace", the UN Secretary-General has underlined the disruptive potential for the international system of the forces of fragmentation arising from failing states and seccessionist movements.

This concern about the impact of internal conflicts on inter-state relations and the overall international system is coupled with the widely shared belief that intervention in domestic affairs is legitimate to convince or force governments to comply with a set of inviolable fundamental principles. This has made conflict prevention an even more attractive concept. In fact, since governments find it harder to resist pressure to intervene than in the past, the best course of action for them seems to deal with potentially violent conflicts at the earliest possible stage.

2. Conceptual and definitional problems

According to the "Agenda for Peace", what the UN Secretary-General has called "preventive diplomacy" can be aimed at three different goals: (i) to prevent disputes from arising between parties; (ii) to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts; (iii) to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.

This list has been critized from different points of view. In particular, whilst some analysts argue that it is incomplete since it overlooks other important conflict prevention activities, others, in contrast, advocate a more restricted definition in order to make it more operational.

The goal of preventing disputes from arising - where

"disputes" are taken to be the least destructive types of conflict - is a very ambitious and demanding task, arguably beyond the actual capacity of the current or any future possible system of international organizations. After all, conflict is a structural element of any international system and as such cannot be completely extirpated, but only contained or controlled. Moreover, many forms of conflict should be seen as instrumental in producing or favouring beneficial changes. They often derive from emancipatory thrusts against repressive or illegitimate institutions or social structures. They can contribute eventually to the establishment of institutional or social settings that are less conflict-prone, thus having a long-term stabilizing function. What seems crucial is that conflicts occur within the context of social systems capable of self-regulation, in which they can be prevented from assuming a purely disruptive nature.

By and large, it seems reasonable that international action should concentrate on those conflicts that have a clear potential to become violent. This certainly implies an effort to prevent all forms of armed conflicts, including those that can erupt between governments and insurgent forces. More controversial is whether other forms of organized violent action, such as ethnic cleansing or genocide, should be the object of preventive action. Keeping in mind the current attitude of international organizations, the answer cannot but be affirmative. In particular, the UN Security Council has repeatedly characterized all massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law as threats to international peace and security. As a matter of fact, only rarely have those actions not turned into major destabilizing factors.

However, setting the goal of "preventing disputes from arising" - what some authors have called "conflict avoidance" - can be helpful inasmuch as this leads to emphasizing the need to develop specific instruments and mechanisms - to be embedded in internal as well as international regimes - both for fostering mutual trust and for helping common values and

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interests among the various actors to emerge. The system of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) employed by the OSCE provides an important example of a cooperative regime of "conflict avoidance". One of the most valuable assets of the CSBM regimes is the provision of a constant flow of objective and unbiased information. Many analysts has stressed the role played by the lack of complete or reliable information in creating the climate of uncertainty and mutual distrust that often leads to violent conflicts. By providing the parties with correct information and ensuring transparency, external actors and institutional mechanisms can substantially change their perceptions and attitudes.

More generally, the key importance of permanent conflict prevention activities and instruments has to be stressed. These have acquired a growing importance within the OSCE context, progressively superseding the various emergency mechanisms which can be activated on an ad hoc basis. The diplomatic dialogue and exchange of information which take place regularly in the OSCE political bodies have proved both more effective and, in case of the emergence of actual disputes, less confrontational for the parties involved. A valuable contribution to conflict prevention is also provided by the constant review of the implementation of OSCE commitments - in particular, those related to the security and human rights dimensions.

Conflict prevention has thus to be seen as a complex endeavour which includes ad hoc and permanent instruments, short-term and long-term strategies. The ability to mount emergency responses to impending crises is only one side of the coin. An action aimed at changing the pattern of interaction among the relevant actors in a stable way, making it less conflict-prone, is also required. This includes the establishment of cooperative regimes at the international system (level ???) as well as an effort to promote change in the internal regimes in which the fundamental conditions for a non-disruptive relationship among the various political and social groups are lacking.

In the last few years, the international community has undertaken a sustained, long-term effort to face a considerable number of crisis situations or actual conflicts.

In those cases, it has launched continuing peace processes the ends of which often undefined and, indeed, highly uncertain. Conflict prevention components are generally present in all stages of these processes. In particular, what has been called "post-conflict conflict prevention", that is, the measures for avoiding a resumption of the conflict, is acquiring increasing relevance. Similarly, the effort to limit the spread of a conflict when this would entail the involvement of not directly affected areas or qualitatively new actors - such as external states in the case of domestic conflicts - has to be regarded as a true conflict prevention activity.

Therefore, identifying conflict prevention only with a single stage of the development of a conflict could be misleading. What is important, instead, is the exclusion from the concept of conflict prevention of any activity - whether coercive or not - that is specifically designed to eliminate the ongoing conflicts. In general, eliminating a violent conflict poses more challenging problems than preventing a potential one. Indeed, some major problems connected with the strategies of intervention in ongoing conflicts do not affect - or affect much less heavily - conflict prevention. The latter, however, is far from being a non controversial activity. In fact, for preventive interventions to be successful, a set of pre conditions have to be met. Moreover, preventers often face several policy dilemmas that can prove to be rather thorny.

3. Pre-conditions and policy dilemmas of conflict prevention

Although conflict prevention seems to present clear advantages over other forms of intervention, it requires a consensus-building the achievement of which may encounter many

difficulties. Generally speaking, the most relevant obstacle lies in the reluctance of the governments to engage in interventions for which, by definition, there is no proven urgency. This reactive attitude of the governments towards international events that do not immediately affect their interests is basically shared by domestic public opinions. On paper, many official foreign policy documents - including those elaborated by the US administration - emphasize the need to strengthen conflict prevention capabilities at both national and international levels. Nevertheless, the amount of resources devoted to this type of intervention continues to be much smaller than, for example, that devoted to peacekeeping missions.

Clearly, a fundamental problem, in this regard, is how to guarantee an adequate and convincing *selectivity* in preventive interventions. The elusive nature itself of conflict prevention complicates the elaboration of sufficiently clear criteria by which to choose the areas on which preventive efforts must be concentrated.

The establishment of an effective and comprehensive *early warning* system is widely considered a crucial pre-requisite for well-founded policy choices in the prevention field. The attention of the analysts has focused on the elaboration of indicators for the identification of conflicts that tend to escalate to a violent stage. Clearly the traditional indicators, mostly based on military aspects, are no longer adequate given the changes in the international environment as well as the new requirements set by the international community. The assessment of political elements, such as the level of respect of human rights, has gained increasing importance.

Early warning of potential conflicts is rather fragmented today. At the UN level, an effort has been made to ensure a better co-ordination between the Secretariat departments which are involved in early warning. Furthermore, especially in the humanitarian field, the UN early warning is now conducted more systematically than in the past. However,

early warning will necessarily continue to be developed in a
decentralized way. It is, in fact, based on an increasingly
wide spectrum of sources of information, including fact-
finding and long-term missions, the review of implementation
of international commitments, more traditional, but also
expanding, forms of diplomatic action. In this respect, early
warning is, in many cases, fully integrated with actual
conflict prevention and has thus become more and more
indistinguishable from it.

A basic requirement for any successful interventions in
crisis or conflict situations is the possession by the
intervener of an adequate degree of *leverage*, that is the
actual power of influencing the choices and behaviour of the
involved parties. Broadly speaking, this is also true for
preventive action. For istance, the EU and NATO policy of
making the granting of the membership conditional on the
solution of some security problems has proved successful
towards a number of Central and Eastern European countries.

Since conflict prevention does not entail, by definition,
coercive measures, it is advisable, in some specific cases,
that the preventer be not a politically or militarily powerful
actor. The parties could, in fact, reject its involvement for
fear that this could lead, sooner or later, to some *forceful
action*. On the other hand, the threat to adopt coercive
measures should the peaceful ones fail could be, in other
cases, instrumental in convincing the parties to make crucial
concessions on the negotiation table. It must be added that,
though based on the consensus of the parties, some forms of
conflict prevention, such as preventive deployment, can be
seen as implying an implicit threat of an escalating military
involvement.

The proper *timing* of the preventive action is one of the
most discussed issue. Many analysts have stressed the negative
impact which premature involvement may have on the development
of the conflict. It may even become a trigger of its
escalation. By strengthening the international profile of a
conflict and, in general, by increasing the awareness of it,

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an external preventer can eventually contribute to increasing the antagonism among the parties and favouring the most radical elements. On the other hand, as stressed above, a delayed action can imply the loss of important windows of opportunity. To avoid both risks, conflict prevention should be developed as an incremental process with, if appropriate, growing levels of involvement. The mandates of the missions in the field can be gradually enlarged and deepened, from low-key activities, such as fact-finding, up to much more committing ones, such as management and direction of negotiating efforts.

Successful conflict prevention often requires *confidentiality*. Public exposure easily prompts the concerned parties to take uncompromised positions. However, the need is also felt, in many cases, to foster the public awareness of the opportunities offered by the peace process and hence the pubblic support for it. These two conflicting requirements are not easy to balance. A division of the competencies in the field of conflict prevention between bodies or actors with different levels of political profile but with a proven and credible institutional link can prove especially helpful.

A possible model is provided by the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). The narrow character of his/her mandate - excluding, inter alia, the role of a minority ombudsman - has contributed remarkably to making his/her involvement widely accepted. At the same time, he/she can submit any matter to the political bodies of the organization for further action and be given by them additional tasks.

Another stumbling block is the difficulty in reconciling some *competing values and principles* which have relevance for defining the limits and nature of the preventive action or the compromise solutions to be pursued.

The principle of sovereignty of the states is often invoked to reject the involvement of a third party or place heavy restraints on it. Although the UN Secretary General himself has contested the absolute and exclusive nature of this principle, the - probably unavoidable - lack of a clear

definition of it makes highly uncertain the scope and
intensity preventive action should assume.

The extent to which conflict preventers may favour or
even promote social and political change as a possible long-
term stabilizing measure is also very controversial.
Traditional third parties were mostly status-quo oriented.
Now, given the increasing focus on internal conflicts, the
goal of transforming the social and institutional systems of
the states has acquired an ever greater salience. Too radical
or too fast changes, however, can further weaken, rather than
strengthen, the structures of a failing state and thus its
capability to survive.

The peace versus justice dilemma, recently emphasized by
the establishment of the ad hoc war crime tribunals, entails
similar problems. Very often the pursuance of a "just"
solution is not compatible with the search of stable
arrangements. Moreover, in many situations there is a big
uncertainty concerning what would be the "just" solution. This
is, in particular, the case of the internal conflicts
involving strong secessionist movements. However, there is a
growing awareness that the most promising course of action is
to promote peaceful accommodation within existing borders,
trying to placate secessionist claims through specific power
sharing arrangements. It must be underlined that in many cases
the reaffirmation of the existing borders has been a necessary
pre-condition for the launching of negotiating processes
between the governments and the secessionist forces. More
generally, the short-term risks connected with the promotion
of substantial change in the existing social and political
order can be accepted only if there is a prospect of a later
stabilization within a reasonable timespan.

A distinct set of dilemmas concern the *actors* to be
involved in conflict prevention activities. Given the limited
resources and capabilities at the disposal of the
international organizations, the involvement of other actors
is needed. This, however, poses the problem of both their
specific role and their interaction with the institutional

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framework.

Regional powers have often a keen interest in controlling the evolution of the conflicts in the areas of their primary national interests. Their leverage can be considered an important asset also for conflict prevention provided that it is used in a way compatible with the general principles and goals of the international community. Yet, regional powers often lack the impartiality that some analysts consider a crucial requirement for an effective third party intervention. Other analysts, in contrast, point out that, for an intervener to be accepted by the concerned parties, what is required is not a strict neutrality, but a relationship of mutual trust and transparency with them.

Russian activities in the socalled "near abroad" face the other European states and the international organizations with this type of problem. Moscow has carried out several diplomatic and military activities in the area, including some that can be characterized as conflict prevention. Although its objective is to advance its national interests, in some cases its intervention has had a positive stabilizing effect. In others, however, there have been clear violations of international rules. The effort undertaken by the international organizations, notably the OSCE and the UN, to interact with Russian initiatives in the "near abroad" in a cooperative way has so far achieved poor results. The area is affected by several ongoing conflicts, but there is also a high potential for the eruption of new conflicts which requires a multi-faceted preventive action. For that to happen, the establishment of effective forms of cooperation between Russia and the international organizations remains a key pre-requisite.

The growing involvement of *non-governmental organizations* (NGO) in conflict prevention activities is also a fact of life. Their role has been consistently promoted by the UN which has given a growing number of them an observer or consultative status. Making use of their field experience and direct contacts with the parties involved, the NGOs have made

a considerable contribution to international early warning and early action, especially related to ethnic conflicts. In some cases, they have been able to influence remarkably the international response to those conflicts. Nevertheless, the usefulness and acceptability of their involvement in conflict prevention is a matter of discussion. They often pursue interests and goals that contrast or are hardly compatible with those of the major institutional actors. Moreover, their lack of accountability is regarded by some analysts as a fundamental obstacle to their greater integration in preventive efforts. The most effective response to these problems lies probably in the creation of a more structured relationship between the NGOs and such international organizations as the UN and the OSCE. This could contribute to enhance the transparency of the NGOs activities and make them eventually more accountable.

Of vital importance is also the creation of effective *links among the various international institutions* for the conduct of preventive action. Although the UN has a special responsibility in the field, a centralized management of the conflict prevention activities within the UN system does not seem, for various reasons, a viable option. The UN preventive action itself, including early warning, is widely dispersed and decentralized. The UN Secretariat also lacks enough resources to play a credible overarching role. Already now it is clearly overburdened, having to fulfill both administrative and diplomatic responsibilities. What is realistically achievable and certainly desirable is a closer and more systematic coordination among the various institutional actors currently engaged in conflict prevention. It is essential that their action develop in a continuing and integrated way. A key component of this policy should be the full implementation of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter concerning the cooperation between the UN and the regional organizations for the conduct of security action of non-coercive nature. In Europe this could be realized by providing the OSCE with primary responsibility for conflict prevention in its area of

competence and improving, at the same time, the mechanisms by which it can solicitate the UN involvement when other forms of interventions are needed.

4. Concluding remarks

The growing emphasis placed by major international actors on conflict prevention has been accompanied by a substantial change in its character. Increasingly, it has become a complex and multi-faceted activity with a strong institutional component. It entails policies and instruments aimed at addressing both the proximate and root causes of the conflicts. In particular, the establishment of cooperative regimes capable of changing the pattern of relations among states should be considered an integral part of this endeavour. In addition, the expansion of preventive action related to internal conflicts has been characterized by a difficult effort to promote systemic changes within states.

As a result of these developments, some basic policy dilemmas of preventive action have also become more acute. The need for a more effective and comprehensive system of monitoring and early warning, as a crucial instrument for the selection of the areas in which to intervene, has gained greater topicality. Rather controversial remains the connection between conflict prevention and possible subsequent coercive action. Identification of the principles and values on which preventive action has to be based also presents crucial dilemmas. Finally, clear guidelines for the cooperative links to be established among the various preventive actors are still lacking. However, as shown by the preceding analysis, incremental progress has been achieved in some of these fields. This can be seen as a promising development for an area of international action which is likely to remain crucial for the promotion of international peace and security.

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"Toward a Framework for Diagnosing and Designing Conflict Prevention in Europe"

by
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Toward A Framework for Diagnosing and Designing
Conflict Prevention in Europe

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CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Despite the expectation the end of the Cold War would bring fewer conflicts, new wars, mostly national in nature, have broken out in central Europe, as in the former Yugoslavia; in the newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union, as in Tajikhstan; and in other regions, as in Somalia and Rwanda. These conflicts have strained the capacities of the UN and other multilateral institutions to realize a renewed post-Cold War commitment to address common problems through collaboration. The conflicts have brought massive human suffering, dangers of intervention through unpopular peacekeeping missions, and financial burdens from humanitarian relief. Consequently, there is growing interest in ways to prevent such violent conflicts from erupting in the first place — before they reach almost unmanageable proportions.

THE STATE OF THE ART

Discussion and action concerning conflict prevention have grown steadily, especially since about 1992.[1] The U.N. General Assembly has discussed "preventive diplomacy" several times; several international conferences have taken up the idea; leaders in the U.S., British, French, German, Swedish, Canadian, Australian and other governments have voiced great interest; prestigious organizations have set up study groups, special commissions, and research and action projects on preventing conflicts; new books have come out; and plans have been sketched for a coordinated international strategy. And the idea is not limited to rhetoric, seminars, and study. Concrete initiatives have been launched by individual governments; the UN and regional multilateral organizations (RMO's) like the O.S.C.E., E.U., O.A.U., O.A.S., and even A.S.E.A.N.; and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) such as International Alert and Search for Common Ground in particularly vulnerable countries such as Macedonia and Congo/Brazzaville and toward potential inter-state hotspots such as the South China Sea. Governments and multilateral organizations have also begun to build institutional capacities for doing early warning and preventive responses.

In sum, not since the founding of the United Nations in 1945 or the arms control and peace movements of the 1970's and 1980's has there been such widespread explicit

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[1] The most prominent expression of this theme was the call by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for more "preventive diplomacy" in Agenda for Peace (1992), a document commissioned by the first-ever summit of heads of state of the members of the Security Council in Jnauary, 1992. The CSCE, however, had already been active in this field.

international commitment and practical activity focussed, not just on ending current wars, but on preventing *future* ones.[2]

Nevertheless, the new emphasis on deliberate action to avert incipient violent conflicts before they arise has progressed only so far. One-time, ad hoc preventive responses are scattered and hardly routine. Whether vulnerable countries get pro-active attention beyond an occasional demarche or visiting delegation tends to depend on whether they hold import to a major power, as seen, for example, in the reasons the U.S. took an interest in Macedonia and the south Balkans, Estonia, and the Greek-Turkey Aegean dispute. U.S. preventive efforts have responded substantially toward areas of strategic or regional importance such as China, North Korea, South Asia, and Ukraine, but not toward hemorraghing and ultimately costly national crises such as Burundi or even Zaire, at least until recent months. Pro-active initiatives in a locale must be allowed by interested global or regional powers, as reflected by the reluctance to get involved initially in the Chechnya conflict. As to new multilateral mechanisms, many are not yet operational. Such limitations leave unattended many potential conflicts that could bring great bloodshed and serious regional problems in the next few years. In short, conflict monitoring and prevention are not standard operating procedure, at least in terms of readiness in the medium term for a range of possible national conflicts.

Lack of Will or Lack of Way?

The conventional reason given for the lack of more progress is the absence of "political will." But this diffuse notion cannot explain why some pre-conflict efforts have been taken in relatively non-strategic areas such as East and Central Africa. Nor does it quite fit the current climate of so many high-level officials from major entities explicitly endorsing the idea of conflict prevention and assigning their staffs to work on it. Virtually the whole top echelon of U.S. foreign policy officials, for example, has spoken publicly in the last three years on behalf of "crisis prevention," "preventive defense," "enlargement of democracy," or similar notions, reflecting their agency's respective angles on dealing with conflicts.[3] Despite its reputation as responding only

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[2] But because this emerging subtext in post-Cold War international affairs has been virtually eclipsed by the greater media and analysts' attention to already-erupted crises like Bosnia, this turn to conflict prevention still remains one of the era's best kept secrets.

[3] For example, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake affirmed in 1993 that "in addition to helping solve disputes, we must also help prevent disputes,...to place greater emphasis on such tools as mediation and preventive diplomacy (sic)." Remarks to the Brookings Institution Africa Forum, May 3, 1993. See also Brian Atwood, "Emerging Markets," Speech at Wharton Business School, March 5, 1996. After the Rwanda debacle of mid-1994, Clinton Administration interest in crisis prevention was stepped up and described as one of its major themes. See Thomas Lippman, "Finding Theme in Foreign Policy," Washington Post, June 30, 1994, p. A 10.

to crises, the Clinton Administration has been more explicitly supportive of prior responses to potential crises than any previous one.

A more likely explanation is simply that despite some desire, large organizations that cope with current crises and routinely administer many programs worldwide lack the time, staff and resources to look down the road. After all, most major governments and multilateral organizations are already carrying out other programs in the very societies that appear on "watch lists" of troubled places that warrant more preventive attention. But so far, these programs pursue other functional agendas such as economic development, health, education, trade, military assistance, and economic reform, and by and large are not geared to averting potential violent national conflicts or even monitoring their own possible effects in worsening them.[4]

But there is also a less noticed but more hopeful interpretation for the lack of further progress: even the increasing number of policymakers who are now receptive to looking for and preventing future conflicts *do not know what they should specifically do.* It is not that relevant knowledge does not exist. We know quite a bit already about how to anticipate and prevent conflicts. A number of early warning specialists are getting closer to characteristic antecedents of likely genocide and other conflicts. They are both pursuing the most powerful general causes of conflicts affecting many societies and testing models of more detailed scenarios that can affect individual countries.

Also, the general elements that prevent, say, national political conflicts from escalating to violent conflicts are no great mystery: protection of ethnic minorities and other oppressed groups from human rights abuses that could prompt rebellions, governments that are more legitimate through expanding their democratic base; engagement of hostile parties in negotiations over abiding differences; and so on. Relevant means to achieve these aims include international observers, mediations with carrots and sticks, enforceable penalties and preventive troop deployments where

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[4] Also, empirical studies have found strong prima facie evidence to support the core belief underlying the interest in conflict prevention – that early interventions stem conflicts more easily than mid-conflict interventions. Supportive conflict resolution theory focusses largely on the social psychological dynamics of conflict escalation. See for example, Connie Peck, "An Integrative Model for Understanding and Managing Conflict," Interdisciplinary Peace Research Vol. One, Number One, May, 1989, pages 7-36; Louis Kreisberg, Social Conflict (Englewood Cliffs,: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982) Chapters 1-5; Ronald J. Fisher, The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), Chapters 1 and 4; Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, Social Conflict: Escalaton, Stalemate, and Settlement (New York: Random House,19), Chapters 1,2,5 and 6. Positive evidence on the effect of early timing on mediation into disputes is found in Bercovitch, Jacob and Jeffrey Langley, "The Nature of Dispute and the Effectiveness of International Mediation." Journal of Conflict Resolution 37 (1993): 670-91.

necessary, political and governmental institution-building, effective civil society-building, expansion of the economic base that creates pressures for violent competition for limited resources, and the like.[5]

But what *is* lacking is advice on how specifically to apply these measures to achieve these elements in particular places and times. Decisionmakers and program administrators do not have policy guidelines about what programs and actions, in what mixes, and in what sequences, are most likely to be effective in various particular contexts. What are the worrisome signs of incipient characteristic post-Cold War national crises? Does effectiveness depend on who engages the situation? When they take action? The types of instruments they deploy? The issues in dispute? Policy research of recent cases and more aggregate studies have begun to suggest answers, but their scattered conclusions have not been pulled together and presented to incumbent policymakers in a usable form. In the meantime, the prescriptions policymakers are left with is an assortment of wish lists of programs, one-size-fits-all supposed cure-alls like democratization and freer trade, and instant action recommendations from op-ed pieces about what to do in particular hotspots.

In short, even were we to suddenly get the attention of more policymakers, we could not hand them a body of usable conflict prevention guidelines that might help decide where and how they might pro-actively intervene in emerging conflicts in the most productive ways.

Applying What We Know: Educating Policy Elites

Foreign policies are governed by politics, not good advice, but in the current relatively receptive climate, analysts might be able to coax some shifting of additional time and resources to conflict prevention in otherwise neglected areas if they could get to specific policymakers at middle and high levels in major governments and multilateral organizations with the available, nicely packaged plausible evidence that certain tools and strategies have in fact worked successfully to head off brewing crises. Were there a way, there might be more will. Conflict prevention might advance a bit further if governments and other entities had some concrete reasonably reliable "rules of engagement" for prevention policy and implementation that are based on assessments of past experience. Policymakers might then feel more confident that they can fruitfully devote more resources to launching and institutionalizing more conflict prevention

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[5] What needs more study is the differential applicability and the sometimes unintended perverse effects in specific settings of promoting these general policy agendas like democratization, rule of law, human rights, and economic reform.

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efforts, and might be emboldened to propose procedural and program changes to their superiors and to the legislators who decide their budgets.

Specifically, what analytical steps could get some incremental movement? As reflected by this conference's associated case-study project and a few other such projects recently, the search for policy-relevant causal patterns in the past efforts to prevent incipient conflicts, both successful and failed, has begun. In addition to continuing to test and refine indicators of early warning, the initial findings of this literature need to be further tested with respect to more cases and through using other modes of research. But even before this research is completed, what we can reliably say now about the ingredients of successful conflict prevention can be disseminated as soon as possible to relevant policy levels. Thus, a more vigorous effort is needed to distill key propositions from the already extant knowledge and to present them in consumable forms to specific policymakers, not only at headquarters but in the field, who now have a little authority and interest to do something about them.

A further catalytic task would be to identify the full inventory of the range of preventive options, or policy tools, that are relevant to conflict prevention, and do methodical evaluations of existing experience with these techniques, when applied individually and in combination.[6] Decisionmakers would at minimum have a more immediate sense that effective options have been applied and so sensible initiatives can be launched and strategies can be developed.

AIMS

This paper starts down this path by beginning to consolidate what is known from recent cases and other research, such as on the causes of so-called "ethnic " conflicts, about the key factors that appear to determine whether emerging national political conflicts escalate into violence or are handled peacefully. In the following section, some of these findings are distilled from recent research and illustrations are given of these factors' roles in recent conflicts. These conclusions can be used as grounded hypotheses for further retrospective case-study and aggregate research intended to refine them further.

In the meantime, however, the factors also can be disseminated as actionable preliminary findings that are used in a heuristic way to sensitize policymakers to the kinds of factors that in given potential trouble spots appear to be significant enough to

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[6] This kind of analysis has been started in Creative Associates International, Inc, Preventing and Mitigating Violent Conflicts: A Guide for Practitioners, 1996. As taken up in he conclusion below, further tasks are organizing the tasks of conflict analysis and preventive strategy formulation and mobilizing more bureaucratic and political support.

warrant continuing attention and some forms of treatment. Thus, in the subsequent section, we illustrate the kinds of preliminary findings that can be applied prospectively to assess particular country cases. They make up a checklist of certain significant "risk factors" that suggest promising points of leverage that policymakers should watch and consider strengthening as part of country-specific preventive efforts.

RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS: IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

SIMILAR SHOCKS, DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

The motivation to find ways to prevent future violent conflicts in Europe arose in the wake of a region-wide revolution. The rising incidence and prospects of secessionist and other wars in the former Soviet Union and Easten and Central Europe derive fundamentally from the profound geopolitical and societal forces that have swept the region with the ending of the Cold War. These trends have discredited Marxian state-socialist ideology; mobilized popular pressures for multi-partyism and political participation and dismantled or retired communist parties; derogated centralized economic planning and state enterprises to market mechanisms such as prices and private ownership; devolved central government authority to subnational entities and seceding states; and abrogated inter-state security alliances and trade relations.

Tensions and the chances of violent encounters have increased because the lifting of communist controls from Eastern European sovereign states and the transformation of the Soviet republics into newly independent states shifted political power rather rapidly among ethnic groups and created new ethnic political geographies. As the existing central state structures, policies and international links were overturned by the looser liberal forms of politics and economics, rising ethno-nationalist movements sought to create new political jurisdictions or rebuild old ones around particular group identities and this often provoked tense political struggles over discriminatory citizenship policies and calls for self-determination.

In places like the Baltics and Slovakia, groups that had been subordinate under a previous regime were now dominant in a new state, and groups such as the Russian speakers in Estonia and the Hungarian diaspora that had been favored or more or less protected through their ties to the wider Soviet empire, were now in a minority. The new minorities often sought redress against perceived discrimination by the new majorities, often by appeals to kin in nearby states. Similarly, in Yugoslavia, groups that had increasingly been taking control of their own territories and public affairs finally aspired

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to their own states. In already recognized states like Hungary, which were no longer restrained by bloc controls concerning their internal policies and relations to other countries, majority ethnic groups asserted a new-felt sense of ethnic nationalism.

Theories of social change and conflict assert that epochal changes of this kind increase the chances of mass violence, state repression, or militarized wars, for they define new interests for states and groups, create new clashes among interests, and cause widespread uncertainty and insecurity.[7] But the fact that systemic changes do not always erupt into violence was clearly demonstrated throughout the region, for they did not break out in all republics and localities where there was added potential. Some local disputes did lead to bloody wars, such as involving Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia; Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Moldova and the "Dniestr Republic," and Russia and Chechnya. But in others such as the Baltic States, Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary and Slovakia, Macedonia, and Russia and Tatarstan, more or less peaceful resolutions of political issues have been achieved. The riveting question for the student of conflict prevention and policymaker alike is why the regionwide pressures and divisive forces led to violent conflicts in certain settings, but non-violent peaceful settlements in others.

This section identifies and illustrates some of the most important "swing" factors, or variables, that appear to determine whether a political dispute escalates to violent conflict or is handled peacefully. They have been derived from case-studies of individual erupted conflicts of recent so-called ethnic and other national conflicts, overviews of such case-studies, theoretical but grounded analyses, early warning research, and comparisons of apparent successes and failures in preventive action.
EXPLAINING CONFLICT PREVENTION: A PROTO-REVIEW[8]

More precisely, what ingredients explain whether conflicts of interests between parties emerge into political disputes and become translated into violent and coercive relationships, on the one hand, or processes of bargaining, negotiation, or other nonviolent political struggle, on the other?

Levels of Analysis

Once violent conflicts erupt, they are explainable by no single cause, but arise from a number of factors at several levels of causation.[9] So, too, when latent conflicts become

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[7] Conflict theory and ethnic security dilemma.

[8] This is work in progress, and conclusions are hardly definitive. But being based on the wider literature as well as preliminary assessments of several cases in view of selected plausible hypotheses, the factors are not purely speculative.

[9] Jack Levy, "Contending Theories of International Conflict: A Levels-of-Analysis Approach," Chapter 1 in Chester Crocker and Fen Hampson, eds. Managing Chaos: Soures of and Responses to International Conflict (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1996)

expressed peacefully, several direct and indirect phenomena may be responsible. The link of some of these causes to peace or violence is *indirect* and proximate, e.g., the lack of democratic government. The connection of other causes is more *direct* and immediate, e.g., arming of militias, an assassination attempt. To develop comprehensive and coherent explanations of prevention, as well as appropriate response strategies, it is useful to classify these various causes of conflict or peace along two major dimensions.

One is the extent the factors operate in the actors' <u>societal or international environment or the actors</u> themselves. Three gradations can be delineated. Certain background conditions exist in the received history and socio-economic structures of the societies involved. Being more or less built into a particular conflict arena, this makes them generally hard to change by specific policymakers or even governments, at least in their entirety and in the short run. An example is the structural changes ending the Cold War, which impacted different former Soviet bloc countries to different degrees, so that emerging conflicts of interests were simply not as sharp in some societies as in others. However severely interests may have been pitted against one another, another variation concerns the particular <u>institutional and political channels</u> through which the structural forces are manifested and managed. In some places, societal or international change may have been wrenching, but institutional and political infrastructures were more capable of absorbing the resulting tensions and achieving necessary compromises. For example, the existence of several separate political channels for expressing and addressing discontent gives it several outlets for possible satisfaction. A third type causal factor are <u>behavioral and attitudinal</u>, for they pertain to the ways the parties affected by the conflict actually see the situation and comport themselves. Generally, behaviors and attitudes are more amenable to manipulation over the short run than the background givens, with institutions and processes being moderately changeable.

The second dimension for distinguishing causes has to do with whether they arise from <u>outside or inside the conflict arena</u>. Some factors are found in the immediate conflict arena, meaning the surrounding region as well as national context, while others arise from sources outside the region, such as the international community.

When it comes to examining how disputes are prevented from becoming violent, it is critical to realize that the local conflicting actors themselves may be a part of the solution as much as they are part of the problem. As seen in the following discussions, "endogenous" domestic and regional factors may help to offset the risks of violent approaches to resolving tensions as much as increasing them. Conversely, exogenous, extra-regional, international factors may worsen more than they ameliorate the chances of violence.

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Putting the two main dimensions together, we can organize the factors in a fourfold or six fold table, as follows:

TYPOLOGY OF FACTORS
SHAPING
PEACEFUL OR VIOLENT CONFLICT OUTCOMES

LOCUS OF FACTORS

		Conflict Arena	*Extra-regional*
	Actors' Environment	social structure, conflict legacy	world prices
NATURE OF FACTORS	*Institutions*	strength of state	state's stake in internat'l comm.
	Actor traits	militancy of group leaders	timing of engagement

To do a coherent account of conflict prevention in particular cases, the analyst needs to consider the direction of the influences of as many of these factors as possible that are pertinent to the case. Whether or not conflicts of interests emerge into violence or not depends on the net effect produced by the several kinds of forces arising from within and outside the conflict arena. A mix of endogenous and exogenous factors is at work, and these domestic and extra-regional factors may be helpful or harmful, depending on the case. The impact of the international community cannot be presumed, such as by looking only at its explicit "preventive action," without close examination of what its various parts actually accomplish. The query "What makes international preventive action effective?" is best addressed as only one part of the larger question: "What range of inside and outside factors prevent violent conflicts from emerging?"

For now, we state briefly what literatures suggest to be some of the most important factors determining peaceful or violent outcomes of emergent conflicts of interests around post-Cold War national conflicts. These are put in the form of questions to be posed by the analyst while "interviewing" the diverse information that may be available about a particular case. How each factor can produce peaceful or violent courses in conflicts is noted, and one or two concrete examples of how they shaped recent conflicts in Europe are given.

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<u>Endogenous Sources of Conflict or Peace</u>

Analysis of options for international preventive efforts has to consider which conditions in the conflict arena itself are contributory to, or inhibitive of, violent expressions of differences. This determines the comparative "degree of difficulty" that faces prevention-minded third parties from outside the region.

Received and Systemic Background Conditions: The Potential for Mobilization of Grievances.

The *potential* for violent conflict is dependent on legacies bequeathed by history to the contemporary actors and current structural conditions that are more or less built into the actors' societal and international environment. These conditions cannot be easily changes, but how they are interpreted can be shaped. Especially important factors include:

1. Extent of Violent History: To what extent have current political groups and their governments dominated each other or engaged in violent conflicts in the recent past?

Past research has found a significant relationship between the extent of past antagonism and the likelihood emerging disputes will become violent (Butterworth, cited by Miall, 77: 199). Research on mediations between states has found that mediations are twice as likely to be successful between previously friendly states as in disputes between former adversaries (Bercovitch, cited by Miall, 130:1992).

Because World War II memories of atrocities by the Utashe and Chetniks occurred within the memory of living generations, newly-elected Serbian and Croatian leaders from 1990 to 1992 could still conjure them up with their constituents and thus instill distrust and suspicion toward the other community. In Macedonia, however, the memory of Macedonians being killed in great numbers by Albanians, or Serbs, or Bulgarians, and vice-versa, goes back much further, to the Balkan wars of the early twentieth century. Rhetoric from leaders that seeks to instill intensely deep hatred between these groups is less likely to find fertile ground. In the 1980's, Macedonians severely mistreated the Albanian minority, but whether this discrimination bequeathed the degree of animosity in ethnic relations in Macedonia as actual guerrilla war and many killings had left between Croatians and Serbs, is questionable. In fact, where there there is some trust to build on, such a history can actually spur extra efforts to avoid repetition of the past clashes.

2. **Past nationalities policies:** To what extent did past regimes or colonial powers give to certain distinguishable groups a proprietary relationship to a given territory, or social benefits such as career and educational opportunities, thus bestowing superior status and material privileges on some groups relative to other groups?

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Nationalities policies of the Soviet Union, post-World War II Yugoslavia, and other communist regimes often used the constitution or political favoritism to bestow political authority and group rights on certain ethnic communities at the expense of others. This practice seems to have ingrained a sense of group entitlement and status-consciousness and rivalry that has imbued post-Cold War political debates in the newly-independent states.

Though dominated by Serbia, Yugoslavia encompassed other ethnic communities whose population each generally predominated in separate republics, such as Croatia, or more localized autonomous jurisdictions such as Kosovo. In response to pro-democratic demonstrations of the late 1960's, the Yugoslavian republics' ties and federal organs were weakened by Tito's devolution reforms of the 1970's. The 1974 constitution gave more powers to the republics, including that of controlling their own local defense forces, and it granted political autonomy to groups in certain subregions, such as the Albanians in Kosovo.

3. Ethnic Proportions and Political Party-Group Linkages: Duopoly versus Oligopoly. Are there only two major mobilized ethnic groups in a multiethnic society or must three or more compete for its political space?

A society composed of one majority and one minority mobilized group seems to holds more potential for intensified conflict than a society comprising three or more groups. Because the two groups of a pair compete only with each other, their mutual hostilities can build up longer. There are more pressures in a more heterogeneous society, however, for its groups to bargain and set up coalitions with several other groups to obtain their own interests, and such coalitions may reconfigure over time.

Because of the presence of six politically active ethnic communities in Macedonia, its political leaders have needed to negotiate with other groups and their parties to form governments. Since 1990, Macedonia was run first by a trans-ethnic, post-Communist technocratic administration and then two coalition governments. President Gligorov heads a coalition that shares executive power among three parties, which includes five Albanians in the Cabinet. This power-sharing has made government policies less ethnic-nationalist in tone.

4. Cross-cutting Cleavages Are the differences in ethnicity, economic disparities, religion, language, and region that exist between groups in a country overlapping, so social groupings differ in many of these features at the same time? Or do groups have share some commonalites?

A prominent factor in the literature shaping whether political leaders can organize and mobilize particular ethnic constituencies to use violence or armed force, and thus whether conflicts between groups blow up has to do with whether the members of active groups in a society share economic circumstances, locale, cultural heritages such as religion and language, level of economic development, or other traits with other politically active groups, or on the

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other hand, these groups differ from each other on many of those characteristics. Where the latter obtains, cleavages in a society are deeper, and violent conflicts may have greater potential than where cross-cutting cleavages are found (Horowitz).

The effect of certain overlapping differences is shown in the struggles between local Russian speakers and the majority population in Estonia and Moldova. In both countries, the areas dominated by the Russian population also hold a high proportion of those countries' industry. Letting the Dniestr Republic secede would have deprived Moldova of fifty-seven percent of its industial production (as measured in 1993).

But the mobilizability of ethnic groups may be offset by internal conflicts of interests. With regard to tensions between Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia, for example, although Albanians constitute about 23 per cent of the population and are relatively less urban and educated than Macedonians, their political power has been limited to some extent by the divisions within their community and its political parties over political issues and strategies. The Macedonian political elite is also fragmented in terms of ethnicity and religion. This may inhibit the extent of mobilization of these groups against each other.

Countervailing ethnic interests constrain the actions of leaders toward other countries, too. The inclination of Albanians living in Western Macedonia to seek support from Albania that would invite greater interference from the Albanian government or nationalist groups is offset by the fact that Macedonian Albanians on average enjoy a higher standard of living than their kin across the border, sharing that with other Macedonians.

5. **Public Monopoly of Social Goods versus Civil Society** To what extent is the allocation of material needs, such as career opportunities and education, and social position, decided in the central government and the country's political institutions, so that whatever group controls state authority and political power also determines who enjoys rank, income, and social benefits?

When government and politics dominate who gets basic social goods, conflict becomes more intense because control of the state and political influence are the sole channels to achieve them. Conflict is less intense if many alternative non-governmental and non-political means for obtaining these goods are possible that operate separately from the main political parties and government, such as private businesses. By the same token, the stakes of political life and control of the state are not as high where numerous associations such as trade unions, benefit societies, business associations, and churches promote commercial, professional, and welfare opportunities. The number and vitality of a society's commercial life and nongovernmental infrastructure may depend in turn to a great extent on how industrialized and urbanized the society is, for these forces tend to foster the creation of society-wide associations built around economic interests.

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Ethnic Political Parties. An feature combining elements of the latter two variables is the extent to which the most important national-level political parties are organized around ethnic groups or other dominant social cleavages, or alternatively, the strong parties exist that combine ethnicities around different sets of shared interests, such as political ideologies. Where the former is the case, when elections are held, winning parties will reflect the power of the ethnic groups in the society, too. Elections in effect become political censuses. In the absence of countervailing bases of organization, political instability is increased because these groups are otherwise also polarized.

These patterns were evident in the republican elections in 1990 and 1991, the years preceding the violent break-up of Yugoslavia. A common tactic of aspiring republican leaders like Slobodan Milosevic was to first capture control of their parties by pushing moderates out, run on ethnic nationalist programs to get elected, and then unilaterally pass referendums at the most propitious moments to validate their parties' control of the republic. Increasingly, these protagonists themselves ran their own ethnic state entities, setting and manipulating their own rules for political ends. But parties that cross-cut ethnicity create a counter-balance to the influence of ethnicity.

6. Power Concentration and Balance: Is political power more or less equal, one-sided, or shifting among major social groups and with government?

Less violence will tend to be associated with both oppressive regimes or equally balanced ethnic groups. It is more likely to flare up where the relative power possessed by contending national or regional antagonists is uncertain. In Kosovo, for example, street violence has been kept at a level since 1991 that, although higher than in Macedonia over the same period, is much less than all-out civil rebellion. One major reason is that the Kosovarians are vastly outmanned by the coercive power of Serbian security forces. Military weakness also helps explain Macedonia's peaceful secession from the rump Yugoslavian government, for Macedonia's defenseless army required President Gligorov to avoid antagonizing Serbian nationalists to pick a fight.

7. Nearby calamities and cross-conflict "learning". Did the given conflict arise before or after analogous conflicts that occurred nearby, thus affecting whether the disputants benefit from observing the effects of previous violence?

Domestic leaders may be repelled and constrained from violent escalation because they want to avoid the outcomes they have observed in nearby like situations. Such turmoil may temper the inclination to push disagreements too far. By causing domestic constituencies to uncontrollable anger that destabilizes their own states, conflicts might spiral outside the control of the existing leadership. Previous calamities or successes may also provide third parties with lessons making them more skillful in preventive intervention.

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Several recent preventive intervention successes seem to have followed in time failed cases that resulted in wars. All the listed Eastern European disputes followed in time the atrocities of wars between Serbia and Croatia (starting in mid-1991), and/or Serbia and Bosnia (starting in mid-1992): Greece-Macedonia (1992 on), Czech and Slovakian Republics (1992-93), and Hungary/Slovakia (1992-94). For all their mutually hostile positions, the leaders of Macedonia, Albania and Greece had the "advantage" of seing a bloody war unfold before them in nearby Croatia and Bosnia. The Yugoslavian wars also cast a shadow over theCzech and Slovak leaders.

Intermediate Institutions and Processes

Historical legacies and systemic conditions may determine the potential for violent conflicts, but they are not sufficient in themselves to directly bring violence about or determine whether, when or where it occurs. "... ethnic stife is related to variations in the constellation of political and ethnic constraints that impinge on elite and mass choices." (Carment and James, 14:1996). Violent conflict is actualized only if political processes and institutions make the background conditions into the pretexts for mobilizing grievances that are unsatisfied short of using force.

8. Politically Autonomous "Strong" States To what extent does the government function as the effective arena within which the political power struggle are abitrated, conflicts of interests between major social groups are negotiated, and compromise national policies are enacted and implemented, or do one or more groups use the state's authority and resources to serve only their own parochial interests?

Formal institutions of the state and informal political agreements can exacerbate social divisions arising from history and social structure, such as ethnic cleavages. But instability and violence are increased to the extent one or more groups use the authority and resources of government to favor their own groups and dominate others (check) (Cf. Sisk, vii: 1996). "... in the conflicts which led to major violence, there was often either an identification between the government and one ethnic group, or a struggle between ethnic groups for the control of the government...where governments themselves become identified with an ethnic group, they clearly become parties themselves, and may make an existing dispute more violent." And institutions can mute or blunt these divisions by incorporating major groups' interests but acting as constraints by pursuing transcending interests (Carment, 6-9:   ). Governments thus become effective third parties.   (Miall 83:1992)

One way strong states attain their mediating role is by representing the major social groupings through various power-sharing arrangements, through which executive cabinentpositoins are dolled out among representatives of major social groups, thus keeping one group from dominating its policies to the exclusion of others' interests. A similar means is an

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elite compact that is relatively insulated from direct popular democracy. Leaders of factions contending for power reach agreements with each other to control the brokering of policy issues affecting their respective groups, rather than leave them totally subject to popular pressures, through public opinion or referenda. This can produce a core group of moderate leaders who represent major constituencies but are committed together to keep effective control of national decisionmaking.

Violent tendencies may be lessened when such elites agree on policies before popular votes on them, rather than popular votes deciding these policies because competitive bidding among them is discouraged that might otherwise escalate conflict. This strategy was adopted by the established Czech and Slovak party leaderships, who agreed to their divorce before submitting it to popular vote. In Moldova, however, the elections held on each side early in the process pushed out moderates because competing leaders outbid each other. The new leaders on the two sides then encouraged violence before they considered negotiating the issue.

But although such informal ethnic balancing and collaboration short of full popular democracy may help in the short run to avoid violence, more law-based constitutional democracy is needed in the long run (Cf. Sisk, viii, xiv:1996)[9] More or less representative governments that gain political legitimacy by incorporating some cross-section of the main social groups do not ensure against violence or coercion. The leaders of these groups may not always work effectively together to produce valued public policies or wield effective authority over the workings of government administration, social services, and other public functions such as education. A representative elite must be sufficiently cohesive to hammer out common public policies that achieve acceptable results in order to retain control of appropriate state business. Instead, government could become fragmented by ethnic partisanship, so public service is merely a vehicle through which the perquisites of government are divided up and parcelled out among competing, stalemated groups. This encourages escalating competition, or the creation of other channels for pursuing these goods. If social mobilization and political participation are high, but state institutions cannot manage political demands, instability occurs, and institutions and groups eventually will rely on coercion to pursue their interests (Carment, 3:199)

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[9] Rothchild distinguishes three types of regimes differing in such features as their regularity of elections, openness to interest group demands, and central discipline: hegemonic, hegemonic exchange and polyarchical. While the latter two allow grievances and moderate them rather than block access and resist them; the former resists pressures. Over the short run, they may be less violent, but in the long run, they are more prone to it. Being more cut off from groups and ill-informed, they tend to use military solutions and thus face rebellions. Hegemonic exchange and polyarchic regimes process demands, however, thus channelling conflicts along pre-determined lines with relative regularity and predictability (Rothchild, 17-19, 22, 23: 1989)

Though dominated by Macedonians and influenced by that group's nationalist desires, the coalition government in Macedonia has included Albanians and other minorities and thus is not mono-ethnic. It is at least trying to achieve even-handed policies toward minorities in civil service recruitment, education, and other policy areas and is making some progress — notwithstanding that these efforts fall short in the eyes of the minorities. Such efforts at balanced government policies renders legitimacy to the government to discourage extreme behavior by disgruntled minorities or majorities.

In contrast, a major factor making it difficult for mediators in 1991 and 1992 to have any impact in keeping the dissolution of the federal government of Yugoslavia from erupting into violence was the disintegration already occurring since the late 1980's in the collective organs of the federal state such as the system of economic self-management, the collective presidency and the Yugoslav army. Before and during the debate between the republics over Yugoslavia's constitution, increasing control was being assumed by the presidents of each of them over political, administrative, economic, and increasingly, military forces. Similarly, the leaders of Moldova and the Dniestr republic shared few common political institutions before the conflict over the latter's status.

Institutionalized Politics. The underlying feature of strong states that allows them to manage political disputes without violence or coercion is that the rules of political struggle are regularized and predictable. Regularity in competitive politics discourages violence. By incorporating interest conflicts within the decisionmaking processes — executive bodies, governing coalitions, legislatures, parties, interest groups, elections, provincial and local government — incentives are created for participation in more or less stable processes for dispute resolution (Mazaffar, 16f: no date) The main factions possessing political power pursue their disputes within common, agreed-on, and enforceable governing procedures, norms, and institutions -- embodied either in formal governing institutions (such legislatures, regularized elections, judicial systems, and bureaucracies), or informal political processes, (such as political compacts) -- rather than determining the formation and rules of these institutions. Even in elite compacts, for example, violent methods of pursuing social interests can be avoided to the extent the wielders of effective political power deal with one another through agreed-on shared rules and procedures of political conflict operating independently of providing services to their partisan constituencies.

However, if the state is not the venue for political conflict resolution, disputes become conducted outside established channels and thus in ad hoc ways subject to volatile power moves between political factions, or the whims of individual personalities.

9. **Control of the means of force** Does the state ensure that the security and armed forces serve the interests of a constitutional order independent of the partisan aims of political factions vying for control of the state and public policies, or can these factions create or control their own armies or militias?

Violence is less likely where non-politicized military and security forces have the upper hand over factional militias or political terrorism that can pose threats to domestic security. Recent successful cases of conflict prevention within states took place within governing institutions that had control of their security and armed forces, such as Macedonia and Czech and Slovak republics. Though the police and military are led by Macedonians who generally held these positions during the communist era, civilian politicians exert significant control over these forces. In March, 1993, the commander of the armed forces was fired, for example, for allegedly exceeding his constitutional authority.

In recent violent conflicts, however, political leaders on the disputing sides assumed early effective control over their own distinct armies and militias that served their political aims (i.e., "warlordism"). In Moldova, as violence erupted on the left bank, interior ministry forces lined up against a local militia increasingly supported by the Russian14th Army. Similarly, the Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian wars were preceded by increasing local political control of the republican militias prior to the formal dissolution of the federal government. As early as 1990, the republics were not sending conscripts to the Yugoslav army, and instead creating their own armed republican units within the police.

10. **The Neighbor Effect** What stance is taken by neighboring governments toward national political disputes? Do they: a) overtly or covertly support particular political or military factions that are vying for influence within the society, such as ethnic political parties or the regime against insurgents; b) remain neutral or indifferent by refraining from supporting one side or another; or c) actively promote even-handed settlement of the disputes, such as through faciliating the involvement of international bodies?

Recent treatments of ethnic conflict often fail to include the influences of the international system on domestic conflict, and vice-versa (Carment, 1994 p. 553). A major example is the way countries next door and groups within them can either worsen national conflicts or help their peaceful settlement. This depends on whether neighboring government or political leaders support one of the disputants in a direct, partisan way through moral and rhetorical support; political support, such as recognizing a secessionist movement as a state (Carment, 1994, 563; Carment, ? p. 5); financial support, or military backing. They may seek support from a third state (Szayny, 199 , 30). They may worsen internal tensions by opposing a nationalist government's interests in the international arena, such as by lobbying for international support for internal minorities, trying to shape the perceptions of third parties,

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and constraining preventive actions toward a national dispute through vetoing the involvement in the dispute of the UN or a regional organization of which they are a member.

Such a "backer effect" (Munuera) can arise to the extent that the groups in a country have ethnic, historical, or ideological affinities to groups outside their country, even though these groups do not necessarily share all interests with the outside group. The aspiring ethnic group within a state and its outside backer have a symbiotic relationship in which each can fuel the other (Szayny, 199 , 32) and this helps to escalate the internal conflict as well as between the two states. The elites of the outsider states see such ethnic affinities as political opportunities and the domestic groups on whom they rely for support see such affinities as potentially useful to promote their own interests (Carment ? , 5). Especially where the elites in the neighboring states face insecurity in maintaining power, there may be advantages to activating these latent group identities by showing support for an ethnic minority in a neighboring state, or to prop up the government in a conflict. Their attention and the prospects of outside support increase the incentives for the inside groups to organize themselves, mobilize a following, seek the outside support, and possibly wage violent conflict as the way to achieve their political goals (Szayny,199 , 24, 28).

The conflict can then escalate because the host country distrusts its ethnic minority to the extent it encourages or enjoys the support of the outsider (Szayny, 199 , 32), and leaders in the target countries can use these sources of state insecurity as a reason to justify repression of certain minorities or rival political groups and groups within have a warrant to organize more in their own self-defense, although this does not necessarily bring about armed conflict between the states (Carment and James, 1996, 8f.; Carment, 1994, 576; Carment, 5,7:   )

Examples can be cited of how this variable worsened conflicts, and where its absence helps explain the lack of violent wars. In the Balkans, the shift of the Yugoslav army (YPA) from a stance of neutrality in the emerging conflict between ethnic Croatians and Croatian Serbs in 1991 toward direct support of the latter that helped make that conflict into a full-fledged war was motivated in large part by the presence of many ethnic Serbs in the Krajina region and the increasing Serbian composition of the YPA. Hungarian leaders have often made a cause out of the plight of their dispersed brethren in neighboring countries such that all political parties that hope to become significant are under pressure to pledge their active support. Even small amounts of discrimination has provoked a reaction.

The rhetoric of Russian nationalists like Zhironovsky from December 1993 to spring 1993, such as in suggesting Russia take control of the Baltic countries obviously heated up relations between those governments and put pressure on the Baltic states leaders concerning their Russian speaking minorities. In Moldova, the Russian 14th Army went beyond peacekeeper to support the Dniestr forces for a time. The Dniestr leaders were able to stay in

power in part because in 1990 Moscow aided them and other minorities in southern Moldova as leverage against Moldovan secession. Decisions to escalate the conflict were preceded by assurance of armed support from Moscow under the Soviets and the Russians (Kaufman, 199   ). In the spring of 1992, Moscow media were full of groundless claims that could distort Russian and other perceptions of the issues there, such as that Moldova had decided to join Romania, was stockpiling weapons, and was committing genocide (Kaufman, 23,   )

In contrast, violent conflict or even high tensions were avoided between the Czech and Slovak Republics in part because of the relative lack of minorities of one group residing in the territory of the other. And vis-a-vis Slovenia's and Macedonia's decisions to secede, Serbia had fewer incentives to hold onto them in part because of the much smaller percentage of Serbs living in those republics. The Slovenian war ended within days and Macedonia seceded peacefully.

Behaviors, Perceptions, and Actions of the Disputants

A third set of variables has to do with the attitudes and perceptions that can shape reactions to the environment and institutional incentives that actors face, and the actions and policies that themselves can trigger or suppress hostile behavior. These factors may be relatively more amenable to change than the systemic and institutional factors described above.

11. Accommodating Leadership To what extent do the leaders of the conflicting parties, such as governments and organized groups, show moderation in their words, actions, programs, and policies; make conciliatory and reciprocal gestures; and seek bilateral or multi-lateral negotiations and give-and-take bargaining to resolve them -- rather than engaging in demogogic rhetoric, unilateral provocative acts, uncompromising policies, or coercion and force to seek their objectives but that worsen tensions and discourage compromise?

A major pattern noted in more recent studies of the emergence of ethnic conflicts emphasizes the independent effect that the behavior of individual ethnic group leaders can have in shaping the political atmosphere and the reactions of the rank and file to it (Gagnon, Kaufman,   ). Unilateral and coercive actions provoke reactions of the same nature, thus escalating the conflict into a vicious cycle of increasing hostility and violence, and moving it further and further away from a mutal agreement. "...where ethnic groups attempted to impose a settlement, either by making a secession attempt, or by using control of the government to dominate an ethnically divided society, violence was the result. Thus neither attempting secession nor seeking to establish a dominant national identity by excluding ethnic groups is likely to result in peaceful resolution of conflict." (Miall, 84:1992)

However, reciprocal and conciliatory behavior, such as agreeing to follow agreed-on procedures, moderate declarations of intent, and enacting institutional reforms and policies,

such as minority rights protections (Miall, 86-88:1992 book), are conducive to non-violent dispute outcomes because accommodating the other side's demands helps to pre-empt more extreme demands (Rothschild, 24-27: 1989) and can foster a "virtuous circle" of increasing cooperation. "The ability of political leaders to persuade their consituents to act peacefully, is the most important variable in creating improved relations among ethnic groups." Sisk, 1996, p. xi.

A crucial dynamic that often lies behind the escalation process starts with the desire of aspiring leaders of groups who are losing power or seeking power to seize control of the group by outbidding their opponents in the competition for its leadership (Cf. Sisk, 96, viii). Where groups are insecure about their political status, aspirants can succeed by taking antagonistic positions against the group's perceived opponents and manipulating the rank and file's perceptions of their motivations. This escalates violence by causing a violent reaction by the other group, thus confirming the initial group's suspicions. Sometimes, elites will deliberately organize covert violence against the other side to provoke the confirming behavior desired and thus further mobilize one's own following, which helps in turn to increase the leader's position.(Cf. Carment   ? , p. 14, citing Marshall, 1994)

The Yugoslavian and Moldovan cases reveal numerous instances of group leaders to engage in provocative and divisive nationalistic rhetoric through the media, to take political action unilaterally such as ad hoc referendums and declarations of independence, to covertly build up military power, to resort immediately to force or coercion, and to resist international influence and assistance, except where it appears to consolidate one's own gains. Several analysts attribute the eruption of the Croatian and Bosnian wars to these elite motivations and tactics. To fend off their domestic challengers in thenew democratic climate, Serbian and Coatian leaders intensified a perception of common ethnic group interests through populist appeals to emotion-laden ethnic identities and images of exclusivist ethnic cultures, and away from constitonal issues. Fears were created about the motives of other groups by conjuring up memories of past threats by the group, although the previous perpetrators had been in the minority in both populations. To increase the perception of threat, clashes were provoked to intensify the hostilities along ethnic lines thus achieving a self-fulfiling prophecy because of the reaction of the other group is cited as proof of the initial complaint, thus advance one's own program and preserving the leaders' domestic bases of power (Gagnon, 132-36: 199).

The Moldova violence was similarly elite-provoked on the Dneistr side. A Russophone protest against a 1989 language law was led by Russian industrial workers, although they were less affected by it; the portests were organized by the industrial enterprises, who paid the workers; and although the law allowed local governments to make Russian thge language of

government and commerce, communist party city council members voted to defy the law rather than exempt their constituents constituents (Kaufman, 18:199)

Contrasting examples of how ethnic group leaders' can choose to have a moderating, rather provocative impact on rising tensions come from Macedonia and Kosovo. Although Albanian professors unilaterally announced they would create a new all-Albanian university in Tetovo in 1995, police actions against the demonstrations led to several deaths. But the chair of the main Albanian national party went on television to ask Albanians to stay off the streets, rather than taking advantage of the situation by inflaming passions. Similarly, after a demonstration against police in the Bit Pazar market and an arms smuggling episodes in 1994, Albania's President Sali Berisha publicly exchanged calming words with President Gligorov, and he has met with him to pledge mutual respect for the two countries' existing borders. Though it makes a virtue out of a necessity, the LDK's non-violent doctrine obviously has helped keep a volatile situation in Kosovo from escalating into ethnic war.

The accommodating tendency to refer issues to negotiations and international bodies has characterized the leaders of several countries that have recently managed potentially explosive crises over the interests of minorities within their borders whose kin are majorities in neighboring states. In the Gabcikov-Nagymaros hydroelectric project dispute and other controversies with ethnic overtones between Hungary and Slovakia, harsh words and unilateral actions by the parties were nevertheless mixed with efforts to initiate bilateral negotiations and to involve third parties, which eventually resulted in mediated agreements.

As Estonia moved out from under years of Soviet domination to independence in August 1991, for example, nationalist feelings sought to reverse the Russification it had experienced since World War II by reasserting Estonian prerogatives. Law and referenda passed from 1989 through 1993 regarding language, local elections, citizenship and the constitution restricted the professional, educational, and cultural opportunities of many of its 30% non-Estonian population and removed the parliamentary vote from most of them. Russia retaliated in 1992 by slowing down the agreed schedule for withdrawing troops, and at one point Estonia seized a naval base. The highpoint of tensions was reached when a June, 1993 law on aliens met with demonstrations by the Russian speaking community and Moscow reacted with bitter criticism from Russia's highest leaders, a gas cutoff, and calls for sanctions, including threatening statements from the rising Russian nationalist Zhironovsky.

Despite Estonia's restrictive legislation and its unilateral action against a naval base, however, its actions have been tempered by a willingness to accept monitoring and policy suggestions by international bodies such as the Council of Europe, the CSCE, and a UN Human Rights delegation. The aliens law and a measure to remove Russian from Estonian schools by the year 2000 were submitted to the Council of Europe and the CSCE for comment and Estonia's

President Meri sent back their drafts back to Parliament for modification before final enactment. Other measures easing up on local election requirements, allowing a referendum on autonomy for the Russian speaking areas, and registration of a Russian-speaking party also helped to reduce the rancor. And although Russia used its energy supplies and troops presence as bargaining chips, it also imposed pressure through appealing to European bodies and seeking to enlist world elite opinion.

The peacefully resolved dispute between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea has ingredients similar to both the Estonian case of relative "success" and the Moldovan case of relative "failure:" the presence of a Russian-speaking majority in the area and other eastern parts of Ukraine who have been attracted to retaining links with Russia, Crimean leaders who have risen in part from local aspirations for independence or autonomy, and a major military presence left over from the Soviet period in the form of the Black Sea Fleet. The fact that the tensions over possible Crimean separatism that at one point caused considerable international concern have since abated can be explained mainly in terms of the larger stakes involved in the overall Ukrainian-Russian relationship, especially the negotiations over the dismantlement of Ukraine's nuclear weapons and Ukraine's considerable economic dependency on Russia. But it is important also to note that Ukraine's policies toward minority rights and interests has been one of the most liberal in the area.

Although serious issues remain to be resolved regarding Crimea, moderate policies have undoubtedly kept discrimination charges from inflaming this issue. Unlike many other former Soviet Republics, Ukraine defines itself as a territorial and legal entity, not a nation of a certain people; its people are defined in terms of their place of residency, not ethnic or linguistic terms; and its legislation regarding employment, education, and culture protects every citizen regardless of ethnic origin, language, religion, and so on. Ukraine has also turned to the OECD and the UN to help it with dealing with its local minority problems.[6]

Exogenous Factors

Systemic

12. Extent of economic integration To what extent are the protagonists "status quo" state actors with high stakes in having their economy linked with a larger regional or global economy?

One of the most powerful variables found by Gurr, et. al. to be associated with a range of indicators of "state failure" is the extent of isolation of economies from trade and commercial relations with other economies. Global and regional organizations have procedures that

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[6] Drohobycky, in Drohobycky, pp. 15-24.

encourage regular contacts and active dispute mediating procedures between governments and internal groups, such as regular forums for discussing common issues, special envoys, confidence-building measures, negotiations, and the like.

Institutional

13. Global and Regional Integration To what extent are the protagonists state actors with government membership in functioning global, regional or subregional organizations?

14. State Interests. Are the actors states or political groups within states?

Past research finds a strong association between peaceful dispute outcomes and whether the parties to the disputes are states (Miall, 1992). States wish to preserve and improve their positions in the international system and need to pursue a variety of diplomatic, economic, legal and political interests at any one time, suh as trade, aid, security, and so on. Thus, the inclinations of governments to actively support neighboring ethnic kin communities' political goals may also be tempered to the extent that the outsider countries and host state have wider, more compelling interests and incentives that counterbalance their perceived gains from promoting ethnic or other social strife. If the neighbors are heads of sovereign states in the international community, powerful constraints and interests that has to do with retaining the integrity, prerogatives, and benefits of that status. Ethnic conflicts which also involve territorial claims have been found to be more likely to be resolved without major violence, because such disputes can be settled in the interests of one of the contending states with offsetting guarantees for the ethnic group belonging to the other state. Thus, if territorial issues are involved in ethnic conflicts, they become more of a matter between governments and they may more easily defused. The ethnic element is cooled since the governments are not fully aligned with the interests of ethnic groups. (Miall, 83: 1992)

In Europe, such state interests appear to be basically conservative in terms of their effect on inciting internal ethnic violence. The desire of leaders of established states to continue to preside over stable, successful governments and where possible, to increase the material well-being of their constituencies usually outweighs the gains to be achieved from inciting, beyond a certain rhetorical level, one's own nationalist chauvinists fervor or even from stirring up the animosities of an ethnic "kin-group" within a neighboring state. Another deterrent against undermining another state through its minorities is fear of one's own balkanization; ethnic restiveness against one state might give minorities in others the same ideas. Thus, the specific response of a potential supporter of a kindred ethnic minority in a neighboring country may be shaped by the extent to which it wants to maintain its status quo

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position and opportunities as a state, or on the other hand, either has aspirations to greater powers, or its borders are not final and its statehood is not secured.

In particular, the status of a government as a recognized sovereign state or a government that aspires to such recognition seems to restrain the extent to which it actively supports ethnic brethren in a neighboring state. Benign neighbors are fostered when governments develop strong stakes in receiving the benefits of membership in the international community, such as membership in regional economic organizations like the EU and IMF and World aid. And there is a difference between, on the one hand, providing armed or even legal and political support directly to the group behind the back of the host government and on the other, raising their situation before the government itself or through the CSCE or CE (Szayny, 199, 29).

The tempering influence on conflicts of state interests is also clear in other instances of potential kin group-led conflicts. In successful outcomes of ethnic dispute that involved states – such as between Estonia and Russia and Hungary and Slovakia, some of the protagonists were leaders of established, internationally recognized states. The mother countries were constrained in their support to kindred groups next door by other states and international norms because they stood to lose more in the aid, multilateral memberships and other inducements the international community could bestow or withhold than they could gain politically from promoting ethnic nationalist causes. After 1991, the various potential hotspots around Macedonia all involved recognized governments as one of the parties – rump Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, and Macedonia itself – the middle three of which were long established states. Only in the Kosovo and domestic Macedonian disputes are one of the parties not states, but (Albanian) political movements aspiring to more state power, if not their own states. Thus, for example, although the leaders in Albania have voiced moral support for the Albanian minority in Macedonia, this support has stopped far short of armed backing and has been balanced by Albania's recognition of the new state and forswearing of any intent to change borders through force. Because the relatively weak Macedonian state and its weak army may be relatively easily disrupted by domestic turmoil, it is probably more in Albania's interests that Macedonia's politics be managed successfully than for it to fall under more Albanian influence. Despite the economic embargo it imposed on Macedonia in response to its dispute over the new country's adopted name, even Greece ultimately has ulitmately stood to gain from maintaining a stable buffer state in Macedonia. Were the Bosnian war to spread to Macedonia, Greece might have to host thousands of refugees. Undoubtedly for these kinds of reasons of state, the leaders of Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria have initiated diplomatic contacts and regional military agreements with each other to reduce the likelihood of miscalculations. And the irredentist or revisionist tendencies in countries such as Poland,

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Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, for example, are offset by potential counter claims against them, so they may be regarded as reluctant or conditional status quo powers. (Szayny, 36:)

Actors' Behavior and Perceptions

14. Extent Third Parties Engage Before Violence or Coercion. Have significant governmental third parties outside the arena of the conflict applied strong positive or negative incentives to pressure the disputants unequivocally to pursue their differences peacefully -- before one or other party has mobilized a significant political following or exercised armed force or coercive power to achieve their aims, such as to gain territory or control of a government?

If third parties become engaged in the early stages of a dispute by providing positive or negative inducements to the parties to follow a peaceful course that are more compelling than the parties perceive the gains to be had from engaging in violent or coercive methods, it appears that the chances are quite high that the parties will "talk" rather than "fight." Thus, third parties need not only to be involved early, but must put sufficiently weighty political, economic or military pressures on the disputing parties to to bring disputants to the negotiating table to work toward a mutual solution. This is needed in order to pre-empt the dynamic of escalation that might otherwise be unleashed if either party has begun to garner political support for its cause, or take coercive steps to gain its objectives. The impact of the same amount of pressure is likely to be much less if it comes into play after one or other party has already made gains.

In the Hungarian-Slovakian dispute, third party involvement was not especially early. The parties themselves had requested outside assistance several times and been turned down. Even when the EC did offer mediation, it initially failed to get an agreement. Nevertheless, a settlement was achieved once it was clear to Hungary and Slovakia that their membership in the EC would be hindered if they continued to balk at settling the issue. Similar monetary rewards were held out to Estonia as an inducement to modify its minority legislation, and Russia was provided an incentive to remain on schedule with its troop withdrawals by the threat that U.S. and other Western economic aid otherwise would be withdrawn.

The multiple preventive measures in Macedonia were taken to ensure against Serbian clandestine efforts to destabilize Macedonia by Serbia directly or through intensifying the suppression of the Kosavar Albanians, as well as to signal international support for the maintenance of political cooperation among its ethnic groups and their parties. To the extent these measures have been effective, it may be because they involved symbolically powerful deterrent measures that were put in place largely *before* any of the potential external or internal sources of instability had a chance to impose its will in Macedonia through force or agitation. These deterrents included the periodic warnings from Presidents Bush and Clinton to

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Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to refrain from any Serbian armed movement in Kosovo or against Macedonia, or they would be met by firm U.S. retaliatory measures, which have been understood to mean military intervention. The other action was the U.N peacekeeping force set up in 1993 to patrol the Serbian-Macedonian border, thus after the Yugoslav Army had withdrawn from the area, as a tripwire to deter their return. The fact that Macedonia is recognized in international law as a state by many other countries and is a member of the UN may also be a significant deterrent effect of a normative kind, because combined with the other measures, this "draws a line in the sand" *before* the fact of any encroachment.

The reason that these actions are probably more effective than the recognition of Croatia in early 1992 was that Macedonia was not simply endowed juridically with the status of a sovereign state prior to any takeover by hostile elements but also that some military protection was provided to enforce it. Although the 1000-man force would in fact be no match for a Serbian Army invasion, incursions across the border now would be aimed directly at Western forces and violate firmly accepted norms against international aggression, thus possibly triggering a much more vigorous countermeasures, i.e., U.S. and perhaps other military intervention.

None of the recent political disputes in Europe which eventuated into violence or deadlock show evidence that muscular third party efforts were made before significant inter-communal violence or the pre-emptive use of armed force. In Moldova, no international body took an interest in the growing contention between the Moldovan government and the Dniestr separatist movement on the left bank until the CSCE mediated a ceasefire in 1994 and placed an observer mission to monitor it. By that time, local forces had captured the territory they wanted. Similarly, in the years and months preceding the outbreak of war in Chechnya in December, 1994, although there were several bilateral negotiations between the Moscow authorities and the Chechen political leadership, and requests were made for international mediation, the only international missions apparently sent was a fact-finding mission by the non-governmental International Alert in 1992.

In the growing conflict between the Yugoslav federal republics after the breakdown of the communist party, several outside efforts were made beginning in early 1991 to pressure the republics to stay together or negotiate their differences. In this case, the problem was not that no mediation efforts were made. To dissuade the nationalist leaders in the republics from pursuing independence unilaterally, the EC used admonitions, the power to withhold recognition, threats of economic sanctions, and proferring of a negotiations table. But the EC and the U.S.'s pleadings and offerings of economic assistance came at a time in 1991 when political separation had already gone very far and military preparations and actions on the ground were already underway. In comparison to the gain in popular support and territory

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through a unilateral *fait accompli*, the rewards for cooperating in a peaceful solution and the penalties for pursuing independence by fiat were apparently insufficient.

In sum, the level of inducement that third parties must bring to bear in terms of carrots and/or sticks is relative to the strength of disputing parties and scale of the conflict being addressed. Measures applied early in a conflict require less pressure and thus costs than do measures applied later. To the degree that the use of coercion or force to gain territory or control over a government is imminent or deployed, preventive action must wield a great deal of counterforce to deter or reverse it, whether in the form of material rewards or military deterrence. Diplomacy and good offices may require very attractive rewards or the contingent threat of force or other forms of coercion such as effective sanctions, before the parties to a mature dispute or an engaged violent conflict will contemplate a peaceful settlement.

15. Multi-Faceted Interventions Are the several short-term and long-term sources generating potential for violence in the conflict arena being addressed through an appropriate mix of carrots, sticks, facilitative services, or other tools?

A number of sources suggest that to be effective, preventive interventions must "mix and match" several kinds of remedies to come to terms with the several forces or conditions that are driving the conflict. One dimension to look at concerns the various structural, political and constitutional, or substantive, levels of the problem, each of which may entail a different time frame – long-term, medium term, and short term (Vayrinen, 1995:6). The tools must operate on the various fronts or levels of society in which the conflict is being waged, and thus vis-a-vis the associated local players. Thus, power-based, official mediation approaches may produce temporary settlements among elites that maintain power relations, but would not address underlying issues concerning abiding needs such as participation, security, and identity (cf. Burton) But long-term structural approaches will not be effective toward emerging disputes (cf. Bloomfield, 1972:). Incentives for reconciliation may need to be both broad – to include hardliners –and deep – to reach key publics (Sisk, xi: 1996).

In sum, one or more tools may be needed to: reduce tensions, assure immediate security needs, mitigate severe economic conditions worsening the conflict, improve trust, alter mutual perceptions, begin inter-communal reconciliation, both nationally and at grass-roots, fostering communication between the parties and engage them on the substantive issues in dispute, provide specific structural or other substantive proposals.
strengthen mass-elite agreement around peaceful goals, stem the flow of arms, and deter specific hostile policies, actions, behavior, and rhetoric.
Unfortunately, the third parties most engaged may not have in their repertoire the particular tools and experience that are needed. Emissaries from governments and the UN and regional

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organizations are generally used to negotiating and bargaining over tangible assets and among state actors. They are less familiar with issues of *status* or identity and thus non-governmental actors. But while NGO's may have experience with the latter elements, they are not usually brought into the picture in major roles (Cf. Miall 185:1992)

A further key notion is of an appropriate balance or weighting of various objectives within an overall strategy that, over time, sees conflict prevention leading to peacebuilding in an overall process of peaceful change. The aim must be a properly paced and scheduled transition toward desired goals that are ultimately sustainable in the social and political context, not merely quick attainment of specific procedures or objectives that the local body politic will reject. Outsiders promoting democracy, for example, must take into account the domestic effects of rapid shifts in power that may threaten potential losers so much they perpetrate covert subversive actions or ethnic hate campaigns. Since political predictability is important in avoiding violence, sudden changes in power allocations, e.g. ill-timed elections, dramatic redistributions of power through peace accords, and so on, can create instability. Stability is more likely where rates of change between groups and institutions are slower (Carment, 3:)

Thus, specific incentives may be needed to bring conservatives along in reforms (Gagnon; 1995:165-66). Finally, the appropriate "fit" to local conditions must adapt to their changes over time (Cf Carment   ?, p. 14) so a sense is needed of the appropriate sequence or schedule for achieving different ends: settlement of political issues, security, human rights, justice (cf Crocker in Wendt, p. 167, 176)

Finally, to achieve the appropriate mixing, breadth, depth, and modulation over time, the sense of a coherent strategy, authority to orchestrate it, and capacity to monitor it has to reside somewhere.

17. Nature of Major Powers' Involvement To what extent are major global or regional powers' policies toward the country: a) oriented to increasing these power's economic or political influence and advantages in the country, and thus approach it in a way that views it as serving the powers' immediate national interests; b) seeking to strengthen its ability to handle domestic political disputes in balanced ways, such as by supporting or at least tolerating an active dispute settlement process; or c) indifferent to the country's course?

Doing Hypothesis-Guided Case-Studies

Since there are few tested generalizations or theories about conflict prevention to start with, the analyst of a particular case of conflict could easily become bogged down in the myriad of personalities, events, and other features that jump out from the story of any particular unfolding conflict. Each conflict situation is idiosyncratic in its minute details. Violent conflicts emerge from a complex variety of different factors, but which

are the most important? Merely to collect and record a large set of facts, such as in narrative form, or to catalogue a list of causes, is not to provide an analysis of what drives what in the situation. The aim is rather to develop some coherent account by discerning evident causal patterns in the ways that conditions, institutions, attitudes, and actions interacted to produce certain results.

Mining the extant literature thus helps uncover clues or presumptions about what are key forces and their interactions. Their conclusions about some cases can be treated as the hypotheses to be tested as one digs into others. The purpose of retrospective analysis is to see whether these generalizations help to explain the course and outcome of particular cases, and reject or modify them as the findings dictate. The research method of "structured,focussed comparison" (George) is used to in effect "interview" the data from a case in order to derive answers to theory-informed stipulated questions about plausible operative factors. By examining more and more cases with more refined propositions, more reliable and comprehensive explanations are possible.

PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS:
DESIGNING PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

The ultimate practical purpose of doing further case-studies is to suggest how more deliberate preventive actions can apply this causal knowledge in taking future preventive actions in like situations. But even before the further refinement of the most important factors that prevent conflicts is completed (in fact, this is a rolling process), its preliminary findings can be disseminated to current analysts and decisionmakers in situ as a way to begin to inform their current practices vis-a-vis the requirements of preventing conflicts. A framework of the sort illustrated above can serve as a basis for:

• Conflict Risk Assessments. The increasingly refined key variables in the framework provide a list of factors that analysts, political officers, and policymakers who are focussed on different countries or subregions can use to assess the probabilities of serious conflicts emerging there. It serves as a checklist to assess particular prospective conflict situations.

• Context-Specific Priority Setting and Strategy Development. The framework also provides guidance as to what actions the policymaker might begin taking in a given locale. It offers a method for identifying the particular "fronts" or leverage points in the arena of a particular potential conflict that may warrant the most concentrated efforts.

(to be presented)

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Calculating "Probabilities"

DESIGNING CONTEXT-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Conflict Needs Assessment: Setting Priorities

Sequencing Objectives

Preventive Action: A Multi-Tooled Concept

The Toolbox for Conflict Prevention

Tool Profiles

CONCLUSION

Dollars or Design?

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Appendix
A PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY TOOLBOX

Development and Humanitarian Tools

<u>Cause: Socio-economic Resources Scarcity</u> One reason violent conflicts arise is because nations or groups lack sufficient basic material resources such as food, health needs, shelter and the means of livelihood to go around and therefore a severe competition is created for limited resources, which tempts the use of violence to obtain them. In view of relative deprivation, it is important to point out here that these systemic conditions refer not only to a possible absolute lack, or small base, of such resources, but also to the perception of their inequitable distribution or unfair shifts in them, i.e., a <u>relative</u> lack of resources in terms of the proportion of whatever aggregate amount is available that is enjoyed by any given cognizant party, in relation to other parties that it takes as its "reference group." So, violent conflicts may arise even when absolute resources are at a high level, and conversely, low levels of resources need not automatically lead to violent conflict.

Humanitarian assistance is usually used during times of crises and conflict as an emergency measure to restore the material needs that are destroyed by violent conflicts. In that sense, it is not a tool of conflict prevention, but of conflict mitigation. But in situations where conflict is at a low level or has recently abated, this aid can be used not only to hasten the process of post-conflict reconciliation and thus prevent future conflicts, through the ways in which it is distributed. At a minimum, it needs to make sure it "does no harm" by being perceived to favor one party over another, thus increasing their incentive to use violence.

In sum, both forms of material provision have to pay heed to the timing and distributional impacts of improving economic conditions, otherwise they might help create violent conflicts, rather than avoid them.

<u>Tasks:</u>
• Alleviating egregious, elemental human needs, extreme social and economic conditions, that can occasion incitements to group violence or armed force
• Addressing more fundamental sources of disputes in material deprivation
• Redressing inequities in the distribution of the resources that are available.

<u>Tools:</u>
• targetted or conditioned economic development assistance
• cross-communities development projects
• income redistribution
• distribution-sensitive humanitarian relief.

Political Development and Governance Tools

<u>Cause: Poor Governance</u> Parties may or may not have an immediate dispute, but even if they do not, they lack some ongoing governmental institutions and

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political processes at the national level, or integovernmental bodies at the international level, that they share and view as legitimate vehicles through which they might resolve any future differences that may arise. The parties may also lack non-governmental means and a public life through which to express demands and aggregate their preferences.

Task: Set up or strengthen permanent political institutions through which negotiations can be regularized. Create permanent non-partisan state and inter-state institutions and procedures that can serve to manage any future dispute that arises and can enforce public decisons that are made. Endow them with impersonal legitimacy through ensuring some form of constituent representation and political equality. Engender the creation of a public life and public discourse independent of the state to which it is ultimately accountable. Promulgate norms of responsible citizenship, debate, and give and take.

Tools:

National
• elections and electoral assistance
• governmental capacity-building or reform of legislatures, administraion and the civil service, and judicial systems
• constitution drafting assistance
• executive power-sharing
• allocation of political authority through federalism, autonomy, decentralizaton of governmental functions
• political party development
• civil society building through grass-roots movements and civic organizations
• non-violent grass-roots movements, demonstrations, boycotts
• peace education
• media programs.
• development of diverse, non-political media
• trusteeship, protectorates

International
• multilateral organizations with executive, representative and judicial functions

Diplomatic Tools

Cause: Non-engagement. Parties in particular disputes may lack any acceptable way of engaging in communication or negotiation with each other over particular issues that separate them, either because they lack common institudions or those common institutions have been discredited in their eyes. Thus, no effective procedures or institutions exist through which the dispute can be discussed and solutions sought. The perceptions and attitudes of the parties toward each other are so negative that they can't get beyond their feelings to consider particular solutions or comply with them. Or, the parties may be engaged at the negotiating table and they seem willing to settle, but they still are unable to reach agreeable settlements because of lack of good ideas, distrust or lack of strong motivation to budge.

Tasks: Engage the parties in communication and dialogue, either face-to face or indirectly -- the "diplomacy of prevention,: through temporary channels and processes for discussion or negotiation. Address the substantive issues in dispute. Generate a range of possible settlements. Induce parties to adopt

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solutions. Provide mutual assurance. Change attitudes and perceptions. Reduce tensions when they arise. Dispel distrust and suspicion through building relationships and foster reconciliation.

Tools:
- good offices
- mediation
- peace conferences and summits
- arbitration
- "track-two" problem-solving workshops or other non-official dialogues
- incentives to negotiate and settle, such as security guarantees, promises of aid or membership in multilateral organizations

Military Tools

Cause: Threats to Physical Security There are few or no restraints on the ability of parties to resort to violence or armed force as a way to achieve their demands, so one or more faces immediate threats to their physical security. This encourages fear and insecurity and acts to counter-act the perceived threat through arming or pe-emptive strikes.

Tasks: Deter, suppress or contain threats of violence or esclatin of low levels of violence. Deprive parties of arms. Provide protection against their use. Maintain or restore public order.

Tools:
- preventive peacekeeping force
- targetted deterrence or contingent threats of force
- enforceable demilitarized zones, safe havens
- military observers
- confidence-building measures and collective security
- arms embargoes
- coercive diplomacy (sanctions, threats of force, exclusions from international organizations, deprivation of aid, etc.)
- policy functions
- war crimes tribunals,
- military assistance
- military reform

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TABLE 4-2: A MATRIX OF CONFLICT PREVENTION TOOLS [TOOLS MARKED WITH * ARE PROFILED IN DEPTH]

Official Diplomacy	Non-Official Conflict Mgmt. Methods	Military Measures	Economic and Social Development	Judicial/Legal Processes and Arrangements	Human Rights	Communications and Education	Humanitarian Assistance	Political Dev./ Governance Structures
Mediation Negotiations Conciliation Good offices/ informal consultations Peace conferences Unilateral good will gestures Civilian fact-finding missions/ observers/ monitoring/ verification teams Conditionality Special envoys* Conflict prevention/ management centers Humanitarian diplomacy Diplomatic and economic sanctions International appeal/ condemnation Partitioning Secession	• Mediation • Support local conflict mgmt / resolution mechanisms* • Conflict mgmt / resol. training • Peace commissions* • Non-official facilitation/ problem-solving workshops* • Civilian peace monitors • Internationally sponsored peace consultations • Exchange visits • Conflict resol./ prevention centers • Peace education • Visits by eminent organizations/ individuals ("embarrassing witnesses") • "Friends" groups • Non-violent campaigns	• Preemptive peacekeeping forces • Professionalize/ restructure military forces* • Demobilization / reduction • Mil.-to-mil. programs • Mil. confidence-building and security measures* • Non-aggression agreements • Security guarantees • Targeted deterrence • Demil. zones • Arms embargo / blockades • Threat/project of force • Disarmament • Arms control agreements • Military aid • Crisis mgmt. procedures • Arms prolif. control • Alternative defense	• Targeted development assistance* • Economic reforms • Economic integration/ cooperation • Inter-communal trade • Private economic investment • Health assistance • Agricultural programs • Conditionality for conflict prevention • Environment/ natural resource management	• Commissions of inquiry/war crimes tribunals • Constitutional commissions • Judicial/legal reforms • Police reform • Support local indigenous legal institutions • Arbitration • Adjudication	• Human rights monitoring • Human rights education/ training/ institution-building • Promotion/ advocacy of human rights standards	• Peace Radio/ TV* • Joint investigative reporting projects • Media professionali-zation* • International public diplomacy • Journalist training • Civic education • Formal education projects • Peace education • Exchange visits • Conflict resolution prevention training	• Humanitarian aid • Repatriation/ resettlement of refugees • Capacity-building for public welfare	• Political institution-building • Election monitoring • National conferences* • Capacity-building of civil society • Training of political leaders • Power-sharing arrangements* • Sub-national devolution and autonomy • Capacity-building of authorities/ training public servants* • Civic education • Federation • Confederation • Partition • Secession • Trusteeship/ protectorates

Joint IAI/SWP Project Conference
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"Preventing Conflict in the Baltic States:
A Success Story That Will Hold"

by
Renatas Norkus
IAI Scholar-in-Residence/Lithuania

Preventing Violent Conflict in Europe
A Joint IAI/SWP Project

PREVENTING CONFLICT IN THE BALTIC STATES:
A SUCCESS STORY THAT WILL HOLD?

by Renatas Norkus

November 1996
Rome

CONTENTS

Introduction

Introduction

It is often argued that the situation in the three Baltic states, especially for the first three years since their independence has been reestablished, contains most of the ingredients of a classical post-Cold War confrontation. Even today, the three countries are sometimes referred to as representing a potentially explosive area of tension which could erupt into violence and eventually armed conflict. In reality, however, at the time of writing, this worst-case scenario has not materialised; the region seems quite stable, with diplomacy and compromise reigning rather than conflict and violence.

To what extent, in terms of conflict prevention, can the case of the Baltic states be called a "success story"? In this study, I attempt to focus upon both conflict and peace in the region. Therefore, answering the questions: *What may explain the fact that the sensitive security situation of the Baltic states has not escalated into violent conflict?* and *Where does the future of Baltic stability lie?* may be regarded as the main objectives of this study.

In order to answer these questions, an analysis of critical factors that might have generated violence in the Baltics is clearly needed. Therefore, I shall discuss the sources of instability in the Baltics to find out *what issues - conflict generating factors - the Baltics are faced with,* and *what policies have been chosen to prevent them from developing into violent conflicts?* This will be covered in the Chapter "Issues and Policies" which will, however, be briefly preceded by an historical and political background of past and current developments in the Baltic states.

Then, in the third Chapter - "Assessment and Prospects for Enhanced Stability" - after having dealt with the main arguments of what has made conflict prevention actions in the Baltics successful, I shall proceed with the discussion of *some prospects for future stability in and around the Baltic states.*

I. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Baltic countries and their inhabitants differ from the rest of the former Soviet Union in some key cultural, historical and political aspects which give the area a unique character. An understanding of this uniqueness both before, during and, consequently, after the Soviet period is essential for a clearer view of the present trends and developments.

1. A glance at the past

The Baltic nations evolved historically as part of the Western cultural and economic sphere. Western influence was transmitted primarily through German and Swedish invaders, and in the case of the Lithuanians, through the Poles. The German Teutonic Order established itself in the area in the early 13th century and eventually converted Estonians and Latvians to the Lutheran faith. They opened the area to Western trade, and considerable development followed - several Baltic cities joined the Hanseatic League and promptly achieved remarkable economic prosperity and cultural progress. Later, the Latvian and Estonian lands fell under the control of Sweden, which established a fairly liberal rule for that time. Lithuania, which received Christianity from Poland and became Catholic, has the most distinguished history of the Baltic nations. The Lithuanians were able to forge a centralized political state by 1236, beat back the Teutonic Knights, and achieve considerable power,[1] both independently and as part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

At the beginning of the 19th century, however, all three Baltic peoples were incorporated into the resurgent Russian empire, and this marked one of the most difficult periods in their history.[2] By submerging the Baltic people's diverging experiences of statehood and religion, the Tsarist regime engendered highly active opposition: the strengthening national movements eventually adopted political aims, striving for self-determination and political independence.

Such an opportunity arrived in the aftermath of World War I. With the collapse of the Russian

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[1]By the early 15th century, the Lithuanians conquered an expanse of Slavic lands down to the Black Sea and created the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which provided an insurmountable barrier to westward expansion by the Mongols of the Golden Horde who ruled Russia in the 14th and 15th centuries.

[2]The Baltic nationalities were subjected to increasing political oppression and massive Rusification pressures: Russian was often introduced as the only legal language in the schools; religions other than the Orthodox were severely circumscribed; in Lithuania, between 1864 and 1905, all publications not printed in the Cyrillic alphabet were outlawed.

monarchy and the simultaneous defeat of Germany, the Baltic states proclaimed independence in 1918. The freedom of the Baltic nations was to last only 22 years, but despite this historically very short time, the three republics were able to establish political systems that proved rather viable and generally liberal. During this period they experienced an unprecedented cultural and economic flowering.[3] Democratic institutions were introduced soon after independence, with an emphasis on strong parliamentary government, and in 1921 the Baltic states joined the League of Nations. True, these democratic developments were overshadowed in all three countries by economic and political crises culminating in a transition to authoritarian regimes. This happened in the form of a coup in Lithuania as early as 1926, while the other two republics put democracy aside in 1934.[4] Though the interwar statehood of the Baltics was somehow associated with insecurity - as they were caught between Germany and the Soviet Union - all three countries were fully independent, as independent as every other European country of that time. This fact distinguishes the three Baltic countries from the rest of the former Soviet Union's republics.

The fate of the Baltic republics was sealed by the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939, according to which the Baltic area was included in the Soviet sphere of influence. In the following months, the Soviets first won the right to keep large military bases in Baltic territory: then in June 1940, they occupied the Baltic republics outright, despite the fact that the Soviet Union had signed friendship and non-aggression treaties guaranteeing Soviet non-interference in domestic affairs with all three countries in 1920. Two months later, the Baltic states were formally incorporated into the Soviet Union as Union republics.[5]

What makes the history of Baltic states exemplary is the fact that they did not have the chance to

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[3] The three republics fared rather well economically, and standards of living during the period of independence were vastly superior to those in the Soviet Union; they compared to those of the Scandinavian countries. For a detailed study of the period of Baltic independence, see: George von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence, 1917 - 1940*, London, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974; also: V. Stanley Vardys, Romuald J. Misiunas, *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917 - 1945*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978.

[4] For the discussion of factors which generated the falling to authoritarian dictatorships in the Baltics, see Olav F.Knudsen, "The Foreign Policies of the Baltic States: Interwar Years and Restoration", in *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1993, p.49-52.

[5] An account of the circumstances and events leading to the Soviet annexation of the Baltic republics is contained in Boris Meissner, "The Baltic Question in World Politics", in V. Stanley Vardys and Romuald J. Misiunas (eds.), *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917-1945*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978. The documentary evidence concerning the annexation is provided in Bronis J. Kazlas, *The USSR-German Aggression Against Lithuania*, New York, 1973.

reestablish their independence immediately after the Second World War, as other countries occupied during the war did. The West did little (or had no effective means) to help them, although the United States and most other European nations never gave *de jure* recognition to the annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union. The Baltic countries, however, were unique not only in the way they lost their independence, but also in the way they pursued its reestablishment. The three republics often represented a model for escape from the "inner empire" of the Soviet Union.[6] Their legal, moral, and political battle during the years of Soviet domination, which was "as effective as it was non-violent"[7], finally resulted in the restoration of their statehood. Their independence received worldwide recognition in the Autumn of 1991.

2. Beginning of transition: political features

With international recognition of their restored independence, the Baltic republics set to the task of becoming "normal countries". First and foremost, it was the domestic political vulnerabilities of the three countries and, for obvious reasons, their relations with Russia. that dominated the difficult Baltic transition agenda.

In the domestic policy realm, the Baltic states had to develop the legal and political state foundations, and effectively support them with new institutions. This development, especially in its initial phase, was highly affected by an internal institutional power struggle. In Lithuania, for example, efforts to institute a strong presidency diverted the country's attention from more pressing problems such as economic reforms, and prevented the parliament from functioning normally for most of 1992. The confusing and conflict-ridden nature of party politics in the Baltics also contributed to a rather chaotic decision-making. The "National Fronts" of Estonia and Latvia, and the "Sajudis" of Lithuania which had brought about independence virtually collapsed during 1991-1992, and gave way to the gradual emergence of a fragmented spectrum of political parties, groups and movements indulging in constant political infighting.[8] As a result of this, frequent rotation of governments and, thus, internal political instability were the features present in the Baltic states in the immediate aftermath of their regained

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[6] The influence of Baltic independence movements, especially during the "perestroyka" time, extended also to Ukraine and Belarus, propagating a model for democratic and nonviolent liberation.

[7] Carl Bildt, "The Baltic Litmus Test", *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 73, No. 5, September/October 1994, p.75.

[8] For a good discussion on party formation and domestic political process in the Baltic states, see: Olav F. Knudsen, "Baltic Security: Domestic Factors", Revised version of a paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Meetings, Acapulco, Mexico March 23-27, 1993 NUPI.

independence.

There were several serious sources of contention in Baltic-Russian relations. The unwelcome presence of the Soviet troops represented both an obstacle and a threat to Baltic sovereignty and independence building, and was seen, not least, as being able to trigger serious armed incidents between Russian and Baltic forces, given the ever-present risk of provocation. Ethnic composition was another most prominent matter affecting the relationship between the Baltic countries and Russia. The Baltic societies have always been multi-ethnic without any major difficulties for mutual coexistence. When they regained independence, however, the crucial problem facing the governments was the integration of other ethnic minorities into the rest of society. Indeed, the numbers of non-indigenous peoples (mostly but not exclusively Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians, and also -- in Lithuania -- Poles) in the Baltic countries are significant. Of courese, the mere fact of multi-ethnicism in the Baltics, and the existence of differences between minorities and indigenous populations did not automatically have to lead to violent conflict. It was clear, however, that the way in which it was to be handled would have affected not only Baltic-Russian relations, but also the future stability of the area.

In addition, the different interpretation of the legal basis for inter-state relations between the Baltic states and Russia has been the problem underlying a whole complex of issues contained in that relationship. Russia and the Baltic states disagree in their interpretation of the Baltics' legal continuity as states from 1940 to 1991. The Baltic states consider their incorporation into the Soviet Union to have been a military annexation and occupation during which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did not lose their legal continuity. Hence, the date of September 1991, when the (then still) Soviet Union finally recognised the independence of the Baltics, is seen as the end of occupation. Indeed, while the countries of Transcaucasus, Central Asia, and even Ukraine and Belarus got their independence as a consequence of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Baltic republics succeeded in breaking away before the USSR finally collapsed. It is ironic to note that to some extent, the Baltics wished the Soviet Union had lasted a bit longer than it did because they believed that, had more than four months elapsed between the reinstatement of their independence in August 1991 and the final collapse of the Soviet Union in December of that same year, then the Baltics might also have had the opportunity to present themselves as belonging to the emerging geopolitical entity of the Visegrad countries, and perhaps even turning the (then) Visegrad Three into a "Visegrad Six".

Russia, however, regards the Baltic states as entirely new countries that emerged after the disintegration of the USSR. This view permits Moscow to disregard treaties and accords that Soviet

Russia signed with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the interwar period, such as the 1920 Peace Treaties which recognised the independence and sovereignty of the Baltic states and specified the borders between them and Russia. It is important to have a clear understanding of this legal-political dispute between the Baltics and Russia, as many other internal as well as external conflict-generating issues are directly or indirectly linked to it.

3. International context

The three Baltic states re-entered an international setting the rules and patterns of which had been determined without their participation. At the same time, the changing nature of the European security system represented at least a factor of uncertainty in itself. Formerly considered by some wrong and unlawful but stable, this system now seemed or claimed to be both just and lawful, although confused, unpredictable, and highly unstable. Having completed the period of confrontation between two military blocs, the international community was now faced with the task of creating the new rules for coping with new emerging patterns of potential conflict.

Almost immediately after restoration of their independence, the Baltic states were admitted to both the United Nations and the CSCE (since 1995 - OSCE). The latter connection was the more important one, since the CSCE seemed to be the right forum in which the most pertinent Baltic issues (e.i. the withdrawal of foreign troops, the minorities' problems, etc.) could be internationalised. In March 1992, on the initiative of Germany and Denmark, the Baltic states joined with these two countries and Finland, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden to become founding members of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). As a broad regional organisation, attempting to foster cooperation mostly in the economic, technological, and cultural spheres, and, thus, to reduce tensions in the Baltic Sea sub-region, the CBSS also holds significant potential for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as a means of moderating any desire for domination in the area by the large power - Russia. The admission of Lithuania and Estonia (in May 1993), and later Latvia (in February 1995) to the Council of Europe was particularly gratifying for these countries since the organisation stresses the protection of human rights as one of its major goals, but also as a criterion for becoming a member of it. In June 1993 the Baltic states also expressed strong interest in associate membership in the then European Community (EC - since 1993 - EU). The intention was to become a reality two years later, when the three Baltic countries signed Europe Agreements with the EU with a view toward full integration into the organisation in the future.

Since the re-establishment of their independence the Baltic states have also developed ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Western European Union (WEU). All three are members of the NATO Cooperation Council (NACC), founded in 1991; they joined and actively participate in the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme since its initiation in 1994; furthermore, with Lithuania leading with its application of 4 January 1994, the Baltic states have officially applied for full membership in the Alliance; in May 1994, they became Associated Partners of the WEU. This wide range of integration processes and increased cooperation between the Baltics and the Euro-Atlantic security community have kept the three countries rather visible in the context of on-going developments of the post-Cold War international environment. There was little doubt that the higher the international profile the Baltics can maintain, the greater the chances for enhancing their security.

The major external players in and around the Baltic states have been and will continue to be the Nordic states, Poland, Germany, the U.S. and, obviously, Russia. The small powers of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden as well as Iceland, each with its different level of involvement, have provided important economic and diplomatic support for the Balts. Poland's main interest has been its traditional ties with Lithuania. Germany has had an historical presence in all three Baltic countries and, therefore, seemed more involved in the region than any other European Community and NATO member. The role of the U.S. has always been major, given the small but well-organised lobbies of ethnic Balts in North America. The key question for the Baltic states has been the relationship with and developments in Russia. After the initial good tone of the attitude of the Russian leadership towards the Baltics, it gradually showed great difficulty in coming to terms with Russia's changed status. It seemed incapable of redefining its relations with the ex-Soviet republics, including the Baltic states. As Russia fell back on a generic approach of "special rights" and "near abroad", trying to denigrate the "foreign country" status of the Baltic states, any steady improvement of the Baltic-Russian relationship became difficult to expect.

In such an international environment the avoidance of serious conflict in the Baltic region was conditional upon several factors, including, above all, the internal stability of the Baltics, but also Russia and its evolution toward a democracy, Baltic and Russian involvement in international organisations, and the role of other outside powers in the area.

II. ISSUES AND POLICIES

1. Foreign troops: withdrawal and their legacy

1.1. Conditions and realities of the pullout

In legal terms, the issue of Russian troops was more clear-cut than other issues: firstly, the restoration of independence removed all possible justifications for their continued presence; secondly, foreign troops must not be stationed on the territory of another state without that state's consent. In practical terms, though, the withdrawal of troops was hampered by several mutually reinforcing factors. During 1991-1992 Russia had refused to negotiate any pullout schedule, which led the Baltic states to internationalize the issue by appealing to the UN and CSCE to pressure Russia to withdraw. Even after the CSCE 1992 Helsinki Summit, which called for "early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of the Baltic states",[9] Russia attempted to postpone the withdrawals, citing various excuses and pointing mainly to its own domestic problems and concerns over the plight of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltics. Withdrawal schedules proved difficult to negotiate also because the Baltic states wanted the Russian troops to leave immediately, whereas Russia was short of housing for returning army families. In the course of negotiations Russia pursued a differentiated policy towards the three states using a variety of instruments (suspension of talks, forms of military demonstration, low-rank representation at the talks, etc.)[10] which resulted in differently paced and uneven progress in handling the withdrawal problem.

Lithuania's flexible attitude to dealings with Russia (on problems of, citizenship, housing, property, social provisions for departing troops) cleared the way for solution of the Russian military presence in that country. The last Russian combat troops left Lithuania on 31 August 1993. The withdrawal from Latvia and Estonia, however, was not smooth as Russia used delay tactics, pressure and other measures to link withdrawal with the status of the Russian-speaking population in the two states. Moscow also took advantage of some incidents to slow down the process.[11] All the problems

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[9] *CSCE Helsinki Document 1992*, "The Challenges of Change", Helsinki 1992, p.8

[10] For a good overview of the withdrawal process see SIPRI Yearbook, 1993, 1994, 1995.

[11] On 10 January 1994, a serious incident occurred in Latvia when the Vidzeme district municipal authorities handcuffed two Russian generals and placed them in a police vehicle do be driven to the Russian border and expelled. In reaction to the incident, several Russian army units near the Latvian border as well as Russian militaries stationed in Latvia were put on full alert.

notwithstanding, on 31 August 1994 the Russian military forces stationed on Estonian and Latvian territories were withdrawn as well as most of their military bases and installations transferred to the respective Baltic authorities. Only a small unit at the Paldiski submarine training centre, Estonia (210 military personnel) remained until 1996 to dismantle the two nuclear reactors at the base. In the Skrunda radar station, Latvia, 500-600 Russian servicemen have remained to run the facility until the year 2000.

1.2. Military pensioners

Even after the Russian forces had been pulled out from the Baltics, some reasons for concern still remained. One of the most controversial issues, which constituted a part of the Russian troops withdrawal package, was the status of Russian military pensioners and their families in Latvia and Estonia.[12] Right before the departure of Russian troops, there were approximately 22,000 and 10,500 retired Russian officers living in Latvia and Estonia, respectively. Consequently, a widely shared fear prevailed in the two countries that this group could serve as a propaganda resource and a potentially active "fifth column" for Russia. Although some of those pensioners were relatively young military professionals who retired from the army in 1992 or later, many of them were of advanced age, in poor health and with no place to go in Russia.[13] Since both Estonian and Latvian citizenship legislations were rather restrictive regarding the former Russian military and KGB officials, any deliberations on the status of this specific group of residents became politically sensitive issue. A solution to the problem had to be found also because the issue appeared to dominate the ongoing negotiations on Russian troop withdrawal, as Russia tied the pullout to social guarantees for military pensioners.

The basis for the solution to the problem was reached by concluding two agreements: the 30 April 1994 "Latvian-Russian Accord on the social security of Russian Federation military retirees and their families who reside on the territory of the Republic of Latvia", and the 26 July 1994 "Estonian-Russian Agreement on the Russian military pensioners in Estonia". According to the Latvian

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[12] In Lithuania's case the issue of Russian military pensioneers has not been much of a problem, primarily due to the inclusive citizenship policies of Lithuania. The agreement with Russia on social guarantees for military pensioners, which Lithuania succeeded in avoiding before the pullout of Russian troops, however, was signed thereafter, on 18 November 1993.

[13] According to the survey of April 1994, conducted by the Institute of International and Social Studies of Estonia, 28 per cent of all interviewed retired officers were aged 50 and under, 30 per cent were 51-60 years old, and 42 per cent - 61 or older. See: Klara Hallik, "Ethnic Relations in Estonia and What They Mean for the World".....p.

agreement, which the government leaders believed was "the best that could have been obtained",[14] all those Russian military pensioners who had retired before 28 January 1992 would be granted the status of permanent residents and could be naturalized as Latvian citizens under Latvian law.[15] A special commission whose task was to oversee the implementation of the accord was set up in Latvia. The Latvian government accepted the agreement only under strong pressure from the US and other Western countries. Many Latvians believed that the West forced its government to grant too many concessions on social guarantees for military retirees but recognised that they were needed to overcome Russia's intransigence and to finally complete troop withdrawal.

The Estonian-Russian agreement declared that the social and economic rights of retirees would be protected by the Estonian state as soon as they were issued residence permits according to the Estonian law. Unlike in Latvia, the Estonian government retained the right, however, to deny residency to any applicant who posed a threat to the security of Estonian state. One could have assumed that with such a provision in the agreement, some military retirees would surely have been refused residence permits, with strong protests from Russian officials following, yet, the actual implementation of the agreement seems to be proceeding rather smoothly.[16] In this respect, noteworthy is that the OSCE has been involved, with its representative, in the work of the Government Commission formed specifically to deal with residence permits.

2. Ethnicity related questions

2.1. The origin of ethnic composition

The current demographic situation, particularly in Estonia and Latvia, is largely the result of planned, systematic Soviet policies aimed at the denationalization and russification of the Baltic peoples, which

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[14]Saulius Girnius, "Relations Between the Baltic States and Russia", *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 33, 26 August 1994, p. 31.

[15] It also contained some rights and privileges for the retirees, such as the right to continue to live in Latvia if they had resided there permanently since the retirement, to dispose their property as they wish and receive their pensions taxfree from Russia. The additional protocol to the agreement deals with the repatriation of military retirees and their families who wish to return to their native land. See: Dzintra Bungs, "Russia Agrees to Withdraw Troops from Latvia", *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 22, 3 June 1994, p. 7.

[16]A total of 19,340 retirees have applied for residence, of which 14,392 received five-year permits, and 331 two-to-four year permits. Though the Estonian government put off a final decision on granting residence permits to other 4,077 by giving them six-month residence permits, it was said most would receive permits soon. See Omri Daily Digest No. 134, 12 JULY 1996.

began at the same time as their annexation. The Soviet Union's deportation of several hundred thousand Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians,[17] and the flight of many thousands more in the face of the Soviet invasion, were followed by an even more massive influx of Russian and other Slavic settlers.[18] (See Annexes: Table 1)

Primarily because of its far higher birth rate and a larger rural population, which supplied the work force needed for the urban industries established after the war, Lithuania was not as overrun as Latvia and Estonia with immigrants from the other Soviet republics. In 1994, there were 705,000 non-Lithuanians living in the country.[19] On the contrary, as a result of the low birth rates and the tremendous losses these nations suffered from emigration and deportations, Latvian and Estonian populations are still below their prewar levels. By the beginning of 1995, there were approximately 435,000 ethnic Russians and 100,000 people of other ethnic origin living in Estonia (while the number of Estonians in 1995 was approximately 956,000).[20] The ethnic situation in Latvia is very similar to that of Estonia. Out of a total Latvian population of 2.51 million inhabitants, only 1.42 million are Latvians (56.5 per cent). There are 765,896 people of Russian origin (30.43 per cent) and the remaining 300,000 are either Belorussians, Ukrainians, Poles or Lithuanians.[21] In six of the seven largest cities, including the capital, Riga, Russians form almost one-half of the population, while Latvians account for little more than one-third. This is quite an extraordinary situation, and it largely explains why ethnic Estonians and Latvians consider it difficult at times to maintain their national identities in their own countries.

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[17]According to Alexander R. Alexiev who used the sources of Encyclopedia Britannica, 20,000 Estonians and 105,000 Latvians were deported in 1945-1946. After the fall of 1944, 60,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia, to be followed by 145,000 more in the next two years. The final wave of deportations took place in all three countries in the spring of 1949 in connection with the forced collectivisation campaign. 60,000 Lithuanians, 70,000 Latvians, and 80,000 Estonians were deported. Overall, some 600,000 Balts were deported - a figure which, given a total population ogf about 6 million, approaches genocidal proportions. See: Alexander R. Alexiev, "Dissent and Nationalism in the Soviet Baltic", Rand study No. R-3061-AF, September 1983, pp. 5-6.

[18]Between 1937 and 1989, for example, the native share of the population in Estonia decreased from 88,2% to 61,5%, while the Russian share increased from 8,2% to 30,3%. In the same time period, the Latvian proportion has shrunk from 76% to 52%, while the Russian increased from 10,6% to 34%. Only in Lithuania has the indigenous population managed to keep its share at about 80%, while the Russian grew from about 2% to 9,4%.

[19] Notably, the same number of non-indigenous population resided in Lithuania before the Second World War. Today, the two biggest national minorities are Russian and Polish, which constitute respectively 8,7 and 7,1 percent of the population. The rest are Belorussians (1,6%), Ukrainians (1,1%), Jews (0,2%), Latvians (0,1%) and Tatars (0,1%).

[20] *Estonian Human Development Report 1995* (Tallin: UNDP / Kolding Trykcenter A/S, 1995), p. 30.

[21]*Latvia Human Development Report. 1995* (Riga: UNDP, 1995), p. 22.

This recent Baltic experience does not exactly facilitate inter-ethnic harmony. Indeed, the Soviet ethnic policy generated the two main dimensions of national identity: for Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians it was an ethno-cultural identity; for the Russophone population, a political (Soviet) identity. This is one of the main reasons why the re-creation of independent Baltic states and the dissolution of the USSR were accepted in different ways: for most Balts, it meant the restoration of a linkage between nation and state; for many Russian-speakers in the Baltics, it meant a psychological shock - a sense of disappointment at the loss of their accustomed (Soviet) identity. This further produced a potentially disturbing situation: large groups of the non-indigenous population did not perceive a Baltic nation-state as open to them and were thus looking for a different or somewhat distinct community in order "to feel at home".[22] Two cases in Estonia and Lithuania can serve as a good illustration.

The largest concentration of people belonging to the Russian or non-Estonian language group is found in North-Eastern Estonia, in particular in the towns of Narva, Sillamae and Kohtla-Jarve, as well as Tallinn.[23] In July 1993, Russian-speaking communities, which constitute an overwhelming majority in Narva and Sillamaae, held a referendum demanding a special territorial autonomy status for the North-Eastern industrial part of Estonia. Voters in both cities were overwhelmingly in favour of autonomy, however, the Estonian Supreme Court ruled that the referendums were unconstitutional. The event indicated the relatively high instability and fear for their personal future felt by people of these cities at the time. In the meanwhile, a certain stabilisation of the problem seems to have taken place.[24]

In Lithuania, relations with the Polish minority have been somewhat tense. Almost half of the Polish minority lives in relatively compact communities in the Vilnius region of Eastern Lithuania.[25] The

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[22] For the discussion on a Baltic nation-state related problems, see Olav F. Knudsen, "Baltic Seacurity: Domestic Factors", reversed version of a paper originally presented at the International Studies Association Annual Meetings, Acapulco, Mexico, March 23 - 27, 1993, published by NUPI, 1993, p. 14-18.

[23] During the Soviet period, the cities of Narva and Sillamae were closed to Estonians, due to the uranium enrichment factory in Sillamae. According to the 1989 census, 96% of the population in Narva, and 79% in Kohtla-Jarve were non-Estonians. See Aksel Kirch, "Russians as a Minority in Contemporary Baltic States", Bulletin of Peace Proposals, vol. 23, No. 2, 1992, p. 205.

[24] Data from the end of 1994 show that a status of administartive and territorial autonomy for the North-East region is demanded by only 16% of Estonia's Russians. See Marika Kirch and Aksel Kirch, "Search for Security in Estonia: New Identity Architecture", Security Dialogue, Vol 26, No. 4, 1995, p. 442.

[25] Vilnius region, which excludes Vilnius city, is 60% Polish; Salcininkai region is over 80% Polish.

tensions between Lithuanians and Poles in Lithuania must be seen in the entire historical context.[26] Given the history of Polish-Lithuanian relations, it was not surprising that Sajudis, the Lithuanian popular front, did not devote much attention initially to the Polish community in Lithuania. As a consequence, the latter chose to ally itself with the local Russians rather than with the Lithuanian majority in the country. Culturally, this tendency was also favoured throughout the Soviet period by Lithuania's Poles, since their knowledge of Russian was much better than that of Lithuanian.[27] In September 1991, the Lithuanian government dissolved the local governments of the two regions, Vilnius and Salcininkai, and imposed direct rule there. This action was justified by accusations against the Polish leaders of the regional governments of supporting the attempted coup in Moscow.[28] Indeed, before August 1991, the Lithuanian government had reason to fear that its Polish minority was disloyal: the Vilnius and Salcininkai regions continued to receive Soviet supplies after trade was cut off with the rest of Lithuania in response to the declared independence on March 1990; in February 1991, less than a third of the population in the two regions took part in the referendum on Lithuanian independence, while only a month later the majority actively participated in the referendum on the future of the Soviet Union, which was officially boycotted by Lithuania.[29] Some ethnic Polish political activists had envisaged and promoted the creation of a Polish Autonomous Territorial Region within Lithuania, with its own flag, army, police, and parliament. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, attempts by Moscow to use the Polish minority against Lithuania ended.

In all three republics, this potentially disturbing diversity of identification, resulting in a lack of congruence between the prevalent idea of the nation-state and the heterogeneity of the population has

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[26]Although the Lithuanians were not ostensibly conquered in earlier centuries (unlike the Estonians and Latvians), over time the relationship with Poland became a kind of subordinate one. For instance, the hostility engendered by the issue of who should control the Vilnius region was such that two countries did not even have diplomatic relations for almost the entire inter-war period. For useful overviews, see Stephen R. Burant, "Polish-Lithuanian Relations: Past, Present, and Future", *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 1991, pp. 67-84.

[27]Some data on language choice and competence in the Baltic states of 1989 suggested that 57.9 % of Poles prefered the Russian language as their second language and only 15 % of those considered Lithuanian as their second language. See the table in Toivo U. Raun, "Ethnic Relations and Conflict in the Baltic States", in: W. Raymond Nuncan and G. Paul Holman (eds.), *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict*, Westview Press, 1994, p. 166.

[28] Some Polish activists, especially in Salcininkai, had put their weight behind the putsch. Newspaper editors printed pro-Soviet propaganda, and some Poles even went so far as to appear in public to call for armed struggle against Lithuania. Tim Snyder, "National Myths and International Relations: Poland and Lithuania, 1989-1994", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Spring 1995, p. 320.

[29] More on these facts, see:Tim Snyder, ibid, p. 320; also: Saulius Gimius, "The Baltic States", *RFE/RL Research Report* Vol.3, No. 16, 22 April 1994, p. 6.

played an important role in designing their ethnic policies. The resulting citizenship legislation, however, has been different in each country as has the level of tension and potential for ethnic conflict.

2.2. Citizenship policies: different approaches

It was due to Lithuania's favourable ethnic composition, that the country granted all permanent residents of the republic the chance to gain citizenship, regardless of nationality, as early as 1989. This liberal approach to citizenship policy removed a major source of possible discontent among the country's minorities and in turn made most Lithuanians rather moderate.

The **Lithuanian** Citizenship Law of December 1991 extended citizenship to all persons born on Lithuanian territory, to those who were citizens prior to 1940 and their descendants, and those who became citizens under the legislation in effect prior to the new effective date of the new law. Naturalization procedures were inclusive. Those living in Lithuania when the citizenship law was adopted could become citizens by making a formal request, swearing loyalty, and giving up any other citizenship. Today, the majority of ethnic Poles, Russians, and others are citizens of Lithuania, and can participate fully in the state's political life. In addition to the same and equal rights to all citizens provided by the citizenship legislation, the distinct treatment of national minorities is spelled out in special articles of the Constitution and the Law on National Minorities.[30]

In Estonia and Latvia, different and much more cautious policies for granting political rights to ethnic Russians were implemented. The basic concept of the Estonian and Latvian approach reflects the republic's legal continuity from pre-war to present times. Accordingly, *automatic* citizenship rights were given only to those who were citizens of the respective republics on 17 June 1940 (the day the Soviet armed forces occupied the Baltic countries) and their direct descendants. This meant that in Estonia, only ten per cent of ethnic Russians were eligible for automatic citizenship (30 per cent in Latvia).

Estonia's new citizenship law entered into force in April 1995. There was no significant change with respect to the previous law of 26 February 1992, which was, in turn, a re-enactment of the 1938

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[30] For example, the Law on National Minorities (amended in January 1991, following the proposals of Polish members of Lithuanian Parliament) provides that the local language of the national minority can be used along with the state language in local institutions and organisations of administartive territorial units with dense population of a particular national minority.

citizenship law. For post-war immigrants the law includes requirements for naturalisation, such as a two-year residency requirement, to be followed by a one-year waiting period, as well as knowledge of the Estonian language and an oath of loyalty. The legal basis for the residence of non-citizens in Estonia is provided by the July 1993 Law on Aliens, the document that has faced the sharpest critique from both inside and outside Estonia. According to the law, only Estonian citizens have an automatic right to reside in Estonia; all others have to apply for a residence permit regardless of whether they were born in Estonia or have lived there for decades. This produced hostile reactions from Russian officials.[31] Another source of tension between the Estonian government and Russian-speakers has been the Estonian legislation on language. The Law on Language (adopted by the Estonian Parliament in 1989, and revised in 1995) declares that knowledge of Estonian, as the state language, is a professional skill necessary for a number of jobs, as well as an absolute essential for citizenship.[32] At the same time, this law contains some guarantees for the use of minority languages.[33] For many Russian-speakers the language barrier is more than evident: one research study found that 40% of Russian-speakers were able to carry on a conversation in Estonian, although the level of their linguistic competence was difficult to assess.[34] Although the need for knowledge of the Estonian language is increasingly appreciated by the majority of the Russian population,[35] many of them still consider the language requirement to be the main obstacle to obtaining Estonian citizenship. While knowledge of the state language is a reasonable criterion for citizenship, it should be realised that many non-citizens - the elderly, the less-educated, those living in monolingual residential areas - may never gain full mastery of Estonian.

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[31]Foreign Minister Kozyrev decleared that Estonia had taken a step "along the road of apartheid by decelaring a third of its population aliens"; Churkin, Deputy Foreign Minister, claimed that Estonia had taken the path of ethnic cleansing; and President Yeltsin asserted that "the Estonian leadership, yielding to the pressures of nationalism, had forgotten certain geopolitical and demographic realities, which Russia could remind it of ...". See Ann Sheehy, "The Estonian Law on Aliens", *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 38, 24 September 1993, p. 9.

[32]Would-be citizens must demonstrate conversational ability in Estonian, requiring a knowledge of about 1,500 words.

[33] The Estonian state is willing, given a request by the local government, to grant the Russian language status as administrative language in regions where Russian-speakers form a majority of the permanent residents - as in Narva, Sillamae and several other towns.

[34] Richard Rose and William Maley, "Conflict and Compromise in the Baltic States?", *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 28, 15 July 1994.

[35]According to the researchers from Estonian Academy of Sciences, "about 80-90% of Estonia's Russians have accepted the idea that everybody in Estonia must know the local language", see: Marika Kirch and Aksel Kirch, "Search for Security in Estonia: New Identity Architecture", *Security Dialogue*, Vol 26, No. 4, 1995, p. 443.

In **Latvia**, the process of drafting a citizenship law has been rather long and complicated, often raising tensions within Latvia and between Latvia and Russia. Although adoption of the citizenship law was postponed until after the election of the new Saeima (parliament), an interim policy (as in Estonia) automatically restored citizenship for citizens of interwar Latvia and their descendants. Other residents had to apply for naturalisation which required, *inter alia*, 16 years' residence in Latvia and a basic knowledge of the Latvian language.[36] As a result, almost 34 percent of Latvian residents were unable to vote in the June 1993 elections.

Only in the beginning of June 1994 did the Saeima pass the citizenship law which included at least two controversial requirements: a system of annual naturalisation quotas for non-citizens and a ten-year residency threshold. After the Latvian President's refusal to sign the law -- largely in response to pressure from Russia and various international organisations -- the Latvian Parliament modified it by suspending the quotas and reducing the required residence period. The citizenship law was finally signed by the President on 11 August, replacing the quota system with a plurennial step-by-step naturalisation timetable. As a result, as of 1 January 1996, persons born in Latvia may apply for citizenship; as of 2001, applications will be open to persons not born in Latvia. Citizenship can be obtained by persons with five years' permanent residence and a legal income in Latvia; a basic knowledge of the Latvian language, the Constitution, the main rights and duties of the citizen and the history of Latvia are required. Applicants also have to take an oath of loyalty to the state and people of Latvia and renounce other citizenship.

Though major disagreements over the citizenship issue seemed to have been resolved, the unclear legal status of the non-citizen population for some time to come continued to spur tension between Latvia and Russia. In this context, a very important development was the adoption of the Law on Non-citizens by the Latvian Parliament on 12 April 1995. The new law gives legal status to over 700,000 Latvian residents who entered or were born in Latvia to non-citizen parents after World War II. It confirms that former Soviet citizens have all basic rights as spelled out in Latvia's constitutional law and permits non-citizens to choose a place of residence in Latvia freely, as well as to leave the country and return. All subjects of the law are entitled to receive non-citizens passports which would serve as travel documents. It is of key importance, however, that the new law be implemented in a

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[36] Ilmars Viksne, "Latvia and Europe's security structures", in *The Baltic States: Security and Defence After Independence*, Paris, Institute for Security Studies / Western European Union, Chaillot Paper 19, Paris, June 1995, p. 57.

strictly impartial and fair manner by the Latvian authorities.[37]

In general, it is argued that the Estonian and Latvian citizenship legislation is perfectly acceptable with regard to future immigrants to these countries. It is problematic, however, to apply them to people who have resided in the country for many years, sometimes even their entire lives. Many of the Russian-speakers, despite their ethnic origin, have no link with the pre-war Estonian or Latvian Republic. Thus, they cannot restore their citizenship and have to go through the naturalisation process. The consequences of this process, however, have not been very inclusive so far: both Estonian and Latvian laws state that non-citizens may not vote or be elected to office (except that in Estonia permanent residents may vote in local elections); they may not own property (in Estonia this applies to property ownership in the cities); they may not carry or purchase weapons. The Latvian social pension (paid to those who do not receive a job-related pension) is reduced by ten per cent in the case of non-citizens. In terms of comparison, the extension of citizenship to those wishing it is proceeding much more slowly in Latvia than in Estonia.[38]

2.3. Responses to Baltic ethnic policies

As already mentioned, Estonian and Latvian citizenship policies came under pressure from both sides, from Russia and from the West. Russia accused the Baltic states, most significantly Estonia and Latvia, of human rights violations. These allegations were intended primarily for Western audiences, and served a multifold purpose. By internationalizing the issue, Russia sought, firstly, to establish a link between the minority treatment question and the withdrawal of its troops, and, thus, to delay a comprehensive troop withdrawal; secondly, to compel Estonia and Latvia to grant immediate and automatic citizenship to all their inhabitants - the so-called zero option; thirdly, to claim that perceived Estonian and Latvian discrimination against the Russian-speaking population would inevitably lead to internal instability and violent conflict; and fourthly, to present itself as the defender of the rights

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[37] As it has been reported, "administrative abuse of non-citizens by the arbitrary actions of the Citizenship and Immigration Department (CID) of the Ministry of Interior of Latvia appears to underlie the large majority of complaints by the non-citizen community. The problems arrise mainly from CID refusing to register a significant number of inhabitants depriving them of the personal code number which is essential to a wide range of fundamental activities: applying for jobs, paying taxes, acquiring lodging, receiving social benefits, registering marriages and divorces, etc". Quoted from the *Update report of CSCE Mission to Latvia*, Prague, 1 March 1994.

[38]In Estonia, the naturalization is proceding slowly but steadily: by 1995, more than 50,000 non-citizens had been naturalized; while in Latvia, by the fall 1995 parliamentary elections, the number of those naturalized was only a few hundred. See Jeff Chinn and Lise A. Truex, "The Question of Citizenship in the Baltics", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1996, p. 137.

of Russians (not only citizens of Russia) living in the Baltic states, thereby being legitimated to intervene in the event of conflict. In expressing specific objections to the Latvian and Estonian approach, Russia called for citizenship rights for all permanent residents, including retired Soviet military personnel; elimination of the language requirement or at least a lowering of the level of language knowledge needed for citizenship; full elimination of the language requirement for the elderly; no residency requirements or quotas in distributing citizenship; automatic residency permits for those who immigrated into the Baltic republics during Soviet times.[39] Latvia and Estonia have not satisfied these Russian desires.

In the West, concerns were also raised about the legislation and practices in the Baltic states regarding treatment of the non-indigenous population. Thus, in addition to unilateral activities, the international institutions of which the Baltics were members or which they hoped to join, also became involved.

The CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Max van der Stoel, and the two OSCE missions to Estonia and Latvia were most heavily involved. The quiet diplomacy practised by the OSCE helped to identify major points of contention over the ethnic issues in both countries. After several visits to the Baltic states, the HCNM made a series of recommendations to the Estonian and Latvian foreign ministries where a number of practical suggestions, all aimed at a fair and impartial application of the laws, were spelled out.[40] The most direct comment on the question of citizenship can be found in his December 1993 letter to the Latvian Foreign Minister concerning the controversial annual naturalization quotas installed in the Latvian draft law on citizenship.[41]

On the initiative of Estonia and, somewhat later, Latvia, two OSCE long-term missions were established in Tallinn and Riga and went into operation in February 1993 and November 1993,

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[39] See Guntis Stamers, "The Ethnic Issue in Baltic-Russian Relations", in Atis Lejins and Daina Bleiere (eds.), *The Baltic States: Search for Security*, Riga, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 1996, p. 194.

[40] For details on the process of engagement of the HCNM, see: *The Role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in OSCE Conflict Prevention. A Report prepared by the Office of the OSCE HCNM.* (Compiled and edited by Rob Zaagman, Adviser to the High Commissioner), The Hague, 30 June 1995, on Estonia pp. 44-46, on Latvia pp. 62-64, on Lithuania p. 64; for the texts of the HCNM recommendation as well as the replies by the Baltic states and Russia in 1993, see: *Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 5-6, 1993, pp. 216-225.

[41] The HCNM commented: "It is essential for a society based on the rule of law that the people know about their rights and the rights be established and granted in clear terms by the law. A quota system, however, could lead to considerable uncertainty amongst a large part of the population about their future status." For the whole text of the HCNM letter to the Latvian foreign minister, see "Documents of the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities" in *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol 5, No. 2, 1994, pp. 109-113.

respectfully. They were able to follow the process of formulating and implementing the legislation on citizenship and aliens, collect information, provide advice and detailed expertise on the laws and their individual elements. Both missions had a similar objective - to help the integration of the Russian-speaking population into Estonian and Latvian societies. In politically sensitive North-Eastern Estonia and in the city of Narva[42] the presence of the OSCE mission has, among other things, had an early warning function of monitoring the situation and proposing action, which has prevented conflicts from breaking out.[43]

In addition to the OSCE's preventive diplomacy, the Council of Europe has played an active role in giving a legal evaluation of the criticized laws. It recommended the changes that would make the laws consistent in principle with European practices. In Latvia, it was the provision on naturalisation quotas mentioned earlier which was modified in response to CoE recommendations. In the case of Estonia, the most important recommendation was to make the language requirement less burdensome. The CoE, in cooperation with OSCE representatives and individual participating states, such as the Nordic countries, engaged in setting up language training programmes for the minority population.

The EU also did an important job of diplomacy with regard to both Russia and, most importantly, the Baltic states; a great deal of pressure was put on Tallinn and Riga to be more open in their approach to non-indigenous populations. Finally, in February 1994 a free trade agreement was offered by the Commission, which included the prospect of concluding Europe Agreements later in Summer 1995. Moreover, in 1994, in response to a French initiative, the EU initialed negotiations on a Pact on Stability in Europe aimed at bilateral and multilateral settlements and agreements concerning good-neighbourly relations and minority and border issues among those states applying for accession to the EU. It is noteworthy that Russia, after being merely an observer, contributed to the results in the end.[44] The WEU, on its part, has involved the Baltic countries in its activities since 1992, with the creation of the Forum for Consultation; it further strengthened the perspective of closer association by offering

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[42] The OSCE mission in Estonia has its branches in Kohtla-Jarva and Narva.

[43] In 1994 the OSCE mission and the HCNM, by meeting with Narva pro-communist Russian leaders, were able to find out about a so-called civil disobedience campaign being planned, with the object of persuading non-citizens not to register for residence permits. If the campaign had been successfully organised, a situation in which those refusing to register in legal terms would have faced the threat of expulsion from Estonia, could have lead to a serious conflict with Russia.

[44] On the evolution and the resuts of the Stability Pact, see Florence Benoit-Rohmer, Hilde Hardeman, "The Pact on Stability in Europe: A Joint Action of the Twelve in the Framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy", Helsinki Monitor, Vol 5, No 4, pp. 38-51; also: Harry Helenius, "More Stability in Europe", OSCE Review, Vol 3, No 1 (1995), pp. 8-9.

them "associate partner" status on May 1994, thereby, perhaps helping to moderate Baltic fears vis-à-vis Russia and reduce the negative effect on the non-indigenous population of this anxiety among Latvians and Estonians.

It may be argued that Russia's internationalization of ethnic issues in Estonia and Latvia created a situation that, on balance, worked in favour of the Baltic states. The Western countries and international organisations firmly rejected the attempts to link troop withdrawal to any other issue; the numerous international observer missions discovered no evidence to substantiate the Russian charges of massive or systematic violations of human rights; no international organisations recommended application of a "zero option" citizenship policy to Latvia and Estonia. In effect, it was generally recognised that neither the citizenship nor naturalization laws of Estonia and Latvia represented human rights violations. Most important, however, is that international involvement in both countries helped to achieve progress in reducing tensions by fostering mutual understanding and an overall improvement of the minorities' status within the countries as well as to calm down the accusations of Russia.

Noticeably, the Estonian and Latvian governments not only supported the establishment of the OSCE missions on their territories, but encouraged international observers to investigate the situation of Russians in their states. Moreover, they were able to come up with their own initiatives contributing to the settlement of existing tensions. In order to improve community relations in Estonia, the Presidential Round Table of non-citizens and ethnic minorities was established in June 1993. This arrangement, comprising representatives of the Estonian parliament, the Russian-speaking population, and the OSCE Mission, provides an essential framework for institutionalised dialogue in which many problems of the Russophone community are debated and further proposals to the President are prepared.[45]

3. Territorial and border issues

3.1. Baltic - Russian dimension

After the restoration of independence in the Baltic states, and following the collapse of the Soviet

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[45]In late 1994, the Round Table submitted a list of recommendations to the parliament criticizing the draft of the citizenship law; some sociological studies concerning attitudes of Estonian residents on inter-ethnic relations were undertaken on the initiative of the Round Table.

Union, the former "internal" borders in the Soviet Baltic area were upgraded to the status of inter-state frontiers. However, the present Estonian-Russian and Latvian-Russian borders are not identical to those of the prewar republics recognized by Moscow in the 1920 peace treaties of Tartu and Riga (See Annexes: Map 2.) The transformation of Estonia and Latvia into SSRs entailed territorial losses as Stalin transferred certain areas to the Russian Soviet Republic. Estonia forfeited about 5% of its territory (areas in the Narva and Petserimaa districts) and 6% of its population, while Latvia lost about 2% of its territory (the town of Abrene and six rural communes) and 2% of its population. Today, these areas are populated overwhelmingly by Russians (over 90 per cent of the population).

Latvia has apparently opted not to raise any territorial claims and has so far given relatively low priority to border issues in its negotiations with Russia. The reasoning behind this approach is primarily that the potentially disputed Abrene region has been largely Russified; the majority of Latvians who lived in the area before World War II either perished or fled westward during the war and the local community has not formed any pro-Abrene lobby. Still, the Latvian Supreme Council Decree on the Non-recognition of the Annexation of the Town of Abrene and the District of Abrene. adopted on 22 January 1992 considers, albeit indirectly, the current Latvian-Russian border to be a temporary one. In addition, a declaration on the USSR's and Germany's occupation of Latvia during World War II, passed by the Latvian Saeima on 23 August 1996, calls on the world community to help Latvia remove the consequences of Soviet rule, pointing out that the Abrene district of Latvia was unlawfully incorporated into Russia in 1944.[46]

In Estonia, where the validity of the Tartu Treaty is confirmed by the 1992 constitution,[47] there was an initial demand that the border be restored to its location prior to World War II, which would mean transferring about 2,000 square kilometres of land from Russia to Estonia. This was vigorously rejected by Russia. The dispute heated up in mid-1994, after Russian attempts to equip the current Estonian - Russian border installations in their existing configurations.[48] This action was denounced by the Baltics as unilateral and illegal. Although Estonia is no longer seeking the return of the

[46] Saulius Girnius, "Latvian declaration of occupation surprises Russia", Omri Daily Digest, No. 165, 26 August 1996.

[47]The article 122 of the Estonian 1992 Constitution states: "the land border of Estonia shall be determined by the Tartu Peace Treaty of 2 February 1920 and other international border treaties." See Saulius Girnius, "Relations with Russia Turn Bitter", Transition, 31 May 1996, p.45.

[48]President Yeltsin's decree of 21 June 1994 ordered a unilateral demarcation of the border by 31 December 1994.

territory in exchange for Russia's acceptance of the mentioned treaty,[49] the two countries have yet to agree formally on the demarcation of their borders. Russia perceives the Tartu treaty as a merely historical document with no relevance to the present. Moscow has insisted that the relevant document on the Russian-Estonian border is a 12 January 1991 agreement on bilateral relations. Although Estonia has not moved from its insistence that the continuing validity of the Tartu treaty be recognised, it has tried to facilitate such recognition for Russia. In July 1996, Estonia proposed a draft political declaration that would affirm the recognition of the 1920 treaty without implying that Estonia could reclaim land Russia later annexed, however, Russia refused to negotiate the proposal.[50] While the possibility of arriving at a mutually acceptable settlement is very remote, many find Estonia's mulishness on the issue surprising as well as politically and practically unwise.[51] Officials of the EU and the Council of Europe have urged Estonia to resolve its border dispute with Russia, repeatedly suggesting that a resolution would be an important prerequisite for Estonia's eventual membership in the EU.[52]

The border questions are proving to be more challenging to Estonia and Latvia than to Lithuania (which has only a relatively short frontier with Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast), which faces a different situation as far as its current borders are concerned. Though it also signed a peace treaty with Soviet Russia in July 1920, it has placed less emphasis on its validity than have Estonia and Latvia. Whereas the latter countries sustained territorial losses after World War II, the administrative borders of the Republic of Lithuania in 1990 were essentially the same as those recognized by Russia in 1920.[53]

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[49] See "Estonia may give up territorial claims, opposition asserts", *Baltic Independent*, Vol. 4, No. 165, 11 - 17 June 1993, p. 3.

[50] Omri Daily Digest, No. 133, 11 July 1996

[51] "While these claims are understandable in legal and simbolic terms, they are very unwise in political and practical terms. <...> A mutual effort should be made to put this irritant out of the way...", Carl Bildt, "The Baltic Litmus Test", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 5, September/October 1994, p.82.

[52] The European Commission has warned Estonian officials that it was important for Estonia to settle its border with Russia since it could become the outer limits of the EU. See: Saulius Girnius "Update on Estonian - Russian Border Talks", Omri Daily Digest, No. 54, Part II, 15 March 1996.

[53] It is important to note, however, that Lithuanian territory was a subject of losses in the period between 1920 and 1940. Right after the Treaty of Suwalki, which designated Vilnius and its suroundings as belonging to Lithuania was signed on 7 October 1920, the Polish troops took over the city and the region, and maintained control until 1939. The Klaipeda region (Memel in German, which before WWI had been a part of Germany's East Prussia) had been transferred to Lithuania by the Allied Supreme Council on 24 March 1919, and Lithuanian jurisdiction over it was internationally approved by the Klaipeda Convention on 8 May 1924. On 22 March 1939, facing the risk of German invasion in the region, Lithuania ceded Klaipeda region to Germany. For the discussion of these complex events see George von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of*

Furthermore, Lithuania has not officially been questioning its border with Kaliningrad Oblast or Russia's jurisdiction over the region. Lithuania considers the treaty on bilateral relations with Russia of 29 July 1991 as the legal document regulating, among other things, the border between the two states. Nonetheless, although the actual negotiations on the demarcation of the Lithuanian-Kaliningrad border began in the Fall of 1993, little progress, especially with regard to the sea-border[54], has been made. In the Spring of 1996, some members of the Russian Duma expressed territorial claims with regard to the Lithuanian Klaipeda region, warning Russian negotiators "not to sign any border agreements with Lithuania unless the relevant circumstances were figured out".[55] As the Russian government has failed to comment upon this, the generally constructive relations between Russian and Lithuanian negotiators have been disturbed.

Although the issue of borders could remain essentially one of symbolic disagreement, it could be instrumental in slowing down or even blocking an overall process of relationship-building between the Baltic states and Russia, thus contributing to increased tension in the Baltic area. Moreover, Estonia and Latvia's claim to their historical-legal rights to the territory may well play a counterproductive role for their ethnic and national security interests. However, as all the parties to the dispute are participants in the OSCE, they are politically obliged to abide by the OSCE principles, which only allow for a change of borders and exchange of territory by peaceful means and appropriate agreements.

3.2. Inter-Baltic dimension

In addition to Baltic-Russian frontier issues, the three Baltic states have engaged in rather serious disputes over their sea borders among themselves. The issue represents a new phenomenon, given that the three countries have mostly been viewed as a "joint venture" by the international community. The roots of the recent Lithuanian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian disputes partly lie in the fact that the sea borders between the three republics were more administrative delineations during the Soviet era than definite demarcations. Thus, after independence, the new border demarcations had to be negotiated

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Independence, 1917 - 1940, London, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974.

[54]The oil field No. D-6 on the Baltic Sea shelf remains the main obstacle to the border agreement. Lithuania protested a 1995 agreement between Russian and German oil companies to exploit the oil field, arguing that the border should have first been settled. See: Saulius Girnius, "No Progress in Russian, Lithuanian Sea-border Talks", Omri Daily Digest, No. 78, Part I, 19 April 1996.

[55]"N.Ryzkovas pareiske teritorines pretenzijas Lietuvai" ("N.Ryzkov made territorial claims to Lithuania"), *Lietuvos Rytas*, 14 June 1996.

among the respective countries. In the Latvian-Lithuanian case the main problem was determining the borders of the economic sea zones which may contain oil fields. Moreover, since Latvia has signed oil exploration agreements with two foreign oil companies[56] in disputed waters claimed by both countries, the negotiations seemed deadlocked. Lithuania has been standing by its position that the sea border must be settled before any talks on oil deposits can begin.[57] Latvia, however, pressed by business interests, has been anxious to comply with the deadline for ratification of the mentioned agreements. It is likely that international mediation will be required to find a solution to the dispute that is acceptable for the interests of both countries.

The dispute between Latvia and Estonia began in the spring of 1994 when Estonian border guards started to detain Latvian vessels fishing in Estonia's unilaterally declared territorial waters in the fish-rich Gulf of Riga. The row reached boiling point in April 1996 when Latvia demarcated a line on the map and threatened to send warships to protect its fishermen in that zone if necessary;[58] it also intended to refer the dispute to an international court or arbitration. However, in mid-July, with the help of Swedish mediation,[59] the two parties managed to reach a maritime border agreement: Estonia backed down on its sea border near the island of Ruhnu in the Gulf of Riga, which it had unilaterally declared in 1993; Latvia, in turn, gave up some of its claims in the region.

Although progress in the Lithuanian-Latvian negotiations is still pending, one has to agree that the general trend in dealing with the inter-Baltic dimension of border issues is encouraging. As the Estonian-Latvian case shows, the Baltics are determined to solve border problems by diplomatic means, through negotiations and on the basis of international law. Thus, the chances of finding solutions for the Lithuanian-Latvian dispute are also good, but will take time. The best conflict prevention tool in these inter-Baltic contrasts is their understanding that only good neighbourly relations and cooperation with each other will pave their way to the EU.

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[56]The licence agreement between Latvia and AMOCO/OPAB companies was signed on October 31, 1995. The agreement enters into force after it is ratified by the Latvian Parliament and the border issue between Latvia and Lithuania is resolved. In case the mentioned conditions fail to be complied with by October 31, 1996, the two companies enjoy the right to discontinue the venture. See: "Latvia's golden coin in the sea", in *The Baltic Times*, August 15-21, 1996, p. 12.

[57]See: Omri Daily Digest, No. 182, 19 September 1996.

[58]See: "Update: Latvian-Estonian border Talks", in Omri Daily Digest, No.70, Part II, 9 April 1996.

[59] Sweden hosted seven secret meetings of Latvian and Estonian officials during which the details of the agreement were worked out.

4. Military imbalance

It may be argued that in today's relatively favourable political climate, the issues of a military nature, such as huge military potential in the vicinity of the Baltic states and Russian military transit through the territory of Lithuania, can hardly be seen as an independent conflict-generating factor. What they do represent, however, is a factor of uncertainty for the Baltic states. It has been feared, for example, that in certain situations the high concentration of forces near the Estonian border might encourage an ethnic conflict in Narva, or that a semi-transparent military transit from Russia to Kaliningrad might eventually be used by Russia for political intimidation or provocative purposes. Russia is a militarily preponderant power in the area, and this leads to the most important task: to build confidence and stability among unequal partners. Let's take a closer look at those issues and the policies aimed at their management.

4.1. Militarised vicinity

Part of the problem, directly related to the military concentrations near the borders of the Baltic states, surfaced after the May 1996 Vienna conference to review the Treaty of Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). Although the Baltic region seems to suffer perverse effects, in military terms, rather than receive advantages from the CFE Treaty, the three Baltic countries which, like Sweden and Finland, are not parties to the treaty, did not seem to have any major security concerns, provided the treaty was correctly implemented.[60] As of mid-1993, however, they followed Russia's reiterated dissatisfaction with the CFE treaty flank limits with some preoccupation.[61] Finally, pointing to the changed geopolitical situation and well-known problems it had been facing in Northern Caucasus, Russia

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[60] The CFE Treaty set equal ceilings within its Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) application zone on the treaty-limited equipment (TLE) of the groups of states parties, originally the NATO and the former Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) states (now 30 states parties), essential for launching surprise attack and initiating large-scale offensive operations. The reduction of excess TLE was to be completed in three one-year phases by 16 November 1995.

[61] In autumn 1993, Russia and Ukraine formally opened discussions on the flank zone. Because of flank limitations, Russia was allowed to deploy only 18% of its TLE in the Leningrad and North Caucasus Military Districts (MDs), together covering more than half of its European territory. The deployment asymmetry may be illustrated by the fact that Russia could have 6 times more tanks and 15 times more armoured combat vehicles (ACVs) in the tiny Kaliningrad region than in the whole flank zone. Regarding the flank issue in 1993 and 1994, see: Zdzislav Lachowski, "Conventional arms control and security-cooperation in Europe", *SIPRI Yearbook 1994*, pp. 571-74; "Conventional arms control and security dialogue in Europe", *SIPRI Yearbook 1995*, pp. 769-73; "Conventional arms control and security cooperation in Europe" *SIPRI Yearbook 1996*, pp.718-25, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1994, 1995, 1996). See also Falkenrath, R. A., "The CFE flank dispute: Waiting in the wings", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (spring 1995), p. 118-44.

succeeded in reaching an agreement with other countries - parties to the treaty - that has effectively changed the previous flank-related requirements. These changes introduced conditions for an increase in the concentration of the Russian armed forces on the borders of the Baltic states. (See Annexes: Map 3.) The Pskov Oblast, bordering on Estonia and Latvia, was exempted from the flank limits and permitted a deployment of 600 armoured combat vehicles (ACV's) as opposed to the previous ceilings of 180. Not surprisingly, the reactions of the Baltic countries have been rather alarmed and gloomy. Shortly after the new limits became known, the three Baltic Heads of Government noted in a Joint Statement "the lack of political consultations" before and during the negotiations between the CFE member states and "other legitimately concerned countries" and called for "political support and increased technical assistance" from the United States and West European countries in integrating the Baltic states into NATO and European institutions.[62] Similar concerns were also raised by the three Presidents during the meeting with their US counterpart, and also by Baltic parliamentarians during the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in late July. The Estonian government has also decided to double its military expenditures.[63]

One has to note that, although presumably intended to favour Russia's interests in the North Caucasus, the amendments to the CFE treaty have, indeed, also increased the military imbalance in the Baltic area, which is less exposed to the arms control regime than most of the rest of Europe. Interestingly, neither Russia nor the other Baltic Sea littoral states seem to be eager to initiate any regional arms control measures, but for two different reasons: the latter fear domination by Russia in such an arrangement; the former is rather satisfied with having the right to have a huge military arsenal, especially in the Kaliningrad region.

As a result of the dissolution of the USSR, the region of Kaliningrad - a territory of 15,100 square kilometres with about 902,000 inhabitants - came into existence as an exclave of Russia surrounded by Lithuania, Poland and the Baltic Sea.[64] The neighbouring countries, but especially Lithuania - given

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[62]See: "Joint Statement of the Heads of Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia on the Vienna conclusions of the Review Conference on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty", Vilnius, June 16, 1996.

[63] The latter fact has been reported in *The Washington Times* as quoted in *Transition*, 12 July 1996, p. 67. For more information on the Baltic responce to the changes regarding the CFE flank limits, see: *The Baltic Times*, No 16, July 4-10, 1996.

[64]Before World War II, the area formed the Northern half of the German province of East Prussia, with its center in Konigsberg. Stalin demanded and received the region at the Potsdam Conference in 1945, citing the need for an ice-free Russian port on the Baltic and for some territorial reward at the expense of Germany. Although the area was assigned to Soviet administration, its permanent status was to be determined in a final

its historical ties to the region and the issue of land access - are anxious about what happens in Kaliningrad, mainly because of the high concentration of forces in the area. This concern has several dimensions. Firstly, the validity and transparency of information on military deployment in the region has been far from satisfactory. Estimates of the number of troops there vary from 100,000 to 200,000, yet the data given by Russia to Lithuanian officials refers to about 40,000 troops. Secondly, such a concentration exacerbates the already formidable problems of supply and reinforcement - raising the need for regulation of military transit, both in the air and on the ground. Moreover, since the air space of the Kaliningrad region is too narrow for adoption of a dense air posture, Russia often uses the adjacent air space.[65] Such actions do anything but reduce the level of inter-state confidence and induce appropriate countermeasures to be used. Thirdly, under the CFE treaty, Russia is formally allowed to deploy sizable armed forces in the Kaliningrad Oblast, as the area is not under the flank limits;[66] this gives Russia no real incentive to make moves towards reduction of troops in the region.

4.2. Transit through Lithuania

Lithuania is a transit country for the land link between mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad region. As a result, it is particularly vulnerable to Russian pressure. In 1994, Russia doubled import duties on Lithuanian goods, trying to compel it to sign an agreement on military transit to and from the Kaliningrad region. This turned the problem into the most debated political issue in Lithuania.

The broad political consensus that emerged claimed that, from a national security perspective, any such agreement was extremely undesirable. Some opposition parties were generically opposed to Russia's military transit through Lithuania, arguing that Russia might provoke incidents and then use them against the country. Moreover, in their view, there was no military necessity for Russia to use the transit route through Lithuania at all. And last, but certainly, not least, military transit, they

conference ending World War II, which never took place. See: Raymond A. Smith, "The Status of the Kaliningrad Oblast Under International Law", *Lituanus*, Spring 1992, pp. 7-52.

[65]The Lithuanian Air Force service reported at least 16 illegal and unnotified intersections of the sovereign air space of the republic by Russian military aircrafts and helicopters since January 1995 till July 1996.

[66]Kaliningrad military district is the only little remnant that has remained out of the enlarged European region which, in the original CFE context, consisted of the Baltic, Belorusian and Kiev military districts. Accordingly, the quota for the oblast is 4200 tanks, 8760 ACVs and 3235 artillery systems, and is by no means used up. See: *SIPRI Yearbook 1995*, p. 774.

believed, could hinder Lithuania's integration into Western security structures.[67] Though not all political forces in Lithuania were against military transit in principle, they were, however, convinced of the futility of any agreement with Russia to this effect. All that was needed, they believed, were unilaterally established general rules for military and other dangerous transit applicable to all countries.[68] The most important of these rules, approved by the government in October 1994, was the requirement to obtain special permission from Lithuanian authorities for each border crossing. Thus, the Lithuanian position was that it did not have any commitments to Russia concerning military transit and that Russia did not have any indisputable rights to it.[69] Yielding to Russian pressure, however, the government agreed to prepare a bilateral document specifying some financial and other details of Russian military transit, but Russia wanted a comprehensive political agreement. The difference between the positions risked breaking the negotiations and destabilising the rather moderate relations between the two countries.

International response to the problem was largely in support of Russia's position, pressing Vilnius to reach some accommodation with Moscow on the issue. In the middle of 1994 some Western politicians urged Lithuania to sign an agreement on military transit, and at the end of the year, the embassies of the EU countries in Lithuania expressed their wish that an agreement be concluded. A compromise appeared to be possible in January 1995, when it was announced that a temporary solution had been reached. First, Russia agreed to give Lithuania most favoured nation status, and, second, Lithuania agreed that until December 1995 Russia's military transit to and from Kaliningrad would be continued according to regulations established in the old Lithuanian-Russian agreement on the transit of Russian troops withdrawing from Germany;[70] the regulations were later extended to January 1997.

From a short-term perspective, the solution of the transit issue may be seen as a constructive

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[67]There was also an argument that in 1995 Russia will have been able to use the ferry line from St. Petersburg to Kaliningrad built specifically for this purpose. See Evaldas Nekrasas, "Lithuania's Security Concerns and Responses", in Atis Lejins and Daina Bleiere (eds.), *The Baltic States: Search for Security*, Riga, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 1996, p.72.

[68]For more on this political debate see: ibid, p. 72.

[69]The speach of Lithuania's Deputy Foreign Minister Albinas Januska at the opening of preparatory conference of the OSCE 1995 Summit in Budapest. See *Lietuvos Rytas*, 12 October 1994.

[70]The latter agreement had specified the use of Lithuania's railway system and other transportation facilities, especially the ferry line from Mukran (Rugen) to Klaipeda for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany. Although Russia had completed the pullout in August 1994, this agreement was in force until December 31, 1994.

compromise on the part of both Lithuania and Russia. In the long run, however, and should the demilitarisation of the Kaliningrad region not move forward, Russian military transit through Lithuania will continue to represent a regular potential source of uncertainty in the area.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS: PROSPECTS FOR ENHANCED STABILITY

1. A success story?

To what extent, in terms of conflict prevention, can the case of the Baltic states be called a success story? If we accept the widely-held understanding that differences, divergence of interests and values, and controversy are not negative *per se*, but rather the very essence of politics, then when we say "prevention of conflict" we actually mean "prevention of violent conflict", not prevention of all contrasts. In this regard, the most visible feature in terms of conflict and its prevention in and around the Baltic states has been the tradition of non-violence in the political culture of these countries, both earlier in the 20th century and in the recent past.[71] At first glance, it might appear that the Baltics, especially Latvia and Estonia with their large non-indigenous populations, would be probable candidates for a potentially explosive area of tension which could erupt into violence and eventually armed conflict. The reality, however, is that at the time of writing this worst-case scenario has not materialised; diplomacy and compromise rather than violence have prevailed in the region. A closer look at the situation suggests that the credit for this record of non-violence should certainly go to the presence or absence of several factors in the Baltic region.

Some of the factors that have accounted for non-violent development in the area are structural or systemic. One can argue that the latter, which are by and large less susceptible to deliberate human manipulation, have played an important role in mitigating the potentially conflictual situations in the Baltics. What are these factors?

First, in the interwar era, the Baltic states established a precedent for constitutional government and representative democracy that served as a basis for gradualism in Baltic politics after they regained independence. Therefore the early adoption of constitutions in the Baltic states introduced a significant element of stability in the daily political life of the societies. Ethnic policies, expressed in the

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[71]Since the Gorbachev era, no one has been killed in the Baltic states for ethnic or political reasons, except by Soviet repressive forces. The two major instances of regime-sponsored violence occurred in Vilnius (15 dead) and Riga (6 dead) in January 1991 as part of then the Soviet Union's ill-fated crackdown in the Baltic and then in July 1991 at a Lithuanian border crossing (7 dead). See *The Baltic Independent*, August 16-22, 1991, p. 1.

citizenship legislations of the Baltic countries may be analysed as potential factors of inter-ethnic discontent. On the other hand, the adoption of these legal documents also plays a crucial stabilising role, for they constitute a factual object to be debated, endorsed, corrected, changed or upheld. Hence the argument that **the legacy of the pre-war statehood of the Baltics facilitated the progress of political development and state-building after these countries regained independence** and helped the elaboration of relatively coherent policies for dealing with conflict-generating problems.

Another non-manipulable factor has to do with the fact that, since the minorities in the Baltic states are overwhelmingly recent immigrants, **the major ethnic issues in the Baltics lack deep-seated historical antagonisms, "ancient hatreds" and centuries-old feuds.** Though the recent Baltic experience of Soviet ethnic policies does not exactly facilitate inter-ethnic harmony, in essence, ethnic relations remain negotiable and tend towards improvement.

Other factors, such as **the aims, attitudes, and behaviours of the disputants or the timing and skill of third-party involvement,** are subject to human manipulation, and thus have been realistic targets for preventive action in the Baltics.[72] It is emphasised, that "peaceful outcomes are more likely when the parties to the dispute are moderate in their words, actions, and policies, make conciliatory gestures, and seek bilateral or multilateral negotiations and bargaining to resolve the issues in dispute."[73] In this respect, the chances of reaching a peaceful outcome in the case of controversy over the interests of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia and Estonia, but also regarding border issues, have been and remain rather good. The respective governments, on the one side, and the Russian-speaking communities, on the other, have, in most instances, displayed great restraint and have shown themselves willing to accommodate the interests of other parties through negotiation and consultation. Conflict settlement was also made possible by the successful internationalization of the issues by the Baltic states and the mounting pressure which the West brought on Moscow to convince it that its interest in cooperative relations required political compromises, not maximalist positions.

Another condition for successful conflict prevention in the Baltics has been **a prudent selection of a**

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[72]For more detailed theoretical study on manipulable and nonmanipulable factors explaining why emerging political disputes do not always lead to violence see Michael S. Lund, "Preventing Violent Conflicts. A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy", Draft Manuscript, October 1995, pp. 89-90.

[73] Michael S.Lund, ibid, p. 111.

variety of political and diplomatic instruments or "multifaceted action".[74] Moreover, it is noteworthy that such action has mostly been coordinated among the third parties involved. The OSCE, like the CoE, has played a major role in defusing crises arising over the issue of non-indigenous minorities in the Baltics. A fruitful interplay between a number of different OSCE instruments was established, contributing considerably to the effective settlement of disputes: as then Chairman-in-Office, Sweden conducted an intensive dialogue with Baltic governments and other OSCE governments on both troop withdrawal and the situation of the Russian-speaking population; the discussion of the troop withdrawal issue in the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) helped put the government of Russia under pressure; on citizenship and language issues, the HCNM pleaded the case of the larger European community of nations with Baltic governments; the OSCE Missions to Estonia and Latvia assisted the HCNM in the preparatory and implementation stages of his quiet diplomacy operations.

The presence of leverage is another factor which has contributed to the successful conflict prevention effort in the Baltic states. Without it, preventive action could have been reduced to appeals which the conflicting parties could have heeded or rejected without having to pay for a negative response or gaining an advantage from a positive one. For example, leverage existed when a compromise over the status of the Russian minority in Estonia and Latvia was being worked out. The incentive for reaching a compromise there was a powerful one: not to do so could have risked further prospects of closer relations with and integration into the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance; equally, the lack of a will to compromise would have led, most obviously, to a delay in the departure of Russian armed forces - - both issues of major strategic concern. Analogously, Russia was provided with an incentive to keep to schedule with its troop pullout by the threat that U.S. and other Western economic aid would otherwise have been withdrawn. Yet another instance in which leverage has a certain role to play is the future settlement of the border issues, both between the Baltics and Russia and among the Baltic states themselves.

2. Prospects for the future

The absence of violence in the Baltics, however, does not necessarily mean the absence of issues that could lead to serious conflict. The questions of ethnic populations in Estonia and Latvia, the border issues, both between Baltics and Russia and among the Baltic states, as well as uncertainty pertinent to the Baltic states' militarised vicinity are matters present in Baltic domestic and international

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[74]See: ibid, p. 104.

agendas. Therefore, the continual need for confidence-building policies by the Baltic states, as well as for preventive efforts by the international community, and a certain improvement of both, seems to remain essential. These basic requirements may be further elaborated by suggesting several policy areas of which the pursuance and eventual advancement would enhance stability in the Baltic states.

Firstly, the crucial role in preventing conflict has to be played by the Baltic states themselves by continuing and improving their actions and policies based on both principle and compromise. An example would be the policies towards Russian-speakers. It is right that the Estonian and Latvian citizenship policies place them inside the mainstream of European practice, for they are not fundamentally different from the more liberal provisions of Sweden, France and Britain, on the one hand, and the exclusionary approaches favoured by Germany and Switzerland, on the other.[75] But the regulation of nationality is not exclusively a legal question, it is also political. In the long run the presence in Estonia and Latvia of a large proportion of the population without citizenship and the right to participate actively in political life that nationals enjoy, may have unwanted consequences and eventually lead to instability and conflict. Moreover, the burdensome requirements in acquiring Latvian or Estonian citizenship rather encourage non-citizens to become citizens of the Russian Federation. It is unlikely that such a development would promote stability, as it could provoke Russian interference in the country's internal affairs in order to protect its own citizens. Experience has shown that Russia emphasizes diplomatic multilateral efforts in dealing with ethnic issues, instead of taking unilateral action. However, defence of the so-called Russian speakers in the Baltic states is a stable component of Russian foreign policy strategy and even, at least formally, of its military strategy.[76] It is not entirely inconceivable that this component could take on strength if there were political shifts in Russia. The Baltics do not have a great ability to influence Russia's desire to use the Russian speakers as a tool to serve Moscow's political interests, but that does not mean that they are entirely powerless in the matter. Focussing not so much on averting a Russian threat as on minimising Baltic vulnerability to that threat may be the formula.

If the main incentive for inter-ethnic problems in the Baltics stems from Russia's policy of

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[75]For comparative study on citizenship policies in the Baltics and other European countries see Jeff Chinn and Lise A. Truex, "The Question of Citizenship in the Baltics", Journal of Democracy, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1996, p. 133-146.

[76] See: "Voyennaya Doctryna Rossyi" (Russia's Military Doctrine), in *Rossiyskye Vesti*, 18 Oct. 1993, pp. 1-3.

manipulation,[77] then the primary objective of the Baltic states should be to create conditions for non-indigenous populations that would encourage them to rely on existing legislative mechanisms in their residence countries when seeking solutions to their perceived problems, rather then turning to the motherland for political or military protection. Confidence-building measures undertaken by local elites and governments are the most effective instruments to this end. Such measures must be appropriate to the needs of those who feel vulnerable to the majority-backed state. To reassure ethnic people about their future, one has to make it easier for those who wish to integrate to do so. Acknowledging and showing respect for differences and agreeing to share resources, state positions, and political power with ethnic people provide incentives for cooperation and consolidation along political lines, not ethnic symbols. This helps the establishment of a political nation and reduces the opportunities for ethnic conflict.

Secondly, the existing institutions and mechanisms of the OSCE, e.g. its premises for inclusive European security dialogue, the HCNM and the missions, have demonstrated their usefulness in the Baltic states. For example, Estonia has sometimes been referred to as "the success story of the OSCE". Obviously, as already mentioned, it was not the structure of the institution but rather the structure of the conflict - the level of it, the issues and commitments - which determined the appropriate results of conflict prevention in the Baltic states. However, it has undoubtedly been and will continue to be in the future advantageous to have the OSCE at hand as an institution for legitimate international engagement in subregional conflict prevention. The OSCE has also been an asset in strenghtening European military stability through such instruments as military confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). Arrangements concerning peacetime military activities increase knowledge and transparency, prevent misunderstandings, and forestall the use of military pressure. From the perspective of the Baltic states, there may be room for improvement of this OSCE dimension. On the one hand, the international community has to be able to ensure that agreed measures, among others, the mechanism for unusual military activities, work in crisis situations. On the other hand, "the flank rules" amendments of the CFE Treaty and the likelihood of its further modifications, but also a certain unpredictability of the military developments in the Kaliningrad region, suggests that subregional

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[77]Richard Rose and William Maley, "Conflict or Compromise in the Baltic States?", *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 28, 15 July 1994. According to the results of the surveys in the Baltic states reported in the article, there was not so much conflict between the Baltic peoples and the Russian speaking population in the area as was often suggested in Moscow and elsewere; see also: William Maley, "Does Russia Speak for Baltic Russians?", *The World Today*, January 1995, pp. 4-6.

application of the existing CSBMs in the Baltic Sea area could be constructed.[78] Such an eventual arrangement, functioning within the OSCE framework, would not substitute for but rather strengthen and complement current all-European arms control developments. Consequently, it would aim at confidence-building with a clear conflict-prevention function.[79]

Thirdly, since the stability and peace in the Baltic region continue to be heavily influenced by Russia's domestic and external political evolution, Western policies with regard to Russia play an important role. The EU and NATO have been cautious in their approach to the disputes between the Baltics and Russia at least in part because of the problems of dealing with the latter; the fact that Russia has the means to impose its will by force (with respect to the Balts) but no prospect of integration into the EU or NATO reduces the EU's leverage and invites caution on the part of NATO. In this context, the development of a NATO - Russia partnership remains a sound and essential goal, the accomplishment of which would meet the interests of the Baltic states. Obviously, the prospects for such a partnership, and thus for stability in the Baltics, as well as in Europe at large, depend in no small measure on Russia's ability to develop negotiated relationships of mutual benefit with its partners and neighbours. But for that to happen, Russia must maintain a minimum of political stability at home.

Finally, an important aspect of preventive policy in the Baltics has to do with the role of the Baltic states' westward integration process. Integration into the Euro-Atlantic security community is a foreign policy priority of the Baltic states. Thus, prospects of membership, primarily in the EU, but also in NATO, clearly represent a positive inducement for settlement of any problems which might delay or postpone the integration of the Baltics. So far this "carrot" has proved to be rather effective in practice. Though Western institutions have been rather slow or "careful" in drawing the Baltic states closer, an "open door" policy towards them now appears to be the trend in both the EU and NATO. The clearly stated intention to eventually admit the Baltics into the EU has made them more responsive to external advice and increased the European Union's leverage. The NATO approach towards the Baltic states is still evolving. As it seems now, they might not be among the first invited to join the Alliance. It is of crucial importance, however, that before taking decisions on the first round of enlargement, NATO develop and forge a meaningful and articulated integration policy with

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[78]For more details on eventual Baltic Sea regional CSBMs, see: Renatas Norkus, "Enhancing Stability in the Baltic Sea Region. Lithuanian View", in Axel Krohn (ed.) *"The Baltic Sea Region. National and International Security Perspectives"*, Baden-Baden, 1996, p.p. 61-71.

[79]A similar initiative has been analysed by Olav F. Knudsen and Iver B. Neumann. See: Olav F. Knudsen and Iver B. Neumann, "Subregional Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area. An Exploratory Study", NUPI Report, Nr. 189, March 1995.

regard to those aspiring but not yet invited to join the Alliance.

This, however, brings up a critical issue, namely that the prospects for preventing conflict in the Baltics are strongly determined by the degree of political support they receive from their Western partners. Individually and collectively the Western European countries have a tremendous impact on whether preventive action is taken. The Baltic states have historically enjoyed close relations with the West, especially the U.S. and the Nordic countries. In the past, morality found common cause with legality in that most Western nations had never recognised Soviet annexation of the Baltics. But at some critical juncture in Baltic history, morality and legality collided with the Realpolitik of Western governments - what is often refered to as the "Baltic dilemma".[80] This has important repercussions for the security perspectives of the Baltic states today. In Lithuania at least, it is a common understanding that the most eminent risk to its security is not so much Russia itself with all its instability but rather Western hesitation about where "to place" the Baltic states.[81]

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[80]For more on the "Baltic dilemma" see: Maris Mantenieks, "The Baltic Dilemma", *Foreign Affairs*, (Comment and correspondence), Vol.69, No. 3, Summer 1990, pp. 167-169.

[81] Evaldas Nekrasas, op.cit.(see footnote 68), p. 62.

ANNEXES

Map 1.

The Baltic States

FINLAND

Helsinki ●

Saint Petersburg ●

Stockholm

● Tallinn

ESTONIA

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

BALTIC SEA

● Riga

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

Vilnius ●

● Kaliningrad

Minsk ●

POLAND

BELARUS

Source: Peter Van Ham (ed.), *The Baltic States: Security and Defence After Independence,* Institute for Security Studies, (Chaillot Papers 19), June 1995.
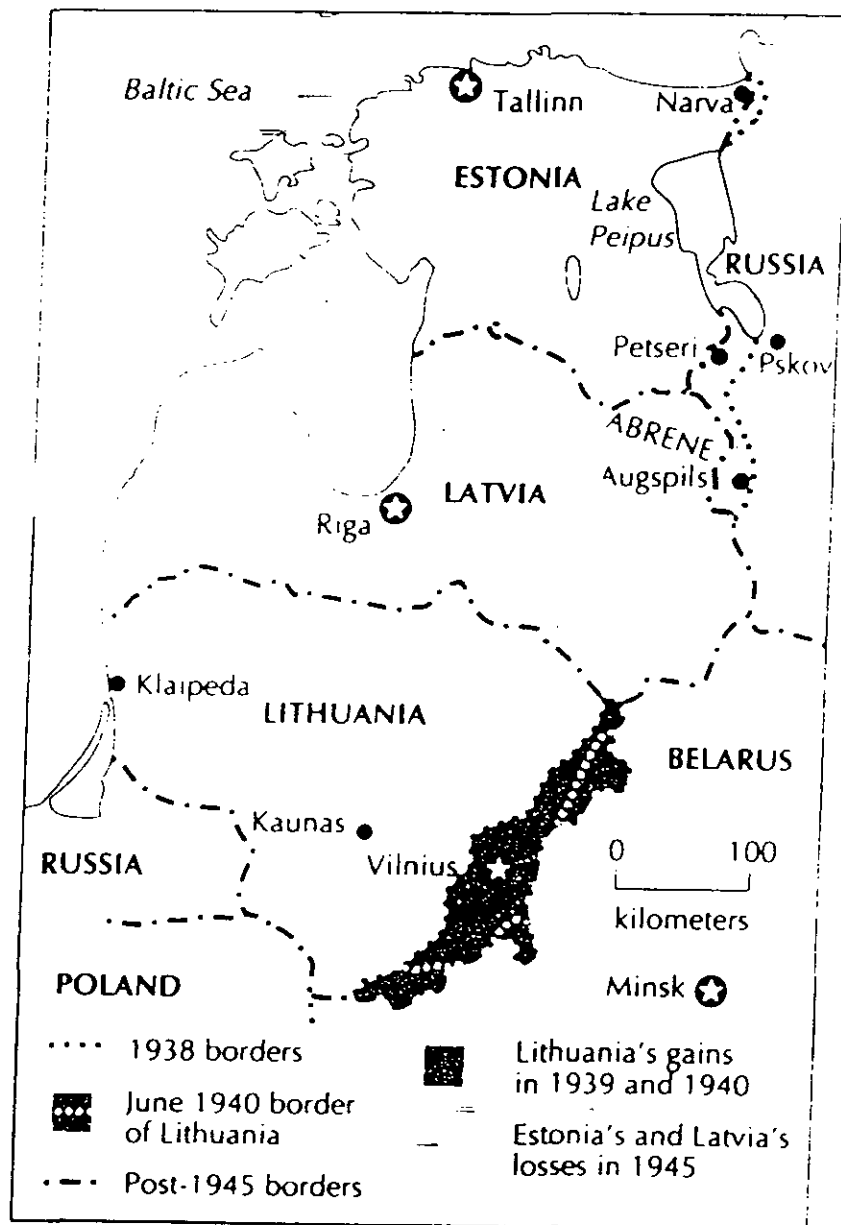
Table I

Population of the Baltic states by Nationality, 1937, 1989, 1994-1995*

Republic	Nationality	Population composition by nationality (percentages)		
		1939	1989	1994-1995
Estonia	Estonian	88.2	61.5	63.2
	Russian	8.2	30.3	29.4
	Other	3.7	8.2	7.4
Latvia	Latvian	75.7	52.0	56.5
	Russian	10.6	34.0	30.5
	Other	13.4	14.0	13.0
Lithuania	Lithuanian	81.0	79.6	81.1
	Russian	2.3	9.4	8.7
	Polish	3.0	7.0	7.0
	Other	14.0	4.0	3.2

* *Sources*: Toivo U. Raun, "Ethnic Relations and Conflict in the Baltic States", in W.Raymond Nuncan and G. Paul Holman (eds.), *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict*, Westview Press, 1994, pp. 160-161; *Estonian Human Development Report. 1995* (Tallinn: UNDP / Kolding Trykcenter A/S, 1995); *Latvia Human Development Report. 1995* (UNDP: Riga, 1995); Martin Klatt, "Russians in the 'Near Abroad'", *RFE/Research report*, No. 32, 19 August 1994, (Table 2) p. 35; *Report on National Minorities and National Harmony*, by Alfonsas Svelnys, Director of the Department of Regional Issues and National Minorities Under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, p. 1.

Map 2.

Territorial Changes in the Baltic states, 1939-1945

Baltic Sea

Tallinn   Narva

ESTONIA
Lake
Peipus
RUSSIA

Petseri   Pskov

ABRENE

Augspils

LATVIA

Riga

Klaipeda
LITHUANIA

BELARUS

Kaunas

RUSSIA   Vilnius

0   100

kilometers

POLAND

Minsk

•••• 1938 borders

June 1940 border
of Lithuania

•—• Post-1945 borders

Lithuania's gains
in 1939 and 1940

Estonia's and Latvia's
losses in 1945

Map 3

Area allowed more weapons near the Baltics (as a result of the CFE Review Conference, June 1996)
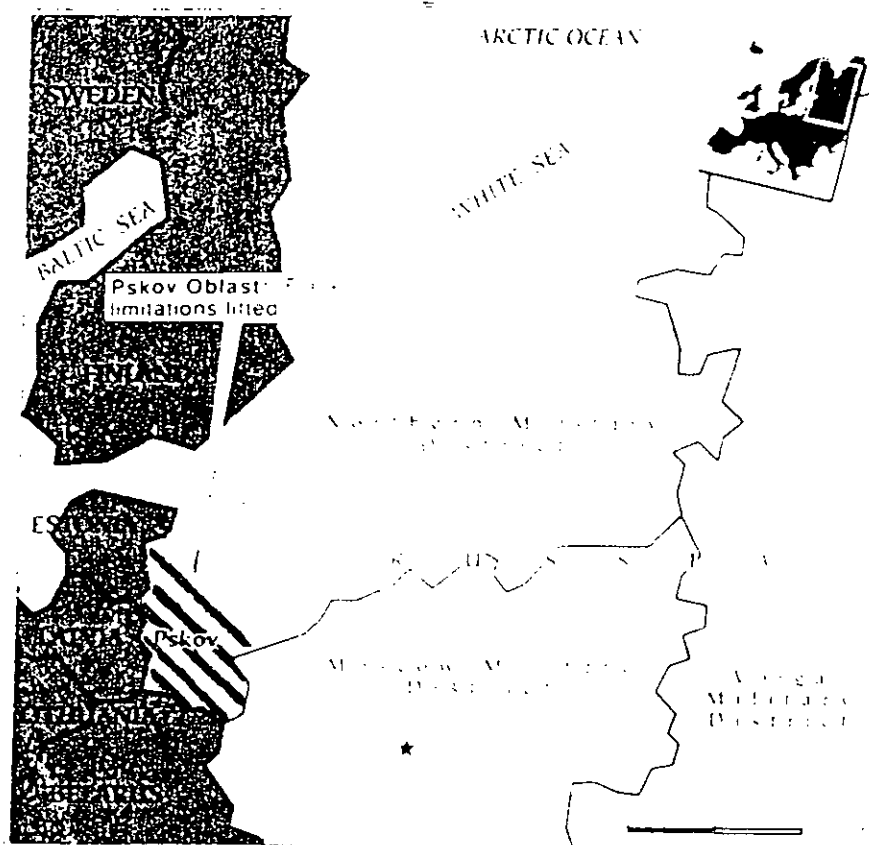
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on

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Ebenhausen, Germany
22-23 November 1996

"Potential for Conflicts in Post-War Georgia"

by
Sopiko Shubladze
SWP Scholar-in-Residence/Georgia

POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICTS IN POST-WAR GEORGIA

CONTENTS

Introduction

The whole region of Caucasus represents an interesting case, because of the different kinds of conflicts and potential conflicts that need to be addressed with conflict prevention policy. This applies particularly to the case of Georgia. If the term *prevention* refers to an advance action against something possible or probable, then the question becomes: What are currently the most important potential conflicts in Georgia and how should they be addressed?

The following study will discuss the various cases in which there is the potential for conflict to escalate into violence. It will examine the cases where violence has already broken out as well as those in which there is a danger of violent conflicts in the future.

Because of the wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Georgian case presents a story of the failure of conflict prevention. But, currently, there is still some potential for escalation in the post-war country and, therefore, the most important case, in particular, Abkhazia, will be analyzed and some conclusions and suggestions will be made for the prevention of its re-escalation into violence. What are the most burning issues within the case of Abkhazia? Which instruments should be used and who are the actors that are implementing conflict prevention policy? Are they outside or inside actors, governmental or non-governmental organizations? And, finally, do prospects for prevention exist in Georgia and how is it possible to make a successful story of conflict prevention out of this current case of failure?

I. Potential for Violent Conflicts

Although the problems in the different parts of Georgia are inter-linked politically, there are several cases within the whole case of Georgia which portray different characteristics, sources, actors in the conflict, and instruments used or to be used in those cases. The two main categories might be called post-violence and pre-violence cases.

1. Post-violence Cases

In parallel with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, not only did the former Soviet republics start the process of becoming independent, but minorities within those republics also increased their demands for self-determination. Georgia is not an exception in this regard, especially since minorities play an important role in Georgia[1]. This is true not only in terms of their numbers (almost 30% of the population), but also, crucially, in terms of their geographical position. The territory of Georgia covers some 69,700 sq. km, but without the regions of Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and Autonomous Region of South Ossetia it covers only 57,200 sq. km. These two areas amount to 18% of the current territory of Georgia. This fact lies at the heart of the problem. It is evident that Georgians would be seriously weakened if nearly a fifth of their perceived territorial extent was transferred to another state or dislocated from its

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[1] However, the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have not been only ethnic in nature. They are not so much based on ethnic hatred as on territorial rights. The causes of conflict, together with ethnicity, were perceived violation of human rights, discrimination, etc. Therefore, those conflicts should be discussed also as political in nature.

present jurisdiction. However, Abkhazians were a distinct minority not only within Georgia but also within the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia[2], unlike the Autonomous Region of South Ossetia, where Ossetians never have been threatened with becoming an ethnic minority within their own region[3].

The interest of international organizations and the conflict prevention policy did not address these conflicts at an earlier stage of their escalation. The UN did not (and, under the international law, could not) become involved in the crisis until after violence occurred. Nothing was done in the direction of early warning or of preventing them from escalating into violence. Politically, the veto right of the USSR prevented any attempt of other members of the Security Council to pay attention to these situations. Legally, the traditional restrictive principle of non-interference in internal affairs prevailed. International action in these regions became possible only when the UN was sure that the USSR and the subsequent independence of its 15 republics gave the UN real opportunity to contribute to regional stabilization, especially in the Transcaucasian countries.

Similar reasons may explain the absence of action by the OSCE as well as other international organizations in the conflicts on the territory of Georgia in their initial stage. The OSCE was able to deal with the question of the conflicts in Georgia only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the acceptance of the Transcaucasian countries as full members of the OSCE in January 1992[4]. In fact, Georgia sent its application for admission even later and entered the OSCE only at the Council's Helsinki Additional Meeting on 24 March 1992.

a. Conflict in Abkhazia

Four years ago, the restoration of two constitutions, the 1921 version of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the 1925 constitution of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia, came into conflict during the „war of laws" from 1988 to 1992, increasing the tensions in the region of Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. The decision of the Georgian State Council to send units of the National Guard to the capital Sukhumi to protect the railway line directly provoked the violence. The Georgian side made the crucial mistake of sending armed forces to the autonomous republic. This was perceived by the Abkhazian side as a violation of their rights as an autonomous republic and, thus, fighting broke out between them and units of the Abkhazian volunteers.

The results went far away from the objectives announced by the Georgian government and the violent clashes lasted for more than one year. The final military victory of Abkhazian side was accompanied and then followed by the ethnic cleansing

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[2] See: Appendix 1. Also, on the dynamics of the growth of the Abkhazian population in the autonomous republic, see *The Historical, Political and Legal Aspects of the Conflict in Abkhazia*. Tbilisi, Samshoblo Publishers Press. 1994. Abkhazians were certainly a minority in Abkhazia at the time of the last Soviet census in 1989, but following the emigration of ethnic Georgians from the territory of the autonomous republic, they are no longer minority.

[3] According to the Major Results of the All-Union population census in 1939, the share of Ossetians in the Autonomous Region was 68% while Georgians accounted for 26%. These numbers remained remarkably stable for over forty years with insignificant changes. According to the 1989 census, Ossetians accounted for two-thirds (66.61%) of the population and Georgians for the other third (29.44%). The remaining 4% is made up of Russians, Armenians and Jews.

[4] See more on this subject in Paye, Oliver; Remacle, Eric, The UN and the OSCE: Facing Conflicts in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, *Peace and the Sciences*, Vol. 25, September 1994.

in Abkhazia which ended in almost total exodus of the Georgian population. The number of people who fled Abkhazia amounts to 250 000[5].

Background

The relations between Abkhazians and Georgians have been tense for many years. The Abkhazians have attempted many times to separate from the Republic of Georgia. In 1918 the Independent Abkhazian State was established, but existed only 40 days and was soon included in the Georgian Democratic Republic. Abkhazia's Autonomy was confirmed immediately after Georgia declared its independence (May 26, 1918), even before establishing the constitution (February 21, 1921), in which the autonomy of Abkhazia was officially legalized.[6] Abkhazia enjoyed a confederal treaty-based relationship with Georgia. In February 1931, the changes were made in the constitutions of both Abkhazia and Georgia, and Abkhazia became the Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia.

The cultural and educational policy of Tbilisi in general, and the decision to open a Georgian branch of Sukhumi University in Abkhazia particularly, caused a conflict between Abkhazians and Georgians in late 70s and early 80s, which was increased by the Georgian leader, later the first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's nationalism in denying the existence of a separate Abkhazian national identity.

Protesting against what they perceived as „Georgianization" of Abkhazia, Abkhazian intellectuals and nomenklatura repeatedly petitioned Moscow to separate the republic from Georgia and attach it to Russia. The Peoples Forum of Abkhazia was organized in 1988 and on March 18th of the following year, in the village of Likhny, the so-called Likhny Declaration proclaimed Abkhazia independent from Georgia. The rally and the declaration caused the first military clashes between Georgians and the Abkhazians.

In December 1990, historian Vladislav Ardzinba succeeded in winning the elections as the head of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Abkhazia. A major catalyst of tensions between Abkhazia and Georgia was all-Union referendum on the 17th of March, 1991. The referendum was boycotted by Georgia, but the Abkhazian electorate did take part and the majority (98,6%) of those who voted (52,3%) favored remaining within a union of sovereign republics. The Georgian government threatened to dissolve the Abkhazian Parliament.

In the negotiations with the Georgian government headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, whose domestic policy towards ethnic minorities carried much of the responsibility for the escalation of the conflict, Abkhazia was allowed to hold the new parliamentary elections according to a new electoral quota. This, in fact, meant the agreement on a new election law in Abkhazia which allocated set numbers of parliament seats to each ethnic group. Of the 65 parliament seats 28 were to be allocated to Abkhazians, 26 to Georgians, and 11 to other minorities. In December 1991 the new Parliament was elected on this basis. Although the disproportionate representation in the Supreme Council of Abkhazia was given as a compromise for remaining in the Republic of Georgia, this did not ease the tension between the Abkhazians and Georgians. The Supreme Council split into two opposing factions, and for all intents and purposes, it ceased to function.

In January 1992 Zviad Gamsakhurdia was overthrown by a military coup, which seized power in Tbilisi to hand it over shortly afterward to Eduard Shevardnadze. The international recognition of Georgia was granted in March 1992, which also implied recognition of the borders claimed by the country's government and, therefore, the remaining of Abkhazia as an autonomous republic within its territory.

On July 23, 1992 the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia suspended the constitution of the Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the territory of Abkhazia and reinstated the Abkhazian constitution of 1925, in which Abkhazia had the status of a

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[5] According to the most of sources, there are some 250,000 displaced people from Abkhazia and the total number of the people who fled conflicting zones of Georgia and are displaced within the country varies between 280.000 and 300.000.

[6] The Constitution of Georgia. Chapter II, pp. 107-108. Tbilisi, 1992 (in Georgian).

sovereign republic. As the Abkhazian side reports, this was the response to the Georgian government's decision to reinstate the 1921 Georgian constitution, in which there was no specific mention of Abkhazia. However, this is not true. In the first article of the declaration, reinstating the 1921 Georgian constitution, it is emphasized that this basic law is going to be adopted, taking into the consideration the current situation without changing the borders of Georgia and the status of both the Abkhazian and Adjarian Autonomous Republics.

Abkhazians opened fire on the Georgian troops deployed for the protection of the railway from terrorist acts, as it was officially announced. Violence broke out. Georgian troops took the strategically important city of Gagra on the north-western coast of Abkhazia, close to the Russian border. By that time volunteers from the North Caucasus started arriving in Abkhazia to help the Abkhazian units.[7] Heavy fighting ended with the military victory of Abkhazian side in September 1993 which was caused by the active support of the North Caucasus as well as Russia.

Of the different levels of conflict prevention policy, diplomatic actions were most often used in the case of Abkhazia. Various delegations were send by the UN and other international organizations as well as by Russia and they negotiated several cease-fire agreements. Some of them succeeded in restraining the violence for a period of time, but basically the practice showed in Abkhazia that cease-fire agreements were used for regrouping the troops and preparing for the next offensive. Mostly, at the earlier stage of efforts to reach an agreement between parties, if the cease-fire was implemented by one side, the other preferred to subvert that agreement in order to fight.

However, at the moment conflict is frozen and currently about 125 UN military observers are stationed on the Georgian-Abkhazian boarder along with 1500 Russian troops to monitor CIS peacekeeping forces in the region[8]. The UN has been involved in the conflict in Abkhazia not only through its efforts in monitoring the cease-fire agreements[9], but also through its important role in humanitarian assistance. United Nations inter-agency humanitarian assessment mission coordinated by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs includes representatives of various UN agencies, i.e. the UNICEF, the WFP, and the UNHCR.

Together with the UN, Russia have mediated talks on the conflict. Representing the regional external actor in all the cases within Georgia, Russia became the main peace-keeper in Abkhazia[10]. There is a dual attitude towards Russia's role in the whole Caucasus and particularly in Georgia. Some blame Russia for using the existing conflict potential as an instrument to keep the newly independent states dependent upon it, with the clear aim of maintaining Russia's permanent domination in the Transcaucasus. Others in Georgia insist that there is no substitute for Russia's leading

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[7] Their support came as a result of the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus (CPC), largely at the initiative of Abkhazians. The CPC was set up on November 11, 1991 by representatives of 16 Caucasian peoples gathered in Sukhumi. Its initial affiliation to Abkhazia was demonstrated both by the admission of the Abkhazians into CPC and by the choice of the Abkhazians' capital as a new center of the Confederations.

[8] RFE/RL News, 15 July, 1996.

[9] In August 1993, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia has been established with the mandate to monitor the cease-fire agreement, to investigate reports of cease-fire violations, to attempt to resolve such incidents with the parties involved, and to report to the Secretary General on the implementation of its mandate. Later, after its extension, its task was also to monitor the CIS peacekeeping in Abkhazia. *The United Nations and the Situation In Georgia*, Reference Paper, April 1995.

[10] On 14 May, 1994, the Georgian and Abkhazian sides agreed that a CIS peacekeeping forces would be deployed at the border between Abkhazia and Georgia. *The United Nations and the Situation In Georgia*, Reference Paper, April 1995.

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role in managing conflicts in the country. However, Russia can hardly remain neutral towards what is happening in the neighboring country, mainly for political and strategic reasons which are important to Russia. Therefore, its peacekeeping in Georgia can not to be disinterested[11].

Russian army played both a destabilizing and a stabilizing role in the conflict. The Russian military was systematically supplying financial and logistical support to the Abkhazians. And although, it is difficult to talk about the direct involvement of the Russian army in hostilities during the first few months of the conflict, a nation of 3 ½ million people should have been capable of holding its own against a minority of less than 100 000, whose total troop strength was estimated at only 5 000 men, plus the North Caucasian contingent, even allowing for the fact that the Georgian armed forces were badly trained and poorly disciplined.

Regardless of the role of the Russian military, the Russian leadership made clear its support for Shevardnadze, however, only after Georgia's decision to join CIS in October 1993. Yeltsin affirmed his support for Georgia's territorial integrity and although the involvement of the Russian Federation in the internal conflicts of Georgia is apparent, it has to be assumed that Russia might play a positive role in reducing current tensions; in fact, all three cease-fires between the Georgian government and Abkhazian separatists have been reached through Russia's brokerage.

In an attempt to explain Russia's role, the existence of two Russias has been suggested: a reactionary one and a democratic one. The first one increases the potential for conflicts while the other tries to prevent them. But there is a simple logic to the behavior of Russia as a whole, namely the preservation of its own strategic interests in the Caucasus[12].

Russia was concerned that if the Abkhazians lost, Shevardnadze would drive the Russians out of Georgia, and seaports and bases would be lost to Russia. At the same time, the people in the North Caucasus area of Russia would see this as a betrayal by Russia and this might trigger a conflict in the North Caucasus, with the result that the Russians might lose their bases there[13].

The war in Chechnia started to change the situation and the Russia's attitude towards the conflicts in Georgia. Although Abkhazians, South Ossetians and Chechens are not strongly linked ethnically, all of them represent Caucasian peoples and they supported each other in their separate movements towards independence. Many Chechens fought in Abkhazia against Georgia, and there are some Abkhazians fighting against the Russian army in Chechnia. Therefore, currently it is almost impossible for Russia at the same time to back the Abkhazians and to oppose the Chechens.

However, given the potential for conflicts in Georgia, even if the most important factor for the successful prevention of future conflict escalation, the willingness of those parties directly involved to compromise, can be reached, this will still be insufficient because of the extent of Russia's involvement.

What is the situation on the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the war? What are results of 3 years of negotiations, and if the conflict has not been solved, is at least the potential for escalation completely gone?

[11] Trenin. Dmitri/ *Russian Peacemaking in Georgia*, in: Hans-Georg Ehrhart. Anna Kreikemeyer, Andrei V. Zagorski (Eds.). Crisis Management in the CIS: Whither Russia? Baden-Baden, Nomos Verl.-Ges., 1995.
[12] Gachechiladze. Revaz. *Geopolitics and Georgia*, Jane's Intelligence Review, Vol. 6, No 12, December 1994.
[13] George Mirsky. ..Russia in the Midst of Change", Institute for National Strategic Studies. July 1994.

The most recent round of talks on a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, held in Moscow in late July, failed to make any progress. Negotiations on a political settlement of the conflict are deadlocked: the Georgians have proposed a federal agreement, under which Abkhazia and Adjaria would have there own constitutions, legislatures and executive and judicial systems, whereas the Abkhazians have been holding out for a confederation.

In Tbilisi it already has been stated several times, that if the process of the negotiation does not succeed, the Georgian side will not exclude the possibility of finding „other means to deal with the problem"[14]. Does this mean that the situation in Abkhazia is close to the final failure?

One hope for the calming of tensions was Vladislav Ardzinba's response to the Eduard Shevardnadze's proposal to discuss the future status of Abkhazia. He readily agreed to a face-to-face meeting to negotiate a power-sharing agreement with central Georgian authorities[15]. The meeting would have been held under the Russian and UN representatives' supervision. However, it is still not clear, whether or not the meeting will take place. What is clear, though, is that the Abkhazian side is unwilling to restore Georgian jurisdiction in the Gali region at the Abkhazian-Georgian border. This had seemed agreed upon during the negotiations in August 1996, extending the mandate for the Russian peacekeeping forces. This became clear during the Minister of Foreign Affair of Russia Boris Pastukhov's recent visit to Abkhazia[16].

The large-scale military exercises of the Georgian army, including the air forces and naval fleet, took place shortly after this proposal and after Abkhazian army exercises near Sukhumi held under the supervision of Defense Minister Vladimir Mikanba and the President Vladislav Ardzinba[17]. The Georgian army exercises were attended by representatives of the OSCE mission to Georgia and the UN mission of military observers, the head of CIS peacekeeping forces in conflicting zones of Georgia, General Yakushev, and the commander of the headquarters of the Defense Ministry of Abkhazia, Vladimir Arshba[18].

Obviously, this was a demonstration of the new abilities of the Georgian army. And it probably did not occur by chance that the military exercises took place in the western part of Georgia, not far away from Abkhazia. More likely the aim was to intimidate the leaders of the separatist regime. The Georgian side demonstrated that the process of creating Georgian military forces is continuing. Central authorities may have considered a demonstration of the army's improved capabilities to be a measure of bringing Abkhazians to the bargaining table. But at the same time, this type of demonstration of force might have rather intensified the tensions and forced the two parties in conflict to improve their military capabilities in preparation for renewed warfare.

Tensions between Sukhumi and Tbilisi have escalated recently because of Vladislav Ardzinba's decision to hold new parliamentary elections on November 23rd, 1996. The Georgian government has expressed its opposition to holding elections before ethnic Georgians are allowed to return to their homeland. The UN Security

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[14] Segodnia. No 146. 15.08.96.
[15] RFE/RL News. 15 July. 1996.
[16] Segodnia. No 153. 24.08.96.
[17] Liz Fuller. OMRI Daily Digest. No 151. 6 August, 1996.
[18] Nezavisimaya Gazeta. No 147 (1226). 10.08.96.

Council has also called on the leadership of Abkhazia to postpone elections until a political settlement is reached on the region's status vis-à-vis the Tbilisi government[19].

Nevertheless, according to the most recent announcement by Vladislav Ardzinba, the elections will take place. Russia has not yet made clear its position on the last events taking place in Abkhazia. On October 2nd, the Georgian parliament adopted a resolution condemning as illegal the Abkhazian parliamentary elections. In the same resolution, Russia's mediation role in the conflict is considered unsuccessful, and a proposition is made to create a state commission to reassess Georgia's entire policy towards Russia, including the issue of Russian military bases. Thus, the Georgian parliament has threatened to annul the agreement which allows Russia to have four military bases on the territory of Georgia as it is conditional on Russian assistance in reasserting Georgian jurisdiction over Abkhazia.

It is evident that the situation in Georgia regarding the Abkhazian case is developing towards escalation rather than prevention of conflict. However, hope still remains due to the recent official announcements of the both sides about their readiness to resolve the conflict by peaceful means only. Thus, Vladislav Ardzinba stated his willingness to continue negotiations under the aegis of the UN and with Russian mediation, and Eduard Shevardnadze said, he believes that „the UN, European Structures and Russia have not yet exhausted the possibilities for a political settlement" in Abkhazia.

b. Conflict in South Ossetia

The clash between Georgians and South Ossetians[20] was the first conflict on the territory of Georgia to erupt into violence as early as 1990, but the situation there, which appeared so shocking at the time, was eclipsed by the war in Abkhazia.

The abolishing of the South Ossetian autonomy by the Georgian government was the immediate cause of the conflict between Georgians and South Ossetians and the violence took place in the region. The war between South Ossetians and Georgians, which lasted for a year and a half, was halted by the cease-fire agreement negotiated between the presidents of Russia and Georgia, establishing the joint peace-keeping forces. The OSCE became the first international actor to take care of the settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia. It provided its assistance in humanitarian aid and protection of human rights in the conflict-ridden zones of Georgia with the specific focus on South Ossetia. It also helped in organizing meetings between Georgian and South Ossetian figures and mediated negotiations.

Background
The situation in Georgia at the end of 1980s was characterized by a massive wave of movement towards independence. The leader of the national independence movement, later the first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia based his popularity on a nationalist agenda, which made ethnic minorities feel threatened and they began to organize themselves. In spring of 1989, the leader of Adamon Nykhas[21], Alan Chochiev addressed Abkhazians, openly declaring his group's support for their campaign against the opening

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[19] Liz Fuller. OMRI Daily Digest. No 206, 23 October, 1996.
[20] Basically South Ossetians are Orthodox Christians like the ethnic Georgians, but the Georgian and Ossetian languages belong to the different language families. South Ossetians are Persian-speaking descendants of the Alan tribe.
[21] This is the name of the popular front formed by the South Ossetian nationalists in 1988.

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of a Georgian branch of Sukhumi University in Abkhazia and even in more general terms supporting Abkhazians in their struggle for independence against Georgia. This caused the first clashes between Ossetians and Georgians in the Autonomous Region.

The tensions were aggravated after the 14th session of the 20th convocation of the regional Soviet of the People's Deputies of the South Ossetia adopted the declaration transforming the South Ossetian Autonomous Region into the „South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic" (September 20, 1990). On September 21, 1990, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia annulled this „illegal and unconstitutional" resolution of the Regional Soviet of South Ossetia. Nevertheless, the 15th session of the 20th convocation of the Regional Soviet (October 16, 1990) confirmed its previous decision and elected the provisional executive committee of the so-called republic, adopted a provisional statute of election and formed the central election commission.

Despite the official warning by the Georgian administration, the election to the Supreme Soviet of the South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic was held on December 9, 1990, followed by a session of the Supreme Soviet on December 11. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia retaliated by adopting a law on December 11, 1990, abrogating the statute of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region „which was created in 1922 against the will of the indigenous Georgian population of the region and to the detriment of the interests of the entire Georgia".

On 7 January, 1991, Soviet President Gorbachev issued a decree condemning the South Ossetian declaration of independence and the Georgian parliament's abolition of Ossetian autonomy, and he called for withdrawal of Georgian troops from the area. The Georgian parliament voted to refuse to comply. In May 1991, the Soviet of South Ossetia voted to abolish the self-proclaimed South Ossetian Democratic Soviet Republic and to restore the Region (Oblast) status under the Russian Federation. This was promptly rejected by the Georgian Supreme Soviet's presidium.

The Georgian parliament's decision to authorize the use of militia formations in order to enforce its decision to abolish the autonomy of South Ossetia and the deployment of the National Guard in the region's capital Tskhinvali and other parts of its territory caused the final escalation of tensions. The intensive fighting in the region resulted in thousands of deaths and the movement of tens of thousands of displaced persons. The South Ossetians were able to push Georgian forces out of their territory with the help of North Ossetia and the Russian military[22].

On December 7, 1991, South Ossetia officially declared its independence and elected Torez Kulumbegov as the Chairman of the Parliament.

In the fall of 1991, President Gamsakhurdia found himself faced with the paramilitary opposition in Tbilisi and after just seven months in power, he was overthrown in January 1992. The newly formed Georgian government under Eduard Shevardnadze quickly showed signs of taking a more conciliatory line, condemning his predecessor Gamsakhurdia's approach to the problem in South Ossetia. On June 24th, Shevardnadze and Yeltsin met in Sochi to discuss the question of South Ossetia. A cease-fire agreement was signed by the two leaders.

Since June 1992, a tripartite Russian-Georgian-Ossetian peacekeeping force has been deployed, backed up by the OSCE monitors. The joint forces include one Russian airborne regiment of 950 men and three Georgian-Ossetian battalions totaling about 1100 men, while another 1000-man Georgian-Ossetian force is held in reserve[23]. This arrangement of the joint peacekeeping forces has managed to implement the cease-fire very successfully.

[22] Sammut. Dennis. *The Birth of the Georgian State: Giving Georgia a Second Chance*, Confidence Building Matters No 3. VERTIC. London, November 1994.

[23] Allison. Roy. *Peacekeeping in the Soviet Successor States*, Institute for Security Studies. WEU, Chaillot Paper 18. November 1994.

Currently important contacts are being established through the OSCE and the peace-keeping forces as well as through some of the NGOs, which are quite active in this case[24]. Although the OSCE mission to Georgia did not, at an earlier stage of establishment, succeed in moving the conflicting parties towards each other[25], in the last two years the mission has intensified its activities in several areas[26]. It has increased its efforts to foster and focus dialogue between Georgians and the authorities in the region of South Ossetia concerning a political solution to the conflict. It sponsored a round table discussion between leading Georgian and South Ossetian figures on the nature of conflict in March 1995. The Mission proposed a broader effort to foster the economic reintegration of South Ossetia into the Georgian economy. At the same time, as mandated in March 1994, the Mission has continued to monitor the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in South Ossetia.

The May 1996 Memorandum mediated by the OSCE contains articles on refusal to use military force or pressure, amnesty for those who fought in the war but did not commit war crimes, improvement of confidence-building measures in order to reestablish the cooperation between the parties, etc.[27]

In comparison to the Abkhazian case, the situation in South Ossetia has already reached the stage of its exhaustion. Currently, a considerable part of the community is ready to accept Georgian jurisdiction and this is strengthened by the trade and human contacts between the two sides. Also, the change of Ossetian authorities has played an important psychological role[28]. Because of the fact that the representatives of the new regional government were not involved in the conflict at its earlier violent stage while all the negative attitudes were forming, it is much easier for them to compromise. Another factor easing movements towards reconciliation is that due to its geographical location, South Ossetia is strategically much less important than Abkhazia.

Although more attention was paid to the conflict in Abkhazia by the national as well as international and regional actors, there is still a danger and a possibility of new clashes. Despite the fact that the conflict in South Ossetia was eclipsed by the war in Abkhazian, relatively recent development of this situation promises peace. The remaining tasks are ones of final conflict resolution rather than conflict prevention.

The main obstacle remains the status of South Ossetia. Since the Georgian government made clear its readiness to reestablish its autonomy, South Ossetians are trying to raise the status of the autonomous region to the status of an autonomous republic. It is hard to assess how the situation will develop in this regard, but the high degree of the willingness of the parties to find the political solution acceptable to both sides in order to put end to the conflict sooner, offer a hope for the final management of the post-conflict crisis in the region.

2. Pre-violence Cases[29]

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[24] See Sammut, Dennis. Cvetkovski, Nikola, *Confidence-Building Matters: The Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict*, VERTIC, London. March 1996.

[25] During 1992-1994 very little progress had been made in resolving the conflict in South Ossetia.

[26] see *Annual Report 1995 on OSCE Activities*.

[27] Diplomaticheskiy Vestnik, 6 June, 1996.

[28] Nezavisimaya Gazeta. No 147 (1226), 10 August, 1996.

[29] In discussing the following cases as pre-violent, I do not mean that their escalation into violence is an automatic consequence of current conditions. These are the cases where violence has not occurred and they may not even escalate into the evident violent conflict. Nevertheless, the potential exists and the sooner it is discovered and addressed. the better.

Despite the post-violence cases, i.e. Abkhazia and South Ossetia, there are several issues which need to be discussed in terms of their potential for conflict. Two of them concern the existence of substantial Armenian and Azeri minorities on the territory of Georgia and the issue of the Autonomous Republic of Adjaria. The third case which will also be briefly discussed is the possibility of the transportation of Caspian oil through the territory of Georgia and its possible impact on the issue of Armenian and Azeri minorities.

a. Armenian and Azeri Minorities

Georgia's strategic location provides an incentive for its neighbors to cooperate with the country, but at the same time, its strategic location might be a reason for the country's political status being not fully guaranteed or independent[30]. Although access to the Black Sea gives Georgia a great advantage, its geopolitical location is not as favorable as the first impression might suggest.

To the southeast, Georgia borders Azerbaijan, which has been on good terms with Georgia and which has been extremely helpful in critical periods of Georgia's recent history. When Georgian overland routes with Russia were temporarily cut off by separatists during the civil war, passengers and goods were transferred across Azeri railways and highways[31]. In return, the latter has used Georgian Black Sea ports. There are three regions in the border areas of southern Georgia with substantial Azeri communities: 80% in Marneuli, 65% in Bolnisi and 64% in Dmanisi[32]. Currently there are no mutual territorial claims between the two countries, but the existence of a small Georgian minority in Azerbaijan and the large and growing Azeri community on the territory of Georgia could be used by nationalistic forces from the Azeri side as well as from the Georgian side as an instrument of provocation in the future, if either side fails to respect human rights or discriminates against their respective minorities.

To the south of Georgia is Armenia, a Christian country, which historically has always had cordial relations with Georgia. Friendly relations and the use of safe roads inside the Republic of Georgia are of vital interest to Armenians, because they have no direct access to the sea. A substantial Armenian population is now located along the border with Armenia in the historically Georgian provinces of Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda[33]. They make up to 90% of the population in the region. The cordial relations between Georgian and Armenian authorities and the Georgian assistance to Armenia in delivering and transporting cargo through its territory plays an important role in stabilizing relations between the two countries. Authorities of regions where Armenians make up a substantial part of the population in Georgia have always supported the Georgian central government in return for the non-interference in the specific internal affairs of the region. Even though there are no major problems either between the Georgian and Armenian governments or between the Georgian central government and the authorities representing the Armenian minority at the moment, the political situation in other parts of Georgia, i.e. South Ossetia and Abkhazia, may well give rise to irredentist tendencies among Armenian minorities. In fact, the Georgian

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[30] Gachechiladze, Revaz, *Geopolitics and Georgia*, Jane's Intelligence Review, Vol. 6, No 12, December 1994.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Major Results of the population census in 1989.
[33] Ethnic Armenians came to this part of Georgian territory some 160 years ago from the eastern provinces of Turkey on the initiative of the Russian General Paskevich. See: Muskhelishvili, D., L.,, *Georgia - „A Small Empire"?!,* „Sarangi" Publishers, 1990, (in Russian).

Interior Minister recently confirmed the existence of anti-Georgian organizations in that region[34].

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossyan visited Georgia in the beginning of June 1996. Ter-Petrossyan and Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze signed several bilateral agreements and a communiqué emphasizing the inviolability of the Armenian-Georgian border. The predominantly ethnic Armenian population of Georgia's Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki provinces, bordering with Armenia, took advantage of Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossyan's recent visit to the region to ask for some degree of autonomy[35]. After his visit to the region, Armenian president said that some of demands of the Armenian population remain unreasonable. Armenians in the region have their schools, theaters, official newspapers, which they do not have in other countries. However, while the two presidents were visiting the region, journalists were not invited[36], which may be a sign of the unwillingness of the Georgian government to acknowledge the existence of a problem in the region.

This, on the one hand, is understandable because Georgia does not want to have another conflict in addition to the problems in other parts of the country. But on the other hand, closing its eyes to the problematic issues might cause the escalation of the conflict. The hopes for prevention might lie in the cordial relationship between Armenia and Georgia and in the willingness of the Georgian government to manage all conflicts peacefully after its experience with South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

b. The Autonomous Republic of Adjaria

The Autonomous Republic of Adjaria is one of the two Soviet administrative subdivisions that were established because of religious factors[37]. Adjarians themselves are ethnic Georgians but most of them are Muslims, who converted to Islam during the centuries of the Ottoman rule[38]. Still there have been no religious tensions between them and Christian Georgians.

Georgia has a great economic and strategic interest in Adjaria. The access to the sea is currently available through this autonomous republic, while Abkhazia is *de facto* out of the jurisdiction of the country. Georgia as well as the region itself benefits very much from its location along the Black Sea, in the south-west of Georgia, having a 60 km border with Turkey. Even under the Soviet Union, the only existing customs point with Turkey was located in Sarpi in Adjaria and the sub-regional cooperation with the neighboring country became a good basis for the developing economy in the autonomous republic.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Adjaria has been an oasis of comparative stability on the territory of Georgia. Unlike the other parts of Georgia, Adjaria remained peaceful since Georgia's independence.

Its economy has benefited very much from the cross-boarder trade with Turkey. Batumi, the capital of Adjaria, has a large and well-developed infra-structure with

[34] Segodnia, No 139. 6.08.96.

[35] Liz Fuller. OMRI Daily Digest. No 111, 7 June, 1996.

[36] „Segodnia", No 139. 06.08.96.

[37] Henze. Paul B., *Georgia in 1995: Recovery Gaining Momentum*, RAND Paper, 1995.

[38] The Autonomous Republic of Adjaria was established in 1921 and the Soviet government with this establishment made political advances to Turkey. See: Muskhelishvili, D.L., *Georgia - „A Small Empire"?!*, „Sarangi" Publishers, 1990, (in Russian).

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facilities for loading oil tankers and handling all sorts of dry cargo. There are also good rail connections to the rest of Georgia, to Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The leader of Adjaria, Aslan Abashidze, is the most interesting and potentially powerful political figure in Georgia after Eduard Shevardnadze[39]. His success is due to many factors. Abashidze succeeded in his efforts to keep the region peaceful while the whole country dealt with pressing problems in the other parts, i.e. in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Aslan Abashidze strengthened his position by trying to make a peace in the conflict between Tbilisi and Megrelia[40], mediating several cease-fire agreements between the Central Government and the supporters of the ex-president Gamsakhurdia. Abashidze had successfully handled relations with the Russian military. He was able to avoid confrontations while the decision on Russia's controlling role of the border with Turkey was being negotiated. He considered the stationing of the Russian troops on the territory of Adjaria to be one of the guarantees of stability. He was able to develop projects with American and European investors in order to promote the economy of the region.

All these factors had a great influence on Abashidze's rating and on Georgian parliamentary elections in November 1995 according to the proportional system. The All Georgian Revival Union headed by Abashidze received 25 seats out of a total of 146[41].

Georgia's new constitution, adopted by the parliament on August 25, 1995, creates a federal state. In the federal agreement proposed by Georgians, Adjaria (as well as Abkhazia) would have its own constitution, legislature and executive and judicial systems. Adjaria has enjoyed far more autonomy since independence than it had under the Soviet regime. This arrangement also suits Georgian central government, which can thus be sure that the country will not face the conflict in this part of Georgia.

However, Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze is still regarded by quite a few Georgians in Tbilisi with profound suspicion because of his authoritarian style of leadership. There is a lack of information on the internal situation in Adjaria, which itself might be enough reason for the warning and early action, since it stems directly from the closed nature of the regional government. If the information does not flow, it might also make it difficult for the respective authorities to assess the situation.

The fact that Adjarian government did not allow the OSCE representatives to monitor the 22 September 1996 parliamentary elections caused bewilderment among officials in Tbilisi as well as in the OSCE office in Georgia. On the one hand, the election law in the Autonomous Republic says that the observers should be representatives of Georgian political parties and organizations. But, on the other hand, according to the representative of the OSCE in Georgia, Dieter Boden, the OSCE has a right to attend any kind of election[42]. However, the elections took place without the OSCE monitoring and as it was widely predicted, the election coalition composed of the All-Georgian Revival Union led by Aslan Abashidze and the ruling political party

[39] More on this subject see in: Fuller, Liz, Aslan Abashidze: Georgia's Next Leader? RFE/RL Research Report, 2 (November 5, 1993) 44.

[40] This is the western part of Georgia, the home-land of the ousted president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

[41] Shevardnadze's party - the Union of Georgian Citizens got 90 mandates, and the National Democratic Party received 31.

[42] Segodnia. No. 172, 9.20.96.

in Georgia, the Union of Georgian Citizens, led by Eduard Shevardnadze, got 83 % of the vote[43].

If democracy in Adjaria lags behind the rest of Georgia and Abashidze's government is truly authoritarian in nature, there might be a potential for political conflict in the region. Nevertheless, the central government prefers to close its eyes to the lack of efforts towards democracy-building in Adjaria, in the belief that it is extremely important for the country to keep Adjaria peaceful since Georgia cannot afford another conflict because of its problems in other parts of the country.

However, if on the one hand, the behavior of the central government in this case is understandable, on the other hand, it becomes quite difficult to build democracy in the whole country while one of its regions remains behind in this process. Therefore, the government of Georgia should work on the homogeneous development of the country from a systemic point of view.

The factor of religion is not a direct potential source of a conflict in Adjaria. Although the majority of the population is Muslim, the younger generation is not strongly Islamic any more. Abashidze himself currently belongs to the Georgian Orthodox Church[44]. The region as well as Georgia itself is quite tolerant towards religious freedom and there are not only Georgian Orthodox churches and mosques, but also synagogues and Armenian churches for their respective communities.

However, religious differences do exist in Adjaria, and were problems to arise because of the lack of democratic institutions, religious factors might be an instrument for Abashidze to distract the attention of Adjarians as well as of the central government from political problems in the region. Therefore, respective institutions should be aware of the problems of democracy-building in the region to prevent a political as well as a religious conflict in Adjaria.

c. Caspian Oil Issue

Currently many sectors of the economy in Georgia are having problems. Since 1990, the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have severely aggravated the economic crisis resulting from the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Heavy disruptions in agricultural cultivation and in industry have been reported. Black Sea tourism has also declined. The entire annual budget at the end of the 1995 was $200 million, more than half of it made up by Western aid[45]. Georgia is suffering from an energy crisis, as it is having problems paying for even minimal imports. Most Georgian delegations to neighboring countries in 1993-1994 were sent because of economic issues[46]. They were aimed mainly at negotiating gas and other energy supply agreement.

One of the areas to which Georgia attaches its hopes is the development of international transportation through the Black Sea port of Batumi which is located in Adjaria. Therefore, Georgia became interested in the transportation of Caspian oil.

The so-called „Oil Contract" first was signed on 4 June, 1993, by the Azeri State Oil Company and the other five foreign companies. But within a month the implementation of the contract had been suspended because of the military coup against the Azeri president. The contract was re-negotiated and signed on September

[43] Bezanis. Lowell. OMRI Daily Digest, No 187, 26 September 1996.

[44] Henze. Paul B.. *Georgia in 1995: Recovery Gaining Momentum*, RAND Paper, 1995.

[45] Khutsishvili. George. *Consolidation or New Conflict*, War Report, June 1996.

[46] Vasilyeva. *The foreign Policy Orientation of Georgia*, SWP Paper, 1996.

20th, 1994[47]. The total amount of investment is more than 8 billion US dollars. The duration of the contract is 30 years and covers an expected production of some 511 million ton of oil.

Apart from the Caspian states themselves, a number of countries will be included in any project on Caspian oil, due to the possible transit of oil through their territory. Georgia is one of them.

Azerbaijan, as the prospective exporter of oil, has an interest in increasing its economic independence and thus its political independence from Russia. Turkey, another actor in the Transcaucasus, not less important than Russia, has suggested several options for overland oil pipelines to the Mediterranean, in an effort to reduce Russia's monopolistic tendencies in the region. Besides, the Russian port in Novorossiysk has less capacity than some others and it is closed at least one third of the year because of the weather conditions. Taking all these factors in its benefit into account, Georgia hoped very much for a decision to run the pipeline through its territory. Therefore, since 1995 it has begun the reconstruction of the Tbilisi-Batumi pipeline, which also aims to increase the capacity of the pipeline from five to some seven million tons.

At the same time Russia did not try to hide its interest in having the pipeline cross its territory. In 1993 Russia was against signing the contract. In order to secure its consent, the Russian oil company LUKoil received 10 % of the consortium shares from Azerbaijan at the expense of its own share. Even this did not satisfy Russia's interest and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs insisted that the oil fields of the Caspian shelf should be jointly owned by all bordering countries.

The agreements with Georgia and Armenia allowed Russia to establish military bases on their territory and commit Russia to the defense of their external borders, which has prevented the three Transcaucasian republics - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - from cooperating in a common effort to rid themselves of Russian control. However, the „oil contract"forced Georgia as well as other regional actors to develop a regional policy. Transcaucasian countries are faced with the stage of their development in which cooperation within the region should become relatively independently of Russia.

Because of the huge monetary value and vital necessity of oil, it usually puts additional pressure on negotiations between governments, companies and international organizations[48]. Is a new economic conflict arising? Is Georgia getting involved in a game which might end up in conflict? What outcome is expected in the Transcaucasus? What kind of impact will this issue have on the situation in the Armenian and Azeri regions of Georgia?

Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia might be a guarantee to some extent for the security of the Azeri minority near the border in Georgia and for the relations developing between these two neighboring countries, especially since the relations between the two countries and the situation in the Azeri minority region have not been strained. Since the option that due oil might go through its territory has been excluded, Armenia has been left out of this cooperation. However, despite the Caspian

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[47] Forsythe. Rosemarie. *The Politics of Oil in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies. 1996.

[48] As the Deputy Undersecretary at the MFA in Ankara, Temel Iskit, stated. „the Gulf Was reminded us that oil is still such an important strategic asset that it is worth waging a war for" (See: Iskit, Temel. *Turkey: a New Actor in the Field of Energy Politics?*, in: Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs, vol. 1, No. 1, March-May 1996).

oil issue, Armenia's geographical location in the Transcaucasus mean that friendly relations and the ability to use safe roads inside Georgia are in its vital interest. Therefore, Armenia might be interested in the successful implementation of the contract and in having an economically developed neighboring country which will always assist it in the delivery and transportation of cargo through its territory. Thus, it seems that the cooperation in the transportation of Caspian oil will help to revitalize the economies and promote the cooperation in the region.

But there is one catch. On the one hand, if the pipeline is laid through this region and oil flows, then not just one or two countries, but all the actors benefit both economically as well as in terms of conflict prevention. On the other hand, oil will not flow unless security is achieved in the region. Indeed, political events in the Caucasus including the conflict in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Chechen war as well as the resistance of the Kurds in Turkey will have an influence on the projects of exporting oil.

All the suggested options for the path of the pipeline run through territory containing ethnic tensions. The security of pipelines across the North Caucasus is a concern which is difficult to calculate under present circumstances, with the war in Chechnia very far from being settled. Pipeline security is a concern also in Turkey because of tensions in the Kurdish region. It is difficult to calculate that one area is more likely to remain safer than another over an extended period of time because the whole Caucasian region is extremely heterogeneous from the ethnic point of view. This was the basis of a strong argument for multiple routes and explains the decision on the twin pipeline made on October 9, 1995: Baku - Batumi and Baku - Novorossiysk. Preference was given to those paths which promised more security. Even though the current situation in Georgia seems quite complicated, the choice that the international society made shows the perception by the US and Turkey of the situation in the country.

However, this perception still needs to be affirmed by the efforts of the whole Georgian society to manage the internal as well as regional problems. If the cooperative oil production and transport can be developed and exploited, it will not only help to develop the main basis for economic growth in Georgia throughout the whole Transcaucasus area, but might also serve directly as an instrument of conflict escalation control policy at the structural level, introducing regional economic cooperation in this case as a tool for preventing the future rise of tensions among the various ethnic groups.

II. Challenges for Conflict Prevention Policy

Some of the problems and the potential for escalation are currently more vitally important than others and the sooner they are addressed, the better. The possibility of increasing tensions in South Ossetia seems quite unlikely. The potential for interstate ethnic conflicts in the regions of the Armenian and Azeri minorities does not seem high and currently as essential as the importance of preventing escalation of the Abkhazian crisis. The issue of Abkhazia still remains at the heart of the problems of the whole Georgia and in managing them, the most important part of conflict prevention in Georgia will be implemented.

1. Problematic Issues in the Case of Abkhazia

There are several issues which need to be settled. Otherwise, they might cause the growth of tensions and the escalation of the conflict into different directions. This section will identify those issues and show the escalatory potential which should be addressed at the different levels of conflict prevention policy.

a. Peace-keeping

While comparing the two post-war cases within Georgia, one may say, that „the idea of a joint peace-keeping force was quite innovative in that it brought the Georgians and South Ossetians into a joint effort"[49] in the case of South Ossetia. The parties in the conflict were directly involved in the peace-keeping operation which did not take place in the case of Abkhazia. According to the Moscow agreement of September 3, 1993, a trilateral peace-keeping force, similar to the one created in South Ossetia, had to be deployed. But in Abkhazia only UN observers were deployed to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement. When it became clear that the Sochi Agreement had failed to restore peace in September 1993, the UN tried to assume the leading role in the peacemaking process.

The preference for joint peace-keeping has much to do with the attitude towards Russia. Observers and researchers agree that the Russian forces were not innocent on-lookers in the conflicts on the territory of Georgia. In any case, the defeat of Georgia, in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, fitted perfectly into Russian political and strategic interests in the region at that time. Georgia agreed (or had to agree) to the membership of the CIS and accepted the agreement, which allowed Russia to have its military bases on the territory of Georgia for a period of 25 years[50]. However, Russia itself might have a very complicated strategic dilemma: if it provided support for Georgia, that would immediately antagonize North Caucasian minorities on the territory of Russia and jeopardize the security of the Russian border areas in the region; but if it supports Ossetians and Abkhazians, Georgia may turn to the only potential ally in the area, which is Turkey[51]. Because of the fact that both Ossetian and Georgian parties were blaming Russia for supporting the other and, therefore, because of their mistrust of Russia, the joint Russian-Georgian-South Ossetian Control Commission did much to make all the parties feel personally responsible for keeping the peace in the region and reestablishing contacts within its framework.

The Russian peacekeeping forces were supposed to provide for the return of people who fled Abkhazia to their homeland, but failed. Therefore, the Georgian parliament, on April 17, 1996, adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Russian peace-keeping forces from the border between Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia unless they were able within the next two months to protect ethnic Georgian refugees wishing to return to their homes[52]. In fact, the mandate of the Russian peacekeeping forces was extended in August 1996 for the following six months without significant changes, much to the dissatisfaction of Georgian authorities.

[49] Sammut, Dennis; Cvetkovski, Nikola, *The Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict,* Confidence Building Matters No 6. VERTIC, March 1996.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Solodovnik, Sergei, *The Conflict in South Ossetia: Peacekeeping Dilemmas for the Future,* in: Ehrhart... (ed.). Crisis Management in the CIS: Whither Russia?. Baden-Baden, Nomos Verl.-Ges., 1995.
[52] Liz Fuller. OMRI Daily Digest, No 77, Part I, 18 April 1996.

Currently Abkhazia is *de facto* lost to Georgia. Tensions are still high between Abkhazians and Georgians and the withdrawal of the Russian peace-keeping forces may lead to the new clashes.

b. The Issue of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)[53]

Because the Abkhazian side wants to legalize the results of the ethnic cleansing, it sometimes agrees to negotiate and sometimes breaks off negotiations in order to gain time. Even some of the agreements that were signed were never implemented, such as the one on the return of internally displaced persons. This issue was frequently used by Abkhazian side to their benefit during the process of negotiation. The quick resolution of the problem of internally displaced persons is extremely important for Georgia. As was mentioned before, they may be as many as 250 000, which together with IDPs from South Ossetia makes up more than 8% of the native population of the country. Currently they live in hotels, former rest-houses and resorts, hospitals and buildings of various institutions. Most of them suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders or have become psychologically imbalanced, frustrated by the low possibility of returning home. During last couple of years the provision of elementary economic conditions and social protection to these people remained the one of the most important objectives in the country. Obviously, the humanitarian support provided by the international organizations never will be enough and Georgia itself does not have the resources to deal with them. Such a high level of displacement within a country, certainly, has a great influence on the rate of the economic development.

The Abkhazian side knows this better than anybody else. The Georgian side as well as the UNHCR have insisted on the unconditional return of the refugees, but the Abkhazian side puts forward a preliminary condition to the return of refugees, seeking international *de facto* and *de jure* recognition. All these factors increase tensions between the two sides.

While discussing this issue one must also bear in mind that the problem of returning IDPs is more complicated that it might seem at first glance. Even if the repatriation is successfully implemented, the problem will not be solved completely. If all IDPs were brought back to their homes, then a new and different potential for a conflict would arise. It is a known fact that the former Georgian villages now are occupied by Abkhazians and those houses of ethnic Georgian IDPs which were not burned down during the war are currently taken by Abkhazian families for living. Is the property enough for everybody? How will the property be divided and by whom? This is another issue which might be a source of a conflict.

c. The Territorial Structure of Georgia

Georgian authorities insist on the fact that Abkhazia as well as South Ossetia are indivisible parts of Georgia. This fact is recognized by the UN and by the Budapest Summit Meeting of the OSCE, in which more than 52 states participated. The

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[53] The ethnic Georgians who fled Abkhazia (as well as South Ossetia) while still perceiving the currently lost territories of Georgia as the indivisible part of the country, get quite irritated when they are referred to as refugees from the conflicting zones of Georgia. If the term *refugee* applies to people who have left their country and found refuge outside of the state, the term *internally displaced persons* refers to the people who are displaced within the country. Therefore, I myself prefer to use the latter term.

territorial integrity of Georgia was officially confirmed by Russia and more recently by the leaders of other CIS countries at their meeting in Minsk.

President Shevardnadze considers that, beyond this sensitive issue, everything can be negotiated[54]. In Georgia's constitution, adopted on 29 August 1995, provisions on territorial structure have been left open partly in order to leave room for negotiated solutions with Abkhazia and South Ossetia (as well as with Adjaria). The key principle of the article, which should be written in cooperation with the former autonomous republics/regions, will be the statement that Georgia is a federal formation. Abkhazia and Adjaria will become republics with their own constitutions and there is a need to determine the status of South Ossetia.

The government of Georgia has already finished working on the bill; according to that, Abkhazia will have its own constitution, parliament, flag, emblem, its ministries and administrations, and legal apparatus. Abkhazia will independently manage its economy, besides which it will retain complete independence in the field of culture. But there are some sectors of the economy, which need to be managed at a higher level than the local one, for instance, railways, energy and highways.

For his part, Ardzinba does not agree on the federal structure of Georgia, and instead offers a kind of „horizontal relationship" which is neither a federation, nor a confederation. According to his plan, five or six spheres of competence and authority will be jointly managed. These include fields which are perceived by the Georgian government as secondary, especially given the current conditions in Georgia, i.e. provision of human and civic rights, ecology and dealing with the consequences of natural disasters, etc. In fact, according to the project of the document prepared by the Abkhazian side, Abkhazia is ready to give Georgia responsibility for foreign policy and regulation of borders. The return of refugees was considered only for the Gali region and has not been implemented yet, and the Russian Ruble is supposed to be the currency in Abkhazia. These conditions will hardly satisfy Georgia.

2. Propositions

The potential for further escalation seems real and the necessity of addressing it with conflict prevention policy is evident. Recently the idea of possible new clashes in the case of Abkhazia appeared and the question - What can one do about it? - should be answered soon in order to promote the process of preventing the outbreak of violence. What are the instruments that might be used to address this escalatory potential and who are the actors that are supposed to implement the preventive policy?

- Economic sanctions:
Most of the leaders of the CIS countries supported Georgia at their meeting in Almaty and signed the memorandum. According to that, they have isolated Abkhazia and agreed on a political and economic blockade. But will it lead to the desired results and bring peace to the region?

Economic sanctions are unlike to force Abkhazians to become the ethnic minority, they would once again be if the Georgian refugees were to return. Besides, it is not clear what kind of sanctions the memorandum advocates. Officially, Abkhazia has been under a Russian blockade since 1994, although most ships can still get to Sukhumi port without difficulty. Other CIS countries have only a symbolic

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[54] „Novoye Vremya". No 9, February 1996.

significance in this case as Abkhazia has common borders only with Georgia and Russia. The threat to block what has already been blocked on paper, but has not been implemented does not sound dangerous, and the usefulness of the economic sanctions in this case is doubtful, especially since a complete blockade seems to be impossible to implement.

The mandate of the peace-keeping forces:
At the earlier stage, the Russian peace-keeping forces played a quite positive role in the effort to stop the conflict. Currently, the objectives are different than they were two years ago and they require a different political approach. The Russian Federation Council voted on August 8, 1996, to extend the mandate of the Russian-dominated CIS peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia by six month, until January 31, 1997. But it does not make sense to extend the mandate of the peacekeeping forces as it has existed up to the present. The decision should be made not only about the mandate's technical extension, but also about its substance.

The official Georgian position is that the mandate of the peace-keeping forces should be extended to the whole territory of Abkhazia and granted police powers in order to protect repatriants in case of possible reprisals by Abkhazian militants. However, even if these demands are satisfied, it still will not lead to the return of displaced persons.

First of all, the mandate should include a strict schedule of repatriation. It should specify dates and the number of people to be repatriated within that specific period of time. Only in this way can the peacekeeping forces play an essential role in the process of helping returning IDPs, rather than involuntarily protecting the separatist regime. Repatriation of people who fled Abkhazia should be implemented from both the Abkhazian-Georgian and Abkhazian-Russian borders. Later on, the mandate of the peace-keeping forces in the zone of conflict can be extended again, in order to help reestablish the railway and other communications through the territory of Abkhazia.

Secondly, none of changes in the mandate of the peacekeeping forces will result in the repatriation of refugees and IDPs unless the Georgian side starts to reflect self-critically about domestic causes of the conflict and Abkhazian side expresses a real interest in bringing the conflict to an end. Therefore, in parallel with other measures, both sides should recognize the mistakes they made in the past and confidence-building measures should occupy a central place. Not only governments and officials, but also NGOs and the mass-media might play an essential role in this endeavor.

- Establishing a joint mission:
Currently, while the war is stopped and the two parties' interests are moving towards each other, there is a need to establish a joint mission in order to assess political as well as economic situation in the region, just before the beginning of the process of IDPs' returning. Also, there is a need to carry out a sociological survey to identify the attitudes of people from both parties in the conflict towards each other in order to create a secure ground, not only at the governmental level but also at the level of the inhabitants of Abkhazia.

Those who establish the mission should be outside international actors. For instance, the mission might build on the foundation provided by the UN or the OSCE missions to Georgia, however, it would be worthwhile to involve the NGOs.

Representatives of the Abkhazian and Georgian sides should also be involved. On the one hand, involving so many very different actors could raise the risk of conflicting interpretations, but on the other hand, if an agreement can be reached, the joint mission might provide real assistance in preventing further escalation.

- Economic support to Abkhazia:

Talk of repatriating IDPs is useless without taking into the consideration the current conditions of the region in terms of existing property. Georgia does not have enough resources to provide people with the elementary conditions which are needed for the first stage of starting life in the territory of Abkhazia. There is a need for essential financial as well as human resources to rebuild the region. International funds and financial organizations might carry out this task, creating specific projects of financial support for helping Abkhazia to create economic base for living. IDPs and refugees from both sides as well as people who remained in the territory of Abkhazia might be directly involved in the process of rebuilding the region.

Direct work with IDPs:

Because of the large number of IDPs from the Georgian zones of conflict and the traumatic experience that they have had, work needs to be done at the grass roots level in order to bring the two ethnic parties closer to each other. After all, IDPs should be considered as the people who will rebuild the region. No intergovernmental decisions can decree cooperation. There is a necessity to carry out intensive social rehabilitational work as well as alternative conflict approach educational projects and to involve IDPs in those projects regardless of their ethnicity. On this basis it will become easier for these people to view the problems and their past experience from a different perspective, to see their role in the whole process of reconciliation and to live peacefully after their return to the region. Being directly connected to the large sections of the public, NGOs might carry out this task successfully.

- Democracy development in Georgia:

None of instruments, either actual or long-term, will succeed if the process of democracy development is not promoted in the country. Increasing efforts towards the democratic state-building might serve as a background for the successful implementation of conflict prevention policy. It applies not only Abkhazia but also whole Georgia.

Since the new constitution gave strong powers to the president and the popular political culture largely identifies state authorities with the single leader, presidential elections were considered to be the most important part of the November 5 vote. Although in the three years of Shevardnadze's rule Georgia lost the war in Abkhazia and a part of its territory, and the living conditions of the population have deteriorated dramatically, his image was largely identified with stability, especially after removing the criminal militias from the political arena and with making life more orderly, thus creating the minimum conditions for developing democracy. This was one of the most important reasons for the success of him getting 72.9% of the votes.

In May 1996, Georgia was granted „special guest" status in the Council of Europe. On July 14, 1996, the Georgian foreign minister sent the formal request for membership in the CE to the CE Secretary General. International organizations are aware of Georgia's efforts to build democratic structures. President Shevardnadze

expressed his hopes that the country will be able to develop democracy to that extent that it might attain membership in the CE within the next one or two years[55].

During his visit to Tbilisi, the Secretary General of the CE announced that the CE insists that Georgia finds exclusively peaceful ways of dealing with the conflict in Abkhazia. High-ranking officials from the Council of Europe called upon Georgia to abolish the death sentence, and promised in return to provide expertise in developing local legislation in accordance with European norms.

Currently, development of democracy and protection of human rights not only play a great role in the settlement of crises in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but might also serve as a guarantee for stabilization in the regions with the substantial Armenian and Azeri minorities, and in the Autonomous Republic of Adjaria on the territory of Georgia. Either by using the incentive of becoming a member of the Council of Europe, or by accepting Georgia into this organization and then promoting the process of democracy building, the CE could play an important role in the implementation of conflict prevention policy in Georgia.

<u>- Coordination of all actors:</u>
There is a direct and strong link between developing democracy in the whole country, on the one hand, and the willingness of Abkhazian and South Ossetian officials to reintegrate their regions into Georgia on the other hand. Thus, the need for the cooperation of all the actors is evident. The problems in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia are very much inter-linked and need to be dealt with as a whole. Only if outside as well as inside sources are brought together, will it be possible to prevent the further escalation of conflicts on the territory of Georgia and find of resolving them.

Conclusions

Several factors make the Georgian case an interesting case study on conflict prevention. First of all, it involves two post-conflict cases in the different regions of the country. Besides these, there are other, smaller cases where, as it was already discussed, the potential for conflict exists, and this makes the case of Georgia even more complicated.

The implementation of the conflict prevention policy in case of Abkhazia faces some obstacles. The most important one is the political interdependence of problems on the level of Georgia as well as on the level of the Caucasus. Crises in different parts of the country can hardly be studied separately from each other. While dealing with the conflict in Abkhazia, the impact of this case on other parts of Georgia should not be ignored. Also, the development of the situation in the Caucasus should be taken into the consideration.

These factors were some of the major reasons for the failure of the international organizations at an earlier stage of their involvement in the conflicts on the territory of Georgia. The OSCE was the first international organization which started mediating the conflict in South Ossetia. Therefore, the UN assuming that the OSCE was already taking care of that case, became involved in the conflict in Abkhazia. It is evident now, that this type of division of labor between the two main international actors did not work out successfully.

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[55] „Segodnia", No 124, 07/16/96.

Currently, however, the situation is quite different in that sense, and as a result of efforts made by the OSCE, the UN, different international and local NGOs, and regional outside and inside actors, fighting has stopped, some steps towards peace have been made and the government of Georgia is ready to implement a federal structure in order to manage the problems of the country. Also, ethnic minorities in Georgia have changed their attitude towards Russia. If at an earlier stage of the conflict they preferred to join the Russian Federation which promised them more security and better economic conditions, their impression of the security of minority rights in Russia declined after the war in Chechnia broke out.

The stage of demanding to join Russian Federation is almost over and ethnic minorities are trying either to establish independent states, which is unlikely to happen, or to claim their rights within Georgia. The regions with substantial number of ethnic minorities within Georgia are asking for the one-degree-more autonomy than they enjoyed before the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This applies to the Abkhazians demanding confederation, the South Ossetians trying to get the status of autonomous republic, and the Armenians asking for any kind of autonomy. If Georgia grants Abkhazia and South Ossetia the status of autonomous republic, it might encourage the Armenian minority to ask for a higher degree of autonomy on the territory of Georgia. How is the Georgian government going to deal with this problem?

However, even if the federation is established, it might not solve all the problems in Georgia. How is the society of ethnic Georgians going to perceive the federal structure of the country? The public opinion and prevalent attitudes towards federal structures are not yet universally positive and need to be reinforced. Currently, one may speak only about limited acceptance of democratic values such as the freedom to publish, to demonstrate and to founding political parties. There is a fear that the federal structure of the country will always provide foundation for the secessionist movement of ethnic minorities within Georgia.

These factors should be taken into consideration. Only a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention policy and all resources, outside and inside, brought together can lead to real peace in Georgia.
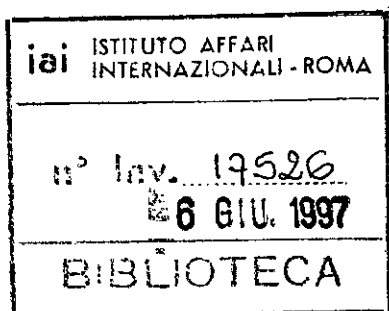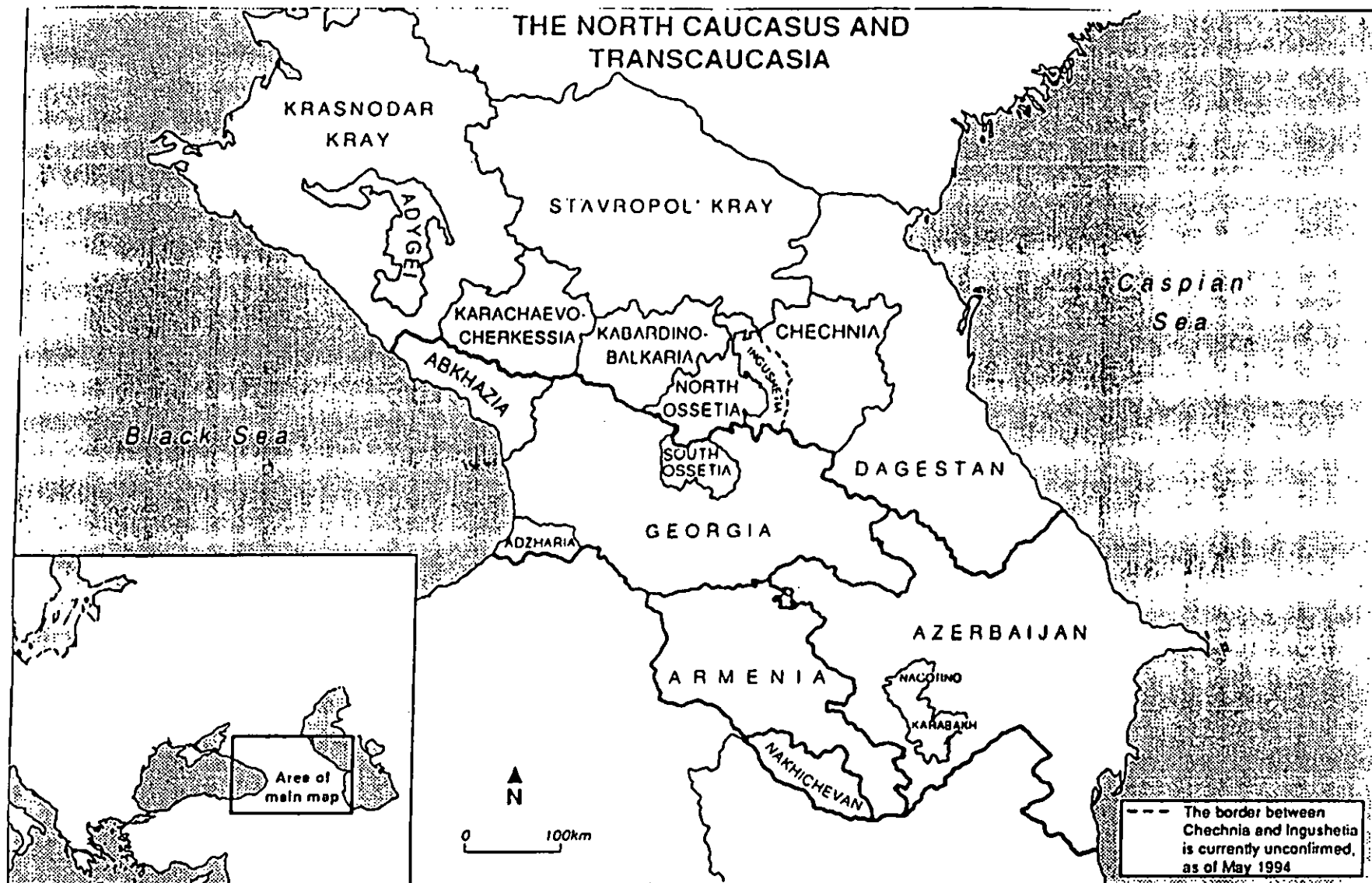
Appendix 1

<u>Population of Abkhazia in 1989</u>

Whole population:	525 061	100%
Georgians:	239 872	45,7%
Abkhazians:	93 267	17,8%
Armenians:	76 541	14,6%
Russians:	74 914	14,3%
Greeks:	14 664	2,8%
Ukrainians:	11 665	2,2%
Belorussians:	2 084	0,4%
Jews:	1 752	0,3%
Ossetians:	1 165	0,2%
Tatars:	1 099	0,2%
Azeris:	517	0,1%

<u>Sources:</u> Natsionalnyi Sostav Nasclenia SSSR (National census of the population of the USSR), Moscow, 1991.

THE NORTH CAUCASUS AND TRANSCAUCASIA

KRASNODAR KRAY

ADYGEI

STAVROPOL' KRAY

Caspian Sea

KARACHAEVO-CHERKESSIA

ABKHAZIA

KABARDINO-BALKARIA

CHECHNIA

INGUSHETIA

NORTH OSSETIA

Black Sea

SOUTH OSSETIA

DAGESTAN

ADZHARIA

GEORGIA

AZERBAIJAN

ARMENIA

NAGORNO

KARABAKH

NAKHICHEVAN

Area of main map

▲ N

0   100km

- - - The border between Chechnia and Ingushetia is currently unconfirmed, as of May 1994

Joint IAI/SWP Project Conference
on

"Preventing Violent Conflict in Europe"

Ebenhausen, Germany
22-23 November 1996

"Dilemmas of Domestic Conflict"

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Dilemmas of Domestic Conflict

Introductory remarks:

This conference presents as an excellent opportunity to discuss critically the following argument and the consequences following from it: **A decisive element of the more-than-often-alluded-to change of paradigm of conflict, which has come about as a consequence of the collapse of communism and the socialist state order and the developments in the wake thereof, is the shift of security challenges from the inter-state to the intra-state level.**

The considerations made neither claim to be put already into a systematic order nor they are regarded as exhaustive. Suggestions are very much welcomed; criticism grudgingly taken into consideration. The following is <u>not</u> an outline of a final paper! Moreover it is the collection of hypotheses, theses, and ideas, which all refer to the above argument.

1. An intrinsic feature of the post-Soviet Union security constellation is the increasing importance of **substate actors**. These are secessionist movements in Ossetiya and Abkhazia, as well as a restless Russian minority in Estonia and Latvia. This does not automatically engender violent conflicts between states. There is ample proof that the opposite has been the case; but the **security dilemma** has a twin: **intra-state conflict potential** as a threat to **international** peace and security. The anarchic international system is neither the sole nor the most prevalent challenge to the community of states, as the realist school of international relations would have us believe. It is not only Kant's hypothesis that republican states, as he named it, tend not to fight with each other that has roused a vigorous scholarly debate. Rather, there is ample evidence that the great majority of violent conflicts of the 1990s have their origin in intra-state developments of a multifaceted variety. At least as far as Europe is concerned, wars aiming at territorial gains have turned out to be less probable. What at least can be maintained is that territorial claims do not stood at the beginning of violent inter-state fighting.

   It is against the background of these assumptions that one needs to ask how sufficient traditional diplomatic means, i.e., those developed to serve inter-state relations, are to meet the present and future needs of international system to deal with internal domestic strife. In order for preventive policy, which all European governments pretend to believe in, to move beyond rhetoric, a big step has to be taken. It faces a number of difficulties that will not be easy to overcome.

2. **Inter-state** conflicts are usually preceded by clear signals. Mobilization of the military needs to be organized, which does not go unnoticed. Since 1975 a series of confidence building measures have been

designed to detect military built-ups and to avoid surprise attacks. There is no doubt, as far as inter-state security is concerned, they contribute to peace and security and play a valuable preventive role.

However this is not the case with the "new" types of conflicts that are emerging in the post-Cold War era; oftentimes they show no clear signals of build up to violent action, as in the case of classic interstate military confrontations. Whether and when, for example, discriminatory practices against an ethnic group, the abuse of human rights, the deterioration of the socio-economic situation, or the neglect of basic environmental standards, to mention just few of the most familiar causes of conflict, infringe on the interests of a neighboring state and might unleash violent reactions is often hard to predict. Or to put it differently, when the chances to prevent conflicts turning violent are most promising, it is often much to early to know for sure whether developments in a state have the potential of violence and will presumably contradict third state interests. Why then should a state or a community of states in the framework of an international organization refer to preventive actions in the case of intra-state developments as long as state interests proper seemed not to be endangered or negligible. Given that **state interests are the prerequisite for action**, a domestic conflict in an early stage of its development often will and cannot move states to act.

_The statement that problems come not from a lack of early warning signals but rather from the refusal to engage in early action describes only half of the picture. Domestic causes of conflict often do not convey a clear-cut signals. The most promising point to „intervene" therefore is likely to be missed, because the question of when state interests are at stake has not yet arisen.

Even if this is not the case, and unequivocal signals about potential domestic conflict are available, the bridge to early action is often missing. It has to be built when the obstacle of no clear cut interests are present. A lot of writing has been done about preventing domestic conflicts from becoming violent. But the question why states or international organizations should engage preventing conflict in case of conflicting interests or no interests at all is still left unanswered.

3. "Foreign ministry stops supporting exile broadcasting", was the headline of a German newspaper, which ran an article about a decision recently taken in Bonn. What was the report about? The then government-owned telecommunication corporation had called on the German Foreign Ministry to endorse a contract that it had signed with the broadcasting station "Democratic Voice of Burma." The Foreign Ministry declined to lend its support to the opposition of a country, arguing that it would have been against the diplomatic rules.

Only few days later the Catholic peace-movement *Pax Christi* stressed the important role local non-governmental organizations are playing in establishing and securing a stable peace process in Bosnia-

Herzegovina, while blaming the international community of states for not sufficiently supporting them.

Why are both cases mentioned here, and what do they have in common? They appear to be totally different but converge in at least one decisive aspect: They both refer to the domestic situation in their respective country, they both are security-related, and they both demonstrate the limitations of state-actors. In the case of Myanmar, the German government refrains from taking sides in an intra-state power struggle. Against the background of the notion of state sovereignty, the German Ministry had probably to decide as it did. (Under the conditions of the East-West conflict things were obviously treated differently!) Seen from the point of view of a neoliberal approach to conflict prevention, the question has to be put, who else can be expected to intervene in a domestic power struggle in favor of promoting democratic change when, for diplomatic reasons, governments do not feel entitled to do so?

The Bosnia-Herzegovina case is not exactly the same. No rigid notion of sovereignty is hampering the community of states from lending its support to NGOs that, in a post-conflict prevention effort, struggle to rebuild a stable basis for a peaceful future for the country. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, NGO's tackle tasks, which traditional inter-state diplomatic means can't fulfill (see point 7 below).

4. In many cases, sub-state actors are party to a conflict with their respective state governments. Chechnya is one case in point (irrespective of the pending controversy about its constitutional status). How far do inter-state diplomatic instruments have access to actors on a substate level? Can they be given an international fora without concomitantly fueling the conflict? The matter is extremely sensitive in those cases where minorities or regions are claiming a special status or are even striving for independence. Addressing them as actors to a conflict may be understood as a first step of being recognized as an independent entity. For the state concerned, it will regard any contact with secessionists inside its borders as a violation of its territorial integrity. It is this irreconcilability of two important principles of the international law, which makes attempts to rally conflicting parties around a table so difficult and exacerbates tensions than to allay them. The Nagorno-Karabakh case may serve as an illustration, since the status of the Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijian is one of the main obstacles to a success of the Minsk Conference.

Does the international community of states have other means to deal with intra-state conflicts of the kind mentioned above, in which the right of self-determination stands against the inviolability of borders? Obviously it does not! The Crimean case is an exception so far. The OSCE *Chair-in-Office* and the long-term mission to Kiev succeeded to take the claims of the Crimean authorities into account, although they are not an OSCE participant but party to a conflict.

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Cases in which the two conflicting principles of the international law–
state sovereignty, at the one hand, and the right of self-determination,
on the other hand–are at stake can't be somehow forestalled. But what
else can be done? Why is this category of conflicts mentioned here? It
not only accounts for the most probable kind of tensions Europe will
face or is already confronted with. Moreover, it is fundamental to a
decision that urgently needs to be taken: **To base preventive action
on principles not on interests.**

This sounds more futuristic than it really is. Efforts have to be made to
set up norms regulating the manner in which conflicts of the type
mentioned above should be handled. The OSCE *Code of Conduct* can
be regarded as a step into the desired direction. While its first part is
more or less a rehash of already agreed upon principles in the
framework of the OSCE and the UN concerning the inter-state
relationship, its second part is a step ahead and stipulates a number of
rules with which domestic conflicts have to comply.

The Chechnyan war could have been the first case to invoke the *Code*,
but this opportunity had been missed. The hurdle of state interests had
to be overcome in order to remind the Russian government of its
commitments. Recalling the beginning of the fighting in December
1994, the states took refuge in the excuse of regarding Chechnya as
part of an intra-state affair, which would not permit them to intervene
politically. The OSCE members, at that time, were competing with one
another over conflicting interests and thus left the *Code* as the looser.

The Chechnyan war serves as an example. It stresses an aspect of
principle: It is up to states only to invoke the *Code* and to press for its
implementation. Neither an international organization nor a substate
actor has, as far as the *Code of Conduct* is concerned, the right to do
so.

States will go on to hide themselves behind the excuse of a non-
interference obligation, even in those cases in which international
conventions justify the intervention of outside governments.
Governments will continue to gauge their states interests with
international legally or politically-agreed-on rules of behavior. **This
kind of deadlock can only be overcome by attributing a greater
autonomy of action to organs of international organizations.** In the
Chechnyan case, it was the Hungarian chair, as the representative of
the participating states, who pressed for OSCE involvement. No
OSCE organ at that time had the right to do so, and they still do not
have it.

5. The *Code of Conduct* and the other OSCE-commitments are state-
oriented. Accordingly, the *Code* stipulates: "Each participating state is
responsible for [its] implementation ... Appropriate CSCE bodies,
mechanisms, and procedures will be used to assess, review, and
improve, if necessary, the implementation of this Code." Only the
High Commissioner on National Minorities (*HCNM*) can, to a certain
degree, act on his own discretion. His mandate entitles him:

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to provide 'early warning' and, as appropriate, 'early action' at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have ...in the judgment of the High Commissioner have the potential to develop into a conflict within the CSCE area, affecting peace, stability or relations *between* participating States,(italics added).

All the institutions, mechanisms, and procedures embodied in the *Code* depend on individual governmental initiatives to get active.

A number of objections are raised against the proposition to provide bodies of international organizations with a greater autonomy to act. Most prominent is the argument that states will not voluntarily curtail their sovereignty by transferring more rights to international bodies. The process of multilateralizing state interests has come to an end or is even on a retreat. This observation is hardly to ignore. But to acquiesce to it implies that the void the East-West-Conflict has left behind, is not yet filled with a new and positive multilaterializing clamp and that the auspices to do so are regarded as meager. Upgrading the *Human Dimension* and multilateralizing the option to invoke it could contribute to filling a gap, which the systemic change in the European security system and the end of the East-West-Conflict has left behind.

Another objection made may even weigh heavier. Even if international actors have the right to take the first steps on a case-by-case basis without having to get authorization first to do so, the final steps will have to be taken by. In other words, to provide international organizations with the right to bring a case of potential domestic conflict to the attention of member countries will lead to nowhere as long as means to act remain under strict state control.

In view of this argument, it has to be stressed that enhancing the autonomy of international organizations is not intended to diminish the responsibility of states. But what probably can be achieved is to induce the community of states to take the initiative and to put potential domestic conflict on their agenda, even when their interests seem not to be involved.

The question is how to make states move into the desired direction? The problem boils down to whether volatile state interests can be curbed in favor of norms of behavior or, to put it in a more familiar way, in favor of a code of conduct. If we look at what has already been agreed to in the framework of the *Human Dimension*, there is a far-reaching set of norms at hand. But what is needed is a decisive step further beyond what already has been adopted, "that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension ... are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned." (Moscow Document)

If this is taken seriously and treated as an operational guideline, the question arises, whether it is only due to tactical considerations, when and under which conditions governments are blamed for violating the commitments in the field of *Human Dimension*. If this would be the case, the argument could be made that the politics of non-interference into the domestic affairs of third countries, although provisions of the *Human Dimension* are violated, is as much a disregard of commitments as the violations themselves. It would then follow as a consequence that not only states should be provided with the mandate–for example, to launch a rapporteur mission–but the OSCE organs as well. Then the only problem to be solved would be to elaborate unequivocal points of interference, indicating when a "serious threat to the fulfillment of the provisions of the ... human dimension has arisen."

But things are more complicated than that. Governments often face the contradiction of the *Human Dimension* norms not being in harmony with each other. For instance, in the case of Chechnya, they call for pressure against the Russian government to halt the war, while at the time relying on it to shepherd the democratization process within Russia, might be regarded as a case in point. Governments are eager to keep their autonomy are not inclined to leave it to the discretion of an international organization. It is against this background, that it can only be a piecemeal move into the direction of a more principled policy. But in view of the domestic dimension of security this move seems to be unavoidable.

All this may sound illusory, because states want to decide on their own what their interests are. But in any case, it is not the policy of states that needs to be put under international surveillance. The point of the issue is the rules of the game, not the game itself. It cannot be left to the discretion of each individual state to determine which principles are beyond their political needs. In inter-state relations, this is already agreed. It has to be extended to intra-state relations as well.

6. **Security is a concern of societies** not only of governments. Governments can take care of it, but their ability to prevent conflicts may be limited in some instances. It is against this condition that the **Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)** come in play. Their increasing number is reflecting new dimensions of security and their societal background. Individual governments as well as intergovernmental organizations have in so far reacted by opening up to nongovernmental advice and information. In this respect, the change has been tremendous in the last few years. What can be achieved refers more to details rather than to principle. The role of NGOs in this field is widely recognized. In the CSCE/OSCE-process, progress has already been widely documented.

But there is still an imbalance: Governments are eager to absorb what they can get from below. They are free to make use of the support offered to them, but they are free as well to disregard it. An inverse procedure is far less developed. This is, as the above mentioned example in view of Bosnia might suggest, not only due to financial

problems. Governments obviously shy away to leave things to organizations that are not under their control and that do not have not the same legitimacy to act as democratic elected governments. They will not stand for and will not be kept accountable for actions they can only marginally, or perhaps not at all influence.

If this assessment is correct, solutions have to be found in order to take advantage of the possibilities *NGOs* have to offer without keeping governments accountable. How far can NGOs be financially subsidized without governments being blamed for what the money is being spent? The *International Red Cross* is blamed for its failures and praised for its successes, although the financial funds at its disposal are largely state financed. What governments have to create is the establishment of an European-based **international foundation** to oversee the work of NGOs. It has to be run by a board of trustees, which is elected by a majority of the OSCE participating states. The status of a board member has to be comparable with those of the *International Court of Justice*. The board decides the activities the foundation wants to support. A self-governed foundation could have reacted differently and supported the Burmese opposition broadcasting station without violating state-centered diplomatic rules, if it had been a European case.

7. **Norms**, such as those of the *Code of Conduct* or of the diverse documents in the framework of the *Human Dimension* process may function as a **neutralizer to state interests**. They enshrine a set of rules of behavior, which in any case are not allowed to be contingent on tactical moves and short-term state interests. It is against this background that a proposition should be made to entitle international organs to refer to established rules without being authorized on a case-by-case basis. The question how, given that this proposition faces a lack of preciseness with regard to the so far agreed-on provisions in the framework of the *Human Dimension*. When a "serious threat to the fulfillment of the provisions of the CSCE human dimension has arisen in another participating State" (Moscow Document) occurs is not easy to decide. Either states must agree on a more precise set of indicators, or it remains to the discretion of OSCE bodies to decide when to get involved. The second version seems to be preferable. It avoids the risk that states might be inclined to fall back behind what they already have agreed to in the more euphoric period of the beginning 1990s.

9. Security, as a mainly military matter, has led to a number of increasingly refined *Confidence Building Measures*. If the main argument of this paper—that security is as much an intra-state affair as an inter-state concern—proves true, then the question becomes whether a process can be launched as it has been done in the military field since 1975. But in this case they would be **confidence building measures in the human dimension**. What has to be announced to other participating states in the field of human dimension obligations? Who can be expected to do so? Again, should OSCE bodies be given the duty to monitor human dimension commitments? Should there be OSCE missions in all OSCE participating states for this reason?

One thing seems to be sure, conventional thinking is not adequate to tackle a dimension of security, which is not new but has become of a paramount importance since the end of the East-West-Conflict.

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"Democracy Building and Conflict Prevention"

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Events of recent years have shown both that democratization can provide an opportunity to resolve previous imbalances in ethnic relations, and that the process can unleash explosions of ethnic violence which may prove fatal to the democratization process itself. In the case of South Africa, the end of minority rule and the establishment of an inclusive political system ended apartheid and provided an opportunity to develop peaceful relations among all ethnic groups in the country on an equal footing. In the Soviet Union, in contrast, Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to liberalize the authoritarian Soviet regime unleashed both ethnic nationalism and ethnic conflicts, which contributed to Gorbachev's downfall as well as the eventual collapse of the USSR.

This paper examines conditions under which democratization is likely to mitigate ethnic tensions, or to exacerbate tensions and thereby stimulate conflict. It addresses first, how the actions of the government preceding a democratization effort may determine whether potential democratizers will have an opportunity to address ethnic issues before they become conflictual. Second, it determines the conditions under which democratization is likely to mitigate ethnic conflict, or to exacerbate tensions. Finally, it will examine how this analysis applies to developments in the Baltic republics and the Caucasus in the former Soviet Union. While ethnic minorities are present in both the Baltic republics and the newly independent Caucasus states, ethnic tensions in these two regions are quite different, with important consequences for their efforts at state-building. A comparison of these two regions may help clarify why ethnic tensions have been handled so differently, with such different outcomes, in these regions.

Authoritarian Regimes and Ethnicity: Pre-existing Conditions

The presence or absence of ethnic tensions under the previous authoritarian regime could determine the likelihood that serious ethnic problems will erupt, and may highlight issues that new governments should avoid, or address immediately. Four factors are important in this regard: the ethnic composition of the regime; the ethnic distribution of the population; the ethnicity of the military; and the level of ethnic conflict in the state prior to democratization.

The ethnic makeup of the authoritarian regime itself could be a source of ethnic resentment under a democratizing government. Members of the regime may have been members of the main ethnic group in the state, in a country with a single prevalent ethnic group. Alternatively, the regime could be associated a minority group in the country, thereby giving the perception of minority dominance, regardless of whether this minority group as a whole supported the authoritarian regime's policies. Finally, the regime may have reflected a cross-section of ethnic groups, representing a similar mix to the groups in the population at large. These differences could have important consequences for the level of tensions between ethnic groups during the democratization process. If one group was associated with a hated regime, it could face hostility in the new environment. This increases the odds that demands for retribution against or punishment of the old regime will take on ethnic overtones.

The geographical mix of ethnic groups within a state will also influence the issues that arise during a transition. Ethnic groups could be mixed together throughout the state, or separated more homogeneously in different parts of the country. What is important to know in terms of problems that might emerge during democratization is whether the authoritarian regime, or some previous government, took deliberate steps to affect the ethnic distribution

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within the state. An authoritarian regime might have adopted expulsion or extermination policies in order to create a homogeneous population; alternatively, it might forcibly have moved different ethnic groups to different parts of the country in order to dilute strongly homogenous regions. Either policy would be undertaken with the aim of maintaining regime control. The ethnic cleansing that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina is an example of expulsion designed to create ethnically homogeneous regions.

The ethnic composition of the military under the authoritarian regime could also have important consequences. Since authoritarian regimes may depend on the military to help suppress ethnic or other societal tensions, some regimes in multiethnic states have manipulated the ethnic make-up of the armed forces and the deployment of ethnic troops to prevent a situation in which military forces might choose to align themselves with the local population and against the regime. This may have an effect on the attitude of the military toward democratization, and its willingness to involve itself or remove itself from politics -- especially if ethnic tensions are already inflamed in the state.

In an ethnically mixed society, the military may be heterogeneous. If there is a dominant ethnic group in the regime, the military is likely to be predominantly from this group as well. It is least likely that the majority of the military would be from a different ethnic group than that prevalent in the regime, though this is not impossible. The regime may not have had sufficient time in power to implement changes in the military hierarchy; alternatively, it may have relied on different organizations such as an internal police force to maintain control over the state, and therefore was willing to tolerate a different ethnic mix in a marginalized military.

The level of ethnic conflict under the previous regime will also have an effect on the role that ethnicity plays in the democratization process, since this could determine the degree of attention ethnic concerns receive in negotiating a new political arrangement. There are three possibilities in this respect. First, tension between ethnic groups could be evident but suppressed. Given the repressive mechanisms of the state, the regime might have kept a lid on existing ethnic tensions so that these played no role in the authoritarian demise, but cleavages within society were clearly visible. This may have been the case in Romania, where the regime's repressive powers did much to intimidate the population, but little to mask the existence of continued distrust between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania.[1]

Second, ethnic tensions might be latent. Either due to repression or a limited history of ethnic tensions, there might be little indication that ethnic groups in a given state were potentially conflictual. For example, there was little evidence suggesting that the Tamils and Sinhalese could not live together peacefully in Sri Lanka prior to decolonization.[2]

Third, ethnic conflict might be a factor causing the authoritarian regime's downfall. This could be the result either of direct ethnic pressure on the regime for change, or simply because ethnic conflict was causing too many problems in the society and state at large, which the regime was unable to solve. South Africa would appear to be a case in which direct ethnic pressure has pushed the regime toward democratization, while one could argue that the Soviet Union's demise was due in part to its inability to allay increasing ethnic conflicts and obstructionism throughout the empire.[3]

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[1] During the revolution Romanians and ethnic Hungarians worked together in opposition to Ceausescu's rule; however, ethnic conflicts quickly resurfaced in the post-revolutionary period.

[2] See Montville, ed., Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies, part III; Horowitz, "Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management".

[3] A discussion of the causes for the Soviet Union's collapse is beyond the scope of this paper. Certainly, ethnic tensions alone did not destroy the empire; however, by 1991 they were clearly a factor in the inability of

Democratization and Ethnic Conflict

When can democratization lessen the danger of ethnic conflict? In the most general sense, it can do so if the negotiating process associated with democratization can establish a workable distribution of power among ethnic groups, so as to preclude the development of severe tensions. Under what conditions is this likely to occur? Nine factors are likely to affect whether democratization will mitigate or exacerbate ethnic tensions.

1) First is the level of ethnic tension when democratization begins. If this is low at the outset, democratization is less likely to unleash ethnic conflicts. Low ethnic tension could result from an absence of suppressed ethnic grievances, and a lack of the ethnic stereotyping which is present in hot conflicts. Whether ethnic tensions emerged later in such a case would then depend on the degree to which ethnic issues were manipulated in subsequent political campaigns. The disintegration of Czechoslovakia is a warning, though, that even in cases with low ethnic tension, ethnic issues can severely hinder the search for new constitutional arrangements.

What if ethnic tensions are high when an authoritarian regime collapses? This highlights a critical problem; while transitions to democracy present an opportunity to address ethnic tensions, if ethnic issues overwhelm other factors this could prevent a process of democratization from beginning at all.

2) A second factor is the timing with which ethnic issues are raised. Democratization is most likely to succeed in mitigating ethnic tensions if ethnic issues are addressed early in the transition process. A comparison of cases in which ethnic tensions were either included in early negotiations or ignored underscores the importance of providing for the concerns of various ethnic groups, even in situations in which there are no apparent tensions. The lack of such provisions in Sri Lanka had devastating consequences by inadvertently encouraging the use of ethnic extremism in electoral competition, while the early introduction of a system for ethnic power distribution in Malaysia helped establish a moderate political climate in the state. Thus, if potential ethnic grievances can be anticipated in advance and avoided during the writing of a new constitution, even before there is an obvious need for such efforts, ethnic conflicts may be avoided or mitigated.

If on the other hand ethnic issues are simply ignored or overlooked in the early stages of constitution-building, democratization may do more to exacerbate rather than mitigate ethnic tensions. The evidence from cases such as Sri Lanka and Nigeria, in which constitutional safeguards for minority rights were not included at independence, overwhelmingly supports the importance of addressing ethnic issues early, so as to avoid creating opportunities for different political parties to exploit the tension of extremist ethnic views. Even in cases with no obvious ethnic problems to address, it is important to build safeguards against exacerbation of ethnic tensions into the system.

3) Third, the relative size of ethnic groups may affect whether democratization can minimize tensions. Democratization should have a greater chance of lessening or preventing tensions if ethnic groups in the state are roughly equal in size and power. This would mean that the danger of one group automatically being excluded from power would be low. Relative parity means that ethnic groups are less likely to see democratization as an opportunity to exploit the use of ethnic extremism out of fear; similarly, they are less likely to

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the central government to hold the country together. For some analyses of the collapse of the USSR, Raymond Garthoff, The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994), Michael Waller, The End of the Communist Power Monopoly (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), Jack F. Matlock, Autopsy on an Empire (New York: Random House, 1995).

feel threatened by the possibility of such exploitation by other groups in the state.[4] Notably, avoiding ethnic tensions will depend in part on the development of an electoral structure which promotes intra-ethnic voting. Given that avoiding ethnic conflict is easier when group leaders perceive their interests to lie in cooperation, the perception that extremism is unnecessary or may be politically harmful is an important one to cultivate. The example of Switzerland suggests that preventing ethnic tensions is possible, as was also seen in Lebanon's constitutional agreement from 1943 to 1975. The Lebanese case, however, illustrates the difficulties of reaching solutions among closely balanced ethnic groups based on fixed quotas.[5]

The mitigation of ethnic conflicts will be more complicated if ethnic groups are of greatly uneven sizes. This creates a greater danger of domination by the majority group, and heightens fears by the minority that its interests will be overlooked. Further, depending on the ethnic distribution in the state, this can complicate the process of finding an electoral solution. A successful example is Malaysia, in which voting districts were in many cases designed to require candidates to gain multi-ethnic support to ensure victory, thus mitigating the minority groups' fears of exclusion from political power. The Malaysian example illustrates the possibility of finding solutions even to complex problems. The ongoing struggle in Canada to find an acceptable solution to Quebec's insistence on greater protections for French-speakers, though, illustrates the difficulty of assuaging all groups' concerns even in societies with low levels of ethnic tension.[6]

4) The ethnic mix of the previous regime is a fourth critical factor. Democratization has a better chance of avoiding ethnic conflict if the authoritarian regime was not peopled by an ethnic minority group in the state. If the regime either contained a representative ethnic mix, or was similar to the majority group in the population, there is less likelihood that resentment along ethnic lines will develop out of antipathy for the previous regime. It is also less likely that ethnic conflict was a cause of the regime's downfall, so ethnic tensions are probably not too severe at the time a transition process begins. Demands for retribution against the ethnic group that made up the regime are also less likely to result if the regime represented a mix or the majority group.

5) Similarly, the ethnic composition of the opposition to the previous regime will affect ethnic relations during the transition. If all the main ethnic groups in the state were united in opposition to the previous regime, either in one opposition movement or a coalition, democratization has a better chance of avoiding or mitigating ethnic tensions. This would be true in particular if the leadership of the opposition included members of different ethnic groups. This would give diverse ethnic groups a cooperative foundation on which to build when working to create a new system of government, as well as ensuring that members of different ethnic groups would participate in the negotiating process over a new political structure. Czechoslovakia provides an example of the harmonizing effect such unity can have; the two heroes of the Velvet revolution were Vaclav Havel, a Czech, and Alexander Dubcek,

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[4] Horowitz points out that one of the dangers in situations with two relatively equal ethnic groups is that if ethnicity is a major political factor, elections can become merely censuses supporting the larger group, rather than competition. See Horowitz, "Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers", p. 116.

[5] See David Welsh, "Domestic Politics and Ethnic Conflict", Survival, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 72-3. This also supports Lijphart's conclusion that proportionality must be fluid rather than fixed in a given constitution, which cannot take into account future birth rates.

[6] David Welsh, "Domestic Politics and Ethnic Conflict", pp. 70-72.

a Slovak, while the main opposition to the communist regime was a coalition between Civic Forum in the Czech lands and the Public Against Violence in Slovakia.[7]

If, instead, opposition to the authoritarian regime was dominated by a single ethnic group, or fragmented along ethnic lines, the process of negotiating a new structure would be complicated. If only one ethnic group is involved in the negotiations to create a new political structure in a multiethnic state, the odds that the end result will satisfy all the major groups in the state are small. Negotiations dominated by one ethnic group will be less likely to address issues of equal rights and acceptable representation in creating a new constitution. If the ethnic balance is severely skewed in favor of a dominant ethnic group this might be inevitable, but again, the example of Sri Lanka and shows that a strong majority position does not mean that ethnic conflicts can be avoided in the long run. Instead, other groups may be driven to violent protest against majority domination.

Sixth, the nature of the leadership of the main opposition groups is critical to whether ethnic tensions are eased or exploited. The likelihood that democratization will mitigate ethnic problems is greater if the leaders of large ethnic groups are moderates rather than extremists. Moderation has two definitions in this context. In democratization, moderation implies support for negotiated settlements to change the power balance, rather than revolution.[8] In ethnic disputes, moderation means avoidance of extremism and hostility in developing positions vis a vis other ethnic groups. Democratization has the greatest chance of avoiding ethnic conflicts if both of these definitions apply to the leaders of the major opposition groups.

If the leadership of some ethnic groups, particularly larger groups, embraces extreme positions with regard to ethnic rights, the ability of the democratization process to lessen ethnic tensions would be weakened. In this respect, one should keep in mind that all ethnic groups must be willing to work together to find solutions to ethnic conflicts; if one side -- or one leader -- sees an advantage in continuing the conflict, it will continue. This prevented solutions to the civil war in Sudan for years. So long as different leaders thought continued fighting would favor their ends, they were unwilling to consider a negotiated settlement.[9]

The presence or absence of external ethnic allies is a seventh factor influencing the democratization's affect on ethnic tensions. If external ethnic allies are not present, democratization is more likely to avoid ethnic inflammation. External allies would thus not be available to exacerbate domestic political issues, or to provide an alternative to the continued unity of the existing state. This would also preclude the possibility of an ethnic group finding a readily available ally outside the state's borders. The absence of an ethnic link outside the state does not remove the possibility of external allies entirely, since there are always states or leaders who will see an advantage in destabilizing a neighboring country. Yet the immediate affinity of a shared ethnic background is a powerful force, the absence of which improves democratization's odds of avoiding ethnic tensions.[10]

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[7] The tragedy of the Czechoslovak case is that no agreement could be reached on an ethnic balance in the formation of the new governmental structure, but this is due primarily to the obstinacy of some key figures and the exploitation of extremist ethnic positions in Slovakia. On the demise of Czechoslovakia see Jiri Pehe. "Czechoslovak Parliament Votes to Dissolve Federation". Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report. Vol. 1, # 48. December 4 1992. pp. 1-5; Paul Wilson. "Czechoslovakia: The Pain of Divorce". The New York Review of Books. Vol. XXXIX. # 21. December 19, 1992. pp. 69-75.

[8] Huntington. The Third Wave. p. 121.

[9] Horowitz. "Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers". pp. 117-119.

[10] This stands in ironic contrast to the positive role that the diffusion of ideas across borders clearly plays in catalyzing and shaping processes of democratization.

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If one or more groups in a given state are members of an ethnic group which governs in a neighboring state, democratization could face additional challenges in lessening ethnic tensions.[11] This could lead to the existence of, or accusations about alternate loyalties for some ethnic groups; indeed, some groups may choose to exploit potential allies outside the state to gain greater rights in the internal bargaining process. As with ethnic conflict management in general, keeping negotiations for democratization bilateral is far preferable, since it keeps any conflicts domestic and reduces the number of actors involved.[12] There are many examples of the problems that can be created when ethnic groups claim external allies, including Northern Ireland, Armenia, and Romania.

Eighth, the loyalty of the army matters. If the army is loyal to the state, rather than to a particular ethnic group, democratization is less likely to lead to ethnic conflict. The Yugoslav Army's dominance by Serbian officers loyal to Serbian leaders greatly complicated efforts either to maintain the Yugoslav state, or to defend moves toward independence in Slovenia and Croatia.[13] This shows the problems that ethnically inclined militaries can pose for democratizing states.

If, alternatively, the military is loyal to one ethnic group, it can cause severe problems for the process of democratization and the search for solutions to ethnic conflicts. If the military is part of the majority group, the consequences will not be too severe, unless ethnic tensions already exist. If both military and the previous regime are members of a minority ethnic group and feel threatened by possible retribution against their group during democratization, the military would be in a position to try to quell the process, or to defend its views by force. The efforts of the Red Army units stationed in Moldova to defend ethnic Russians living there during 1992 illustrates the problems which can arise in such a situation.

Ninth, the existence or absence of historical grievances is critical. Past ethnic domination or the presence of strong ethnic stereotypes may not exacerbate ethnic conflicts, but they will certainly make bargaining among different groups more difficult. Identification of the previous regime with a specific ethnic group, in particular one that was a minority in the state, could create lingering grievances which may hamper efforts to avoid ethnic conflict. If the previous regime manipulated the ethnic mix in parts of the country, the likelihood that ethnic tensions would reemerge would be high. Again, this could cause resentment against the old regime's ethnic group, as well as demands for repatriation or resettlement. Given the new round of upheaval such adjustments would invariably create, this could greatly complicate the process of reaching an equitable distribution of power among national and regional groups.

How certain factors are addressed may enhance the odds that democratization can mitigate ethnic tensions; they may also increase the likelihood that ethnic conflicts will emerge either as a result of, or in spite of, democratization. This does not mean that efforts to mitigate ethnic tensions should be abandoned, just the reverse. Democratization by definition provides an opportunity to expand political participation in the state, and the transition period provides a window of opportunity that should be utilized, even if obvious obstacles to success

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[11] Simply sharing ethnicity with another group creates problems of a different sort. The Kurds are scattered across several states. but because they are not in power in any state and thus have little leverage, the minorities in different states are not useful allies to each other.

[12] I. William Zartman. "Negotiations and Prenegotiations: The Beginning. The Middle. and the Ends". pp. 520-24.

[13] On Yugoslavia's demise see John Zametica. The Yugoslav Conflict. (London: Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992) Adelphi Paper 270.

exist. The key remains in the negotiation of a far-sighted and equitable balance among the ethnic groups in the state.

Indeterminate Issues

In addition to the issues listed above, it is important to note certain factors which complicate attempts to resolve ethnic disputes, and are therefore likely to require particular attention during democratization. First, earlier attempts to manage ethnic conflicts do not provide a clear assessment of the effect that intra-ethnic party competition will have on inter-ethnic disputes. In some cases, intra-ethnic competition appears to lessen the degree of conflict between ethnic parties, by denying any party a clear victory if it relies only on members of its own group. The need to court voters from other ethnic groups then favors political candidates who endorse policies acceptable to many groups, rather than just one, and these will in general be more moderate ethnic policies. In other cases, however, intra-ethnic competition turns into a battle to see which party can win the support of a single ethnic constituency. In states in which ethnic grievances are close to the surface, this can lead to an exacerbation of tensions as parties compete to defend ethnic interests more fiercely than their fellow ethnic opponents, with negative consequences for inter-ethnic relations. Similarly, it is not clear whether ethnic homogeneity or heterogeneity within the state creates a greater likelihood of ethnic conflict. In either case, if the ethnic balance has been manipulated by previous regimes, there is a greater chance of grievances among groups.

What both of these issues highlight is the importance of finding a solution which fits the unique situation in a particular state; there are no ready formulas. And given that many of the groups and parties in newly-democratizing states have little experience of political participation, it is particularly crucial to use great care in constructing either electoral or territorial solutions to potential ethnic conflicts.

Democratization in Practice: the Baltics and the Caucasus

How do these factors relate to the situation in the former Soviet Union, and in particular to the Baltic and Caucasus regions?[14] Clearly, conditions prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union would affect the nature of ethnic relations in these regions once they gained independence. The four factors that matter, according to this analysis, are the ethnic nature of the previous government, the geographic mix of ethnic groups in the state, the composition of the military, and the existing level of ethnic tension.

Pre-Existing Conditions

To determine conditions prior to the transition, one must first decide when the transition began. A brief look at conditions in the USSR prior to Gorbachev's ascendance to power may provide a useful background, given the fluidity of the situation at the end of his tenure. In 1985, the USSR was ruled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The majority of the leadership of the USSR was ethnic Russian, though ethnic elites from the Union republics were integrated into the ruling party of the state. One important consequence of this co-optation of elites is that the Union Republics lost what capable leaders they had, as competent and ambitious local leaders gravitated to Moscow to further their careers, and were Russified, or at least "Sovietized" in the process.[15]

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[14] It should be noted that I refer more to the non-Russian Caucasian republics than to the north Caucasus region within Russia. though I will refer to it on occasion.

[15] Fiona Hill. "Russia's Tinderbox: Conflict in the North Caucasus and its Implications for the Future of the Russian Federation". Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. September 1995. Section II, pp. 20-28.

The Soviet state had a diverse ethnic mix, including dozens of different ethnic groups. In terms of culture, however, it was heavily Russified, as the Russians in essence abdicated a separate Russian culture in return for incorporation of "Russian-ness" as "Soviet". In both Union Republics and the autonomous republics within different Union republics, the "titular" nationality was given precedence. However, the Soviet state manipulated migration to various regions in order to dilute the political strength of the ethnic majorities; moreover, Stalin manipulated the borders of both Union and autonomous republics in order to ensure that local leaders would be stymied in any attempts to build local ethnic bases of support because of the presence of other national groups in their "titular" republics. Thus, local leaders would remain dependent on Moscow for their political power.[16]

The Soviet Army was also heavily dominated by ethnic Russians and other Slavs. 61% of the Officer Corps of the Red Army was ethnic Russian; another 31% was Ukrainian or Belorussian. Moreover, the Army tended to distinguish between ethnic groups in the tasks to which it assigned conscripts. Slavs were appointed to the Navy, the KGB, and front-line divisions, while Central Asian and Caucasian recruits tended to be delegated to construction brigades.[17] This reflected both greater faith in the reliability of Slavic troops, and also the language barrier, since Central Asian recruits could not always speak Russian.[18] As a result of this breakdown, though mixed in composition, the army tended to be identified with the Soviet or the Russian State.

Ethnic tension in the USSR appeared to be low in 1985, when Gorbachev came to power. Indeed, it was widely assumed that ethnic tensions were not a problem in the USSR, and would not become an issue in the near future. In retrospect, this appears to have been the result primarily of the repressive power of the state, as well as Soviet propaganda.[19]

By the time the Soviet Union disintegrated at the end of 1991, the factors influencing ethnic attitudes appeared to have changed dramatically. In the Baltic region, for example, the Soviet government was by 1990 viewed as an occupying government, of either Russian or communist derivation. The ethnic mix in the three Baltic states varied, in ways with important consequences for their future policies; in Lithuania, the population is 80% ethnic Lithuanian, with 8.9% ethnic Russians. Latvia and Estonia have larger Russian minorities. Ethnic Latvians make up 52.5% of Latvia's population, with 34% Russians, while ethnic Estonians comprise 61.5% of the population in Estonia, with 30.5% Russians. In all three states, the remainder of the population is a mix of Belarussians, Ukrainians, and smaller groups from

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[16] Anatol Lieven. The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence (New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1993). p. 184; de Nevers, Russia's Strategic Renovation: Russian Security Strategies and Foreign Policy in the Post-Imperial Era Adelphi Paper # 289 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies. 1994). pp. 14-15.

[17] On the ethnic make-up of the Red Army. see Brian Taylor, "Red Army Blues: The Future of Military Power in the Former Soviet Union." Breakthroughs, Vol. 2, No. 1 Spring 1992, pp. 1-8; Murray Feshbach. "Demographic trends in the Soviet Union: Serious Implications for the Soviet Military." NATO Review. No. 5. October 1989.

[18] On the use of minorities in the military. see Ellen Jones, Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), ch. 7.

[19] Ronald G. Suny points out that this was also a function of the attitudes of Sovietologists studying the system. See "State, Civil Society and ethnic Cultural Consolidation in the USSR: Roots of the National Question," in Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995). pp. 351-364.

neighboring states.[20] In Latvia, the Russian and Latvian populations are mixed throughout the country, while in Estonia, the Russian population is concentrated in the capital Tallinn and the north-eastern part of the state.[21]

By the end of the 1980's all three Baltic republics had begun to object to the requirement that conscripts from their republics to serve in the Red Army outside their home republic; the draft was suspended completely in these republics (as well as Armenia, Georgia and Moldova) by the summer of 1991.[22] This implies that the Red Army was seen to be an instrument of the Soviet state, dominated by Russians. Ethnic tension in these republics remained low, however; while Russians were resented by the "titular" population, this was not a large source of friction between ethnic groups in these states. The protests that broke out prior to the Soviet Union's collapse were clearly directed against Moscow, not the Russian population closer to home.

The situation in the Caucasus was somewhat different. As in the Baltics, the Soviet government was perceived as foreign, and detached from the problems of this region. The geographic mix in the Caucasus, however, is far more complex than that in the Baltics. There are eight main ethnic groups in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, including Georgians, Armenians, Azeris, Russians, Lezgins, Ossets, Greeks, and Abkhazians. Within the Russian Federation in the north Caucasus, the number of small ethnic groups is about 40.[23] The Russian minority in the Caucasus is small, but many of the other ethnic groups are scattered on both sides of what have now become international borders.

While there was a high concentration of Soviet military units in this region in proportion to its geographical size, only Armenia had a substantial number of officers in the Red Army. By 1991 both Armenia and Georgia had suspended the draft, an indication that the army was not considered a hospitable place for conscripts from the region. This suggested that it was not perceived to be acting with the interests of these republics in mind. Finally, the level of ethnic tension in the Caucasus varied from simmering to high; the most serious ethnic violence in the Soviet Union had broken out in the Caucasus, with fighting between Armenians and Azeris over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and tensions between Georgians and the two main ethnic minorities in the state, Ossetians and Abkhazians.

<u>Critical Factors: Mitigating or Exacerbating Tensions?</u>

The following section measures the factors with the potential to ease or irritate ethnic tensions. I look first at the Baltic region, and then the Caucasus.
THE BALTIC REPUBLICS

First, the level of ethnic tension in the Baltic republics was comparatively low at the time of their independence, or "restoration". There was resentment of the Russian minority among the "titular" population, but this had not provoked ethnic violence or even substantial friction.

The second critical factor, the speed with which ethnic issues were addressed during the transition, was mixed. In all three republics the question of citizenship became a central focus of the debate on ethnic rights; who would be granted automatic citizenship in the new

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[20] de Nevers. <u>Russia's Strategic Renovation</u>. p. 29.

[21] Lieven. <u>The Baltic Revolution</u>. p. 184.

[22] Taylor. "Red Army Blues." p. 2.

[23] Fiona Hill. "Russia's Tinderbox," esp. Appendix 3, which includes maps of the population mix in the north Caucasian region of Russia.

states, and what requirements would be necessary for those wanting to apply for citizenship where this was not automatic.[24] In Lithuania, this issue was addressed even before the state declared its independence from the Soviet Union, as the state adopted the "zero-option", granting citizenship to anyone who was a permanent resident when the citizenship law took effect.[25] The question of who would be eligible for citizenship took far longer to resolve in both Latvia and Estonia, as both adopted laws which gave priority to those residing in the republic prior to its annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940 -- and their descendants, a clear indication of the ethnic intent of this stipulation. Both also adopted residency and language requirements for individuals applying for citizenship, and Latvia attempted to restrict citizenship further by setting a quota on naturalization as well.[26]

The differences in the way these three republics addressed the ethnic question is explained in good part by the relative size of the ethnic groups in the states, the third important factor. The variation in the size of the titular ethnic population and the Russian minority was central both to Lithuania's willingness to address the ethnic question promptly, as well as to Estonia's and Latvia's reluctance to resolve this issue satisfactorily. As mentioned earlier, Lithuania had no reason to worry that its native language and culture would be diluted by accepting the ethnic Russian population as equal citizens, since ethnic Lithuanians remained a dominant majority in the state. Both Latvia and Estonia, in contrast, feared that their culture and language would be threatened if their states were unduly "Russianized". Interestingly, this appears to be the reverse of what would be expected in terms of how this factor should affect the mitigation of ethnic conflicts; relatively equal size of ethnic groups should make it easier for them to establish a political system in which no group is dominant.

The fact that previous (Soviet) regime was linked with the Russian minority, and the presence of an ethnic ally of the minority population, the fourth and seventh critical factors influencing ethnic tensions, also complicated the citizenship issue. All three republics, but especially Estonia and Latvia, harbor historic grievances against Russians, in line with factor nine. Rather than claiming independence as new states, these republics consider their inter-war independence to be "restored" after the Soviet Union's occupation. Ethnic Russians therefore are seen as reminders of the "occupying" power. Moreover, their presence is resented because it is perceived to result from Soviet efforts to dilute the indigenous culture, which indeed the Soviet state attempted to do. Hence the concern that granting citizenship to ethnic Russians will further the process of "russification".[27]

Finally, while opposition to the previous Soviet regime was dominated by the titular nationalities in these republics, there was not a clear break along ethnic lines either for or against independence. Pro-independence Russian intellectuals worked with the "popular front" movements which sprang up in each republic, and there was some support for Baltic independence among the local Russian populations. While hardline elements in each state tried to manipulate the ethnic Russian population to support continued Soviet rule, with some

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[24] Citizenship was not the only sensitive issue; language laws were also problematic.

[25] "The Citizenship and Alien Law Controversies in Estonia and Latvia." Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. April 1994, pp. 7-11.

[26] "The Citizenship and Alien Law Controversies in Latvia and Estonia;" Jeff Chin and Lise A. Truex. "The Question of Citizenship in the Baltics," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 7, no. 1, January 1996.

[27] The problem, of course, is that the majority of ethnic Russians now living in the Baltic republics have lived there for decades, and many were born there. They do not feel that they deserve the blame for the policies adopted by the Soviet state; indeed most Russians consider that Russians suffered far more under communism than did other ethnic groups. See Lieven, The Baltic Revolution, p. 175-76.

success, it should be noted that support for the Soviet Union was found among both the ethnic Russian and the indigenous population, rather than breaking along ethnic lines.[28]

The nature of the leadership of the opposition movements which emerged to contest Soviet control also reflects the ethnic differences in these states. In both Latvia and Estonia, a significant part of the political spectrum based its desire to "restore" the pre-1940 republics on the desire to exclude the Russian-speaking population. In Lithuania, in contrast, nationalist attitudes focused more on Lithuania's historical relationship with Poland, and in debating whether Lithuania should to try to orient itself more toward the West or not.[29]

How do these factors add up in the Baltic republics? In Lithuania, the balance appears to fall toward moderate policies and low levels of tension. Whether by deliberate design or not, ethnic tensions in this republic appear to have been restrained by the initial circumstances of the state, and the policies it adopted early on.

Ethnic tensions are higher in both Estonia and Latvia. Both faced more difficult initial ethnic circumstances, and the policies adopted by the new governments have done little to mitigate ethnic tensions. The primary issue remains the citizenship law; neither Estonia nor Latvia adopted a zero-option on citizenship. Moreover, both tried, to differing degrees, to make it difficult for non-ethnics to gain citizenship. Estonian leaders in particular justify their citizenship laws by arguing that as restored states, citizenship is based on the pre-1940 constitutions, and also that Russian migration was illegal under international law.[30] Not surprisingly, ethnic relations in Latvia and Estonia have suffered from these policies. Ethnic Russians in each state claim that they are being discriminated against, though there is little factual evidence to support this. Relations with the Russian Federation have been affected by these policies as well. Russia accused Latvia and especially Estonia of human rights violations and ethnic cleansing, and threatened that it retains a right to intervene to protect the "Russian-speaking" population.[31] Ethnic frictions complicated negotiations over Russia's withdrawal of former Soviet troops from the Baltic republics, a process which was eventually completed in August 1994. Clearly, both intra-state and inter-state ethnic tensions have been exacerbated.

Both Estonia and Latvia argue that their new laws fall within the broad "mainstream" of European practice on citizenship laws.[32] But one cannot ignore the fact that these laws are at heart exclusionary, and are based on ethnicity. This cannot promote better ethnic relations. Nor can Estonians and Latvians presume that the ethnic Russian population will give up on citizenship and "return" to Russia; much of this population was born in the Baltic republics, and the grim economic condition of the Russian Federation is hardly likely to make them decide their lives will be improved there. In the final analysis, if the governments of these republics want to mitigate ethnic tensions over the long run, they should grant equal access to citizenship for all residents of the country. The ethnic Estonian and Latvian populations would

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[28] The presence of retired Soviet military officers in the Baltic republics obviously presents a problem.

[29] Lieven. pp. 215-216.

[30] Estonians point to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits an occupying power from moving population masses into territories it has seized. See "The Citizenship and Alien Laws Controversies in Estonia and Latvia." p. 12.

[31] "Program for the Defense of the Interests and Support of Ethnic Russians Living Outside the Boundaries of the Russian Federation (on the Territory of the Former USSR)", unpublished document. January 1994. Alexander Shokhin. "It is Politically Naive Not to Use our Status of the Donor." Moscow News. 19 November 1993.

[32] Chin and Truex. "The Question of Citizenship in the Baltics." p. 146.

be more secure if their ethnic Russian neighbors feel that they are integrated into the state, and have a greater incentive to support it, both economically and politically.

THE CAUCASUS

The question of whether a democratization process has begun is particularly pertinent in the Caucasus. Notably, part of the problem confronting efforts to democratize in this region is the number of ethnic conflicts that have resulted in violence in recent years. Nonetheless, an examination of the status of the factors which might mitigate ethnic tensions may help clarify how ethnic issues affect politics in the region, and whether government efforts are making the situation better or worse.

First, there has been a wide range in the level of ethnic tension in the Caucasus since the Soviet Union collapsed. Ethnic conflict erupted into violence in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1991, and fighting between Armenians and Azeris continued there until 1993. Tensions remain high, as no peace settlement has been reached. Ethnic tensions in Georgia were simmering when the Soviet Union collapsed, and since then the central Georgian government has fought two wars against secessionist movements, in the Ossetian and Abkhazian regions of the state. In the north Caucasus, within Russia itself, ethnic tensions were comparatively low when the USSR collapsed, but violence broke out between the Ossets and Ingush in 1992, and war between the central Russian government and the breakaway Chechen republic erupted in December 1994, and continued into the summer of 1996. Thus, when the opportunity to introduce democracy presented itself, the level of ethnic tension in the region did not appear to be favorable.

The ethnic groups in the Caucasus are both mixed in size, and in their geographic location. In the areas where conflict has erupted, one group tends to dominate the ethnic mix, and often one group has an external ally, ethnic or otherwise. In Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, ethnic Armenians outnumbered Azeris before conflict broke out, and had the support of the Armenian government across the Union border. In Abkhazia, in contrast, the Georgian population was larger than the Abkhaz population, but the Abkhazians appear to have been backed by the Russian army, or at least some of its local commanders.[33]

The ethnic mix of both the previous regime, and early opposition movements, was fairly homogenous. The Soviet Government was predominantly Russian, with a few notable exceptions such as Eduard Shevardnadze, a Georgian. Regional communist governments were made up of the titular nationality of the particular state. As a result, following the USSR's collapse, both Georgia and Azerbaijan viewed Russia as a potential adversary, since it was the successor state to the USSR. Armenia was the only Caucasian state which was a core member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that Russia advocated as a follow-on to the USSR, and which included an agreement on joint defense.[34] Armenia's support for the CIS and alliance with Russia is explained, of course, by its conflict with Azerbaijan and the need for continued Russian backing in this war.[35]

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[33] In many of the conflicts in the former Soviet Union, it has been difficult to determine whether Russian Army units are acting with the central government's approval, or on their own. Nonetheless, few officers have been removed or demoted for actions which Moscow claims to have no knowledge of. For one analysis of the military situation in the Caucasus, see Roy Allison. Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States, Adelphi Paper #280, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993), pp. 63-71.

[34] Allison. Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States, pp. 9-10.

[35] Notably, Russia has supported Armenia, but not enough for it to win the fight over Nagorno-Karabakh outright: this is an example of what might be called "peace-preventing" by Russia, to ensure its own leverage. See de Nevers. Russia's Strategic Renovation, p. 55.

Local opposition to Soviet rule in the Caucasus republics was also homogenous rather than ethnically mixed; it was also dominated by nationalist extremists, such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Georgia. In the cases of Armenia and Azerbaijan this was the consequence of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, while in Georgia, opposition to both Ossetians and especially Abkhazians was an early focus of Georgian nationalism; indeed, the initial protest in Tbilisi which provoked a Soviet military response was a demonstration against Abkhaz separatism.[36] Gamsakhurdia in particular spurred suspicion of ethnic minorities, and branded ethnic moderates (as well as all other opponents of his rule) as "traitors" to Georgia.[37]

In contrast to the Baltic states, ethnic Russians are not the main minority group in the Caucasus, and therefore Russia does not play a significant role as an external *ethnic* ally, another important factor determining the level of ethnic tension.[38] Russia has, nonetheless, been willing to meddle in the ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus. As noted earlier, it is often difficult to determine whether Russian involvement has been authorized from the top or not, but it seems clear that whether on the ground or in Moscow, some Russians have clearly been willing to exploit problems emerging in the newly independent republics for their or Russia's own ends. This can be seen on an inter-state level in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, in which Russia has backed each side at different points in order to ensure the continued presence of Russian army troops and bases in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. On the intra-state level, Russia backed the Abkhaz and Ossetian separatists until Eduard Shevardnadze, by then Georgia's leader, capitulated and brought Georgia into the CIS, and assented to Russia's maintenance of its military presence in Georgia. The Russian army's role has been blurred along the way, because while the military has no obvious ethnic affiliations in the region, local commanders have been complicit in some of the actions which have exacerbated ethnic tensions in the Caucasus.[39]

More important in terms of external ethnic allies, however, has been the fact that populations in the Caucasus are jumbled across what have become international frontiers, meaning that many ethnic groups have external ethnic allies, however small, that are frequently prepared to come to their aid. This has also ensured that grievances over borders are likely to continue well into the future. This has been one source of the kind of historical grievance which can easily exacerbate ethnic tension. Added to this, several entire ethnic groups were deported from the Caucasus in the 1930's and 1940's during Stalin's rule. Some of these groups remain displaced from the region, while the return of other ethnic groups has been a source of tension, since different groups have occupied their land in the interim.[40]

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[36] See "Sto sorok tomov protiv versiy," Sovetskaya Rossiya, March 15, 1991, pp. 3-4.

[37] On the situation in Georgia, see Ghia Nodia, "Georgia's Identity Crisis," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 1995, pp. 104-116.

[38] The exception of course is in some of the north Caucasus republics within the Russian Federation itself. However Russia cannot claim to have acted to "defend" the ethnic Russian minority there, given its willingness to bomb Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, despite the fact that the only people who remained trapped there for much of the conflict were ethnic Russians with nowhere to flee. On the conflict in Chechnya see Fiona Hill. "Russia's Tinderbox," section V. On the military performance in Chechnya, see Anatol Lieven. "Russia's Military Nadir: The Meaning of the Chechen Debacle," The National Interest. No. 44. Summer 1996.

[39] Most obvious have been the ease with which military equipment has been stolen from Russian military bases in the region by all sides in local conflicts.

[40] For one overview of migration in the former Soviet Union, see the UNHCR publication, "CIS Conference on Refugees and Migrants." UNHCR Public Information Section, 1996.

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Finally, it seems clear that if an early opportunity to address ethnic issues existed, it was not utilized. Nowhere in the Caucasus do efforts appear to have been taken to address ethnic concerns by means other than force either before or after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Thus, the collapse of communism was not seen as an opportunity to mitigate the danger of ethnic conflict in the Caucasus -- just the reverse. This is not entirely surprising. The collapse of the Soviet Union was so sudden that all parties were unprepared. The suddenness of this event also meant that there was little opportunity to attempt to negotiate agreements in a stable political environment, which might have provided a greater opportunity to address ethnic issues. Moreover, there were not always obvious opposition movements in place, or alternative leaders to the extreme nationalist figures, which limited the likelihood that moderate policies toward ethnic minorities would be adopted. Finally, in some cases ethnic conflicts had erupted into violence well before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Conclusions

How did the situation differ in the Baltics and the Caucasus, and with what consequences for democratization and conflict prevention? Ethnic tensions were clearly lower in the Baltics when they regained their independence. One consequence has been that to the degree that ethnic issues have been raised, these have been raised through legal means (i.e., law-making), rather than through actual conflict or violence. In the Caucasus, in contrast, ethnic tensions had led to conflict prior to the time when these states gained their independence.

Notably, in both the Baltics and the Caucasus, attempts to address ethnic questions in legal fora rather than with force have tended to exacerbate tensions, rather than resolving them. This is equally true in Latvia, Estonia, and Georgia; Latvia's and Estonia's citizenship laws have provoked fears of statelessness among the ethnic Russian minorities, while Georgia's attempt to abolish the autonomy of the Ossetian and Abkhazian regions within its borders provoked secessionist conflicts. Both policies reflect the larger problem that nationalist leaders are willing to rely on hostility to minorities to retain their base of popular support. There is the problem, of course, that in all three states moderate policies would probably have ensured the defeat of those advocating them; nonetheless, this factor should be recognized as a serious obstacle to the development of more ethnicly impartial political systems.

Both the Baltics and the Caucasus cases point to the exacerbating role played by external actors with an interest in internal conflicts, ethnic or otherwise. External *ethnic* allies have complicated the ability of Latvia and Estonia to resolve their minority dispute, both because this led their governments to resent the minority as former occupier and to distrust it as a potential fifth column for Russian interference down the road. Russia's behavior toward these states has done little to assuage either of these attitudes. External ethnic allies also fueled the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as Georgia's conflict with its Ossetian minority. The Caucasus has the additional handicap of Russia not as an active player on ethnic grounds, but willing to use its military power and resources for its own purposes, primarily to ensure its continued presence in this region.

The fact that violence has been prevalent in the Caucasus, but not in the Baltics, also suggests that the factors presented here as potential indicators of the degree of ethnic tension must be considered together. Each by itself can explain only a part of the puzzle, and different outcomes will result from different mixes. Yet looking at the interaction of these variables may help us determine the source of the problem in a particular situation, and thus aid the search for solutions to different conflicts.

AN INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEM?

Much of the scholarship on ethnic conflict emphasizes the distinction between deeply divided societies and less troubled societies, in which cleavages may be more fluid. The conflicts in divided communities are likely to be the most difficult to resolve and democracy, if it exists in these societies, is most likely to be threatened.[41] One recent correlate of this is the argument that in situations in which ethnic conflict has led to bloody civil war, an end to the violence is impossible without separating the ethnic groups involved. If communities have reached the point where they no longer feel safe living with the other ethnic group present in their community, then only by dividing the two communities and thereby resolving their security dilemmas is the conflict likely to end for any length of time.[42]

While this may be accurate in a theoretical sense, it is a disturbing conclusion for several reasons. First, assuming that separation is the only answer once communities have erupted into violence or ethnic cleansing appears to reward those inciting hate. It seems increasingly clear that what we currently regard as "ethnic" thinking in political life is a product of modern conflicts over power and resources rather than the result of "ancient" ethnic hatreds.[43] Moreover, violent ethnic conflict tends to be incited from the top, as politicians mobilize communities to ethnic conflict for their own political advantage.[44]

Similarly, proposing separation does not address the fact that mixed populations clearly coexisted prior to the conflict. It may be difficult both to pronounce that they can no longer coexist, or to determine when the situation has become so untenable that separation is the only solution. Moreover, moving populations off land that they view as their homeland is not necessarily a long-term solution to the problem of ethnic conflict, since recent conflicts themselves have shown that revanchism remains a powerful force.[45]

Finally, separating populations in situations of civil war would require massive external involvement, and arbitrary decisions by outsiders about where new borders dividing communities should be drawn. The international community is not likely to take on this responsibility, given the difficulty of reaching agreement even in Bosnia-Hercegovina. The difficulty of resolving violent conflicts once they have begun reaffirms, therefore, the importance of preventing conflicts from getting out of hand before such drastic solutions become necessary.

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[41] See Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds. Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. x-xvii; Donald Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," and V.P. Gagnon, "Serbia's Road to War," both in Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy.

[42] Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," International Security, Vol. 20, No. 4, Spring 1996, pp. 136-175.

[43] John R. Bowen, "The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1996; Hill, "Russia's Tinderbox."

[44] Diamond, and Plattner, Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy, p. xxi.

[45] Kaufmann acknowledges these problems, but they are substantial.

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"Régional Cooperation as a Tool for Conflict Prevention: Feasibility and Usefulness"

by
Gianni Bonvicini
Istituto Affari Internazionali

Regional Cooperation as a tool for conflict prevention.
Feasibility and Usefulness.

(Unrevised English FIRST DRAFT. Do Not Quote)
by Gianni Bonvicini

The main aim of this chapter is to answer the question whether and to <u>what extent regional cooperation in Europe</u> can help to prevent a potential crisis from becoming a violent conflict, particularly in the Eastern part of the Old Continent or at its borders between East and West. To be more precise, what we would like to analyze is the security nature and role of regional cooperation in the post '89 Europe, in those areas in which it didn't exist at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, at least in the shape of a democratic and free cooperative framework among sovereign states or frontier regions (local governments).

A related question concerns the <u>preventive</u> character of regional cooperation and its ability to perform as a conflict-regulating tool in the non-traditional field of the new security challenges, originating mainly from ethnic and intrastate crises and not, as in the past, from interstate confrontation. In fact, one answer might be that regional cooperation has less of a chance of acting as a preventive tool than of being an instrument for post-conflict solutions; this, in turn, could mean that regional cooperation can be considered an effective preventive factor only in the presence of particular political conditions.

Finally analysis will turn to the <u>degree of institutionalisation</u> requested to make regional cooperation an effective factor of conflict prevention, and its <u>interlinkage</u> with other regional institutions (such as EU or NATO) and preventive tools (such as the Stability Pact) in order to achieve the best possible results.

A last remark. By regional cooperation, we mean two different levels of cooperative regimes:

- <u>Regional cooperation</u> as such: this is the classical pattern of cooperative agreements among sovereign states;
- <u>Substate regional cooperation</u>: this is what we could call transborder or intrafrontier cooperation among local governments and ethnic communities.

1. A new dimension to the concept of regional cooperation in post '89 Europe.

Regional cooperation in Europe was a well known and widely studied security instrument in the pre-'89 political situation, but its meaning was different with respect that which it is taking on today. This was mainly due to the fact that it was confined into the two geopolitical areas of Europe, the West and the East, and had as its main aim the reinforcement of the different and competing institutional frameworks in both camps. Only partially did it serve as a channel for political and economic dialogue between the two parts of Europe, as was the case in the limited efforts of cooperation between the EC and Comecon in the mid-eighties, or at the

substate level in the experience of the Alpe Adria initiative, among others (Bonvicini, Inotai, 1992).

That kind of regional cooperation pattern, between the West and the East, can be considered no more than an indirect tool to overcome strict political borders in a divided Europe and to diminish the rigidity and the distance between the two European institutional environments of that time, through political dialogue and trade cooperation.

In the new post '89 geopolitical situation, regional cooperation has been attributed a larger and more important role from the very beginning. In general terms, it had to help overcome the old division of Europe and to prepare the countries of Eastern Europe for the necessary domestic adaptation in the economic and political fields in order both to avoid fragmentation and nationalism and to expedite a peaceful transition towards an overall democratic Europe. Great hopes were addressed to initiatives like the one launched by Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1991 with the Visegrad agreement or, the attempt in the southern part of Eastern Europe to transform Yugoslavia into a democratic federation of independent states, just before the open military conflict blew up. In fact, the immediate post-Cold War emergence of numerous attempts at regional cooperation initiatives in order to optimise geographical proximity and economic common interests and to prepare, in some cases, for entry into Western Institutions were greeted as the principal element for assuring stability in Europe

In very general terms, the prevailing philosophy at that time was the following: from one side, Western European and American political leaders tried to favour the peaceful transformation of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into "democratic" federations largely based on autonomous states, thereby avoiding their dissolution; from the other side, they pointed to the setting up of forms of cooperation among those states of Eastern and Central Europe, which had already reached a full status of political independence from the former Soviet Union.

Western Europe, in particular, attributed high priority to this second policy, in which it felt better equipped to intervene, given its geographical proximity and the clear interest of a unified Germany to assure stability at its borders. The principal aim of the superassociation agreements with Central and Eastern European countries that the European Community started to negotiate at the end of the eighties was to link those countries to the Community and to initiate a "group to group" policy with Central Europe to enhance the perspective of security between the two groups (IAI et Alia, 1991).

At this stage regional cooperation among states enlarged its scope to a variety of functions:
- prevent ethnic turbolences;
- obtain economic advantages and stability;
- solve bilateral disputes through political dialogue;
- enhance security in a given area through exchange of military information. (Greco,1996)

Much less attention was devoted to Yugoslavia, for which the renewal of association agreements and the launching of new relations took too much time to exercise any influence on the imminent military confrontation, and to the Soviet Union which was considered an intractable problem for the Europeans and a kind of privileged field of action for the United States and Nato.

Seen today, after having witnessed the numerous conflicts in Eastern Europe, the West's adoption of a political strategy for the maintenance of an integrated system in Eastern Europe, with the objective of keeping a security structure capable to preventing the already emerging tendencies towards disintegration in the former Soviet bloc seems rather ingenuous. It is true that this philosophy was in line with theGorbachev's proposal, shared by many in the West, to built a Common European House; but at the same time it must be admitted that it was very far from the reality of a strong push towards the relegitimation of national states on a new national base.

Therefore, the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, which were part of the post '89 Western strategy to build a new cooperative system in Europe, was detrimental to attempts to further regional cooperation in a more consistent and rapid way. The climate of uncertainty in the security field, which followed the violent events of the beginning of the '90s convinced the Central and Eastern countries to give up trying to create strong cooperative systems among themselves and to address all efforts towards entry into Nato.

A variety of reasons limited a new wave of regional cooperation in Europe:
- unresolved security issues;
- impermeability of economic borders;
- search for more powerful external linkages. (Meier, 1994)

Notwithstanding the stimuli and conditions that Western Institutions gave in order to enhance closer cooperation among associate countries (through the inclusion of ad hoc clauses in the association agreements or the assistance programmes) the basic tendency from the Eastern side was to deal with the EU or Nato on a purely bilateral basis.

Paradoxically, what the Western side considered a model, such as the European Union, to be offered for duplication in Central and Eastern Europe, took on a completely different function and became an irresistible pole of attraction. In fact for the majority of Central and Eastern states the real priority lies in the enlargement of Nato or the Union.

There are two main consequences of the Eu and Nato attraction:
a) it undermines the perspective of stronger cooperation at the borders of the Union during the period of preparation in view of future enlargements;
b) it imposes a drastic choice on the republics more distant from EU and Nato borders between isolation and reintegration with Russia inside the CIS

2. Regional Cooperation in Eastern Europe.

Within the limits of regional cooperation just indicated, it is of interest to examine some practical cases (Visegrad, Baltics, CEI, etc.). The potentials, limits and failures of these experiences of interstate regional cooperation can help to identify their effective role and function in contributing to the prevention of future violent conflicts in Europe.

2.1 The Visegrad experiment

At its inception in the post '89 European scene, great hopes were addressed to the Visegrad Initiative, which officially started at a summit meeting among Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary on 15 February 1991.

Behind the stage of this Initiative was a real need for the then three countries of Central Europe to protect themselves from the collapse of the security framework, the Warsaw Pact, which did not succeed in transforming itself into a European Security Commission or similar mechanism, as suggested at the beginning of the '90th by some diplomats and politicians of the newly independent Eastern European states. (Vukadinovic, 1995)

The risk of disintegration and the growing sense of insecurity in Central Europe was well reflected in the Visegrad Agreement which, besides the obvious prescription of economic and commercial cooperation, stated that the three countries had to engage in coordinating their attitudes and strengthening relations with European and international institutions, counselling on issue of security, and finally, developing cooperation for the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities. That is, they had to engage in precisely those areas in which the main threats to stability already gave evident signs of becoming real at that time .

But the initial convinced engagement of the three countries lasted for only a very short time and the forces of disintegration and opposition to the priority of regional integration started to emerge rather violently; the most shocking event was the partition of Czechoslovakia into two parts, with the consequential undermining of the political cohesion of the Visegrad Group and the reinforcement of those forces which were sceptical on the viability of a Central European Security System (along the line of Walesa's Central European Nato). In the following months, in fact, there was an individual rush to apply for Nato membership and to adhere on a purely bilateral basis, without prior consultation, to the Pfp initiative. (Peters, 1996)

It is partially surprising that those in favour of stricter regional cooperation were the most conservative parties represented by the former communists; on the contrary innovative forces and leaders gave high priority to quick adhesion to Nato and to the European Union. Among them was the Czech prime minister Vaclav Havel, who feared that any institutionalisation of the Visegrad Initiative could undermine prospects for entry into the EU and Nato.

But at the same time, the slowing down of the process of enlargement from both the Nato and the EU side did "oblige" Visegrad countries to maintain a certain level of cooperation, which was rather evident in the economic field, where the passage in 1993 to a free trade area (CEFTA) increased the prospects of a more consistent intratrade development (from the initial 7% to 30% in the next few years). In the security field, on the contrary, the only result has been a growth of bilateral relations in the military sector through exchange of information and limited training activities. (Korosi, 1996)

Clearly these linkages do not signal the birth of a new security architecture in Central Europe, but they might be considered a preparatory activity in view of adhesion to Nato and the EU.

2.2 The Central European Initiative.

Launched in '89, the Central European Initiative (CEI) was a kind of precursor to the new kind of regional cooperation initiatives. From the very beginning its aim was not particularly clear. The absence of Germany, although considered an element of weakness at the same time, was to make it an alternative to possible German dominance in the "mitteleuropean" area. Officially it was to serve as a kind of test bed for equipping Central European countries to prepare for EU enlargement; for this purpose it tried, but with a very little success, to act in a very concrete and pragmatic way, by proposing projects on new infrastructures, protection of the environment and technological cooperation. (Peters, 1996)

Security and defence were not among the official aims: the only reference in a 1989 Policy Document was on "a contribution towards creating security and stability...particularly through establishing and strengthening mutual beneficial partnership structures based on the shared values of parliamentary democracy and human rights".

In reality, from the beginning of the Yugoslav crises, the CEI engaged in the political activity of releasing common declarations to stop the conflict and of enlarging the Initiative to those republics, such as Croatia and Slovenia, which did reach independence. A policy of diplomatic recognition in support of similar actions lead by the European Union.

This policy has been pursued to the present with the progressive entry of all new Balkan republics into the CEI as soon as they disengaged from the violent conflict. With that aim in mind, in the last Gratz summit of November 8/9 of this year the number of participants reached a peak of 16 from the initial four of 1989. The next place, the 17th, will be granted to Serbia-Montenegro when negotiations come to a positive end.

Judged from this point of view, the CEI appears to be more a post-conflict opportunity than a preventive initiative. Probably the loose character of its cooperative system cannot perform any other function than that of a transitional mechanism for more ambitious projects of integration.

2.3 Council of Baltic Sea States.

The key characteristic of this attempt at regional cooperation is what we could call "disparity": some countries are stable and advanced democracies, others not yet; some have modern economies, others still fight to adopt a market economy basis; some are neutrals, others live in a grey area between the old position of dependency in the Warsaw Pact and today's request to enter into Nato; some enjoy a stable domestic security environment, others have to fight against large-scale crime. (Lucas, 1995)

But above all the principal factor of imbalance is the presence of Russia in the Baltic area. Everybody agrees on the need to keep Russia in, but at the same time the stability of the region is largely in the hands of the domestic policies of that still powerful coastal neighbour. And this is "per se" an element of disequilibrium.

Clearly, due to the presence of Russia, the main problems affecting the region are those related to security aspects. Central from this point of view are the relations both between Russia and the Baltic States and between Russia and Finland. The latter are less complex, but in

perspective the policy of Finland towards Nato or the role that it will play in a reinforced European Union with a strong component in the defence field could turn into a source of trouble with Russia, which for the first time, and through Finland, would have a long frontier in common with the European Union.

More serious is the situation with the Baltic countries where a series of factors from the status of Russian minorities to the protection of the corridors between Kaliningrad and the "motherland" continue to remain possible sources of conflict. (Norkus, 1996)

Till now, both through a prudent bilateral policy of negotiations between the two parts and the positive role played by external European institutions, from OSCE to the EU, the development of a cooperative system, in broad terms, inside the region has had a certain degree of success. Certainly the chances of violent confrontations, if not conflicts, were at the beginning of the negotiation process rather high. Now the aim of the Baltic Cooperation Council is principally that of consolidating such a positive tendency.

In order to achieve this result, the Council can perform in its proper field of competence which is mainly the economic field: modernisation of regional infrastructures and the elimination of the prosperity differential between the West and East.

In doing so it has to be supported by a number of external initiatives.

First, a drastic downgrading of the military arsenal in Kaliningrad. From this point of view, CFE negotiations on conventional disarmament have done little to help, given the concession granted Russia to maintain a high level of military presence around the Baltics. (Norkus, 1996)

Second, the continuation of the dialogue on minorities and border issues within the context of the Stability Pact that in 1994 established a Round Table for the Baltic region. The same applies to the OSCE, as it acted positively in the first phase of bilateral negotiations.

Finally, strong and convinced support from the EU side for any opportunity to reinforce multilateral cooperation projects inside the Baltic Sea region: to this end, recourse to the use of instruments like Tacis and Phare assistance programmes should be stressed..

All these external policies and actions can reinforce the basic security requirement of this area, which has very much to do with the full involvement of Russia in a stable cooperative system.

2.4 Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Originating from a summit meeting held in Istanbul the 25th of June 1992, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) has mainly economic objectives. Composed of 11 states of the so-called Euroasiatic Belt it, too, has from the start been affected by a great number of economic and political disparities.

Even in economic terms, a free trade area is hardly conceivable due to the absence of free market conditions in many countries and to diffused policies of subsidised prices.

In addition it is an area of great political instability: Armenia vs Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabahk issue; Russia vs Moldavia on the Crimea question; the Russian minority in Moldova; the Abhazia issue in Georgia; the Kurdish minority in Turkey; etc. (Ozer, 1996)

The lack of financial resources and the legislative disharmonisations among the countries have undermined the initial hopes of rapid development of economic cooperation in the region. The participation of European institutions, namely the EU, in the process of cooperation is very limited. And with the exception of the negotiations in Nagorno-Karabahk, the OSCE has played practically no role in the region. Abandoned to the initiative of Turkey, which largely responds to domestic interests, and to the presence of Russia as a big but passive member, the Black Sea Council has not yet shown any clear potential to play a role of conflict mediator inside the region. Nevertheless it constitutes a framework of great geopolitical relevance to be supplemented with more consistent external intervention from European institutions and other regional cooperative systems, such as the CEI.

3. Substate Regional Cooperation.

Violent conflicts in Europe have originated frequently at the borders of the states where territorial disputes or the existence of large minorities across the frontiers have given fuel to requests of radical changes in the existing situation.

After the second world war this kind of dispute has been limited to very few cases in Western Europe, from the Basque to the South Tyrolean demands for independence. But apart from those few episodes, substate regional cooperation has essentially had the meaning of growing pacification along once-disputed borders. This has been the case for the many experiments of Euroregio at Germany's frontiers with France or with Belgium and The Netherlands: Euroregio Moose Rhein, Rijn Maas Noord, Ems Dollart, just to mention the most popular, have answered that political need of overcoming the violent past. (Vedovato, 1995)

Others had a broader meaning like the Argealp, which extended from Lombardy to Bavaria, and responded principally to an economic logic of crossing the still existing borders through subnational cooperation.

Finally, initiatives like the AlpAdria, which in the pre '89 situation involved provinces of Hungary and Yugoslavia, had as its main aim keeping open a channel of dialogue around the Iron Curtain.

In the new post '89 political environment the model of Euroregio as a pacifying factor is also advancing in some countries of Central Europe. Poland has launched an ambitious program of initiatives to create several (six to date) substate cooperative regions (like Euroregio Pomerania) around its borders to accommodate requests deriving from the existence of numerous minorities and to avoid the reopening of territorial disputes with neighbouring countries. The same took place between the Czech Republic and Germany with the Euroregio Egrensis or the Euroregio Carpatia at the Eastern borders of Czekia. (Richter Malbotta, 1995)

This impressive effort has a clear preventive meaning and in combination with the philosophy of the Stability Pact tries to avoid or postpone any requests of excessive autonomy or the

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correction of borders, in view of the long-term prospect of a full integration into a stronger regional context, such as the EU.

If this can be considered a traditional path for substate regional cooperation, the rise of ethnic and national conflicts in Eastern Europe has added a different role to it: that of avoiding the institutionalisation of purely monoethnic states.

In fact, the emergence of a monoethnic concept of state in the post '89 geopolitical situation, so evident in the Balkan turmoil, has to be considered a permanent threat to stability and security in Europe.

Some scholars have tried to avoid this risk through the so-called states-plus-nations approach (Gottlieb, 1994). This theory calls for the deconstruction of rigid concepts of territorial borders, sovereignty and independence, and proposes, among other things:
- special functional zone across state boundaries;
- creation of national home regimes in historical lands;
- granting of national status to national communities;

In this case substate regional cooperation should serve as a means to eliminate any sort of territorial disputes based on the presence of a strong ethnic group. This is also true in the case, which is rather frequent today, of large minorities scattered inside the territories of a state and rather far from its border. This is the condition of numerous Russian groups that have stayed in the newly independent republics of former Soviet Union after its collapse. In this condition, territorial solutions are even less practicable than in those cases in which minorities are located at the state borders.

But in order to achieve a positive result through application of the state-plus-nation theory, the ethnical character of a region has to maintain a low profile or be balanced through cooperation with other nationalities or ethnic groups. In fact a new phenomena which contradicts the states-plus-nations theory is the rise of ethnocentric regionalism (Guy Heraud, 1996) as a destabilising factor in substate regional cooperation initiatives. To avoid this threat, substate regional cooperation can't be fully institutionalised and obtain the legal right of self determination. This could in fact favour the creation of mini-states on ethnic bases, which would contradict the preventive character of substate regional cooperation.

4. Some conclusive remarks.

Our analysis rather clearly reveals that regional cooperation, at the state and substate levels, cannot provide a definitive solution to the basic problems of security in Eastern Europe, but it can help to move in the right direction.

First, under a certain point of view regional cooperation can be considered a transitory means for solving those problems which existing institutions, such as the OSCE, EU and Nato, cannot solve directly. For example, in the case of the Visegrad Initiative, regional cooperation has also had some limited effect on the security policy field (through regular military consultations), but the creation of an independent security architecture can't be placed on the

agenda. Therefore this limited exercise in the security field has to be placed in the long-term perspective of stronger integration with existing European institutions.

This leads to the second remark which has to do with the role of existing European institutions towards the initiatives of regional cooperation. The linkage between the two has to be continuous and effective for several reasons; to be ready to intervene as mediator in case of crisis (like the positive role that the OSCE played between the Baltics and Russia); to provide the necessary means, economic and legal, to help overcome inequalities and dishomogeneities; to condition, through ad hoc policies and programs, the attitude towards cooperation in order to create a way of thinking addressed to the solution of dormant conflicts. This is the reason why, despite several initial failures, lasting pressure from the Eu and Nato is needed to consolidate present regional cooperation initiatives. To point only to the future enlargement of either Nato or the EU has to be considered a strategic error.

Thirdly, other instruments of conflict prevention, such as the Stability Pact, assistance programmes, the PfP, etc., should also be strictly linked to the development of cooperative initiatives. This is particularly true for those groups of countries which are either part of the CIS , geographically distant from the borders of the EU and Nato, or for which a perspective of enlargement is not evident.

Finally, in institutional terms, regional cooperation has to have some substance under the form of mechanisms for the management of common affairs and for mediation in case of contrasts. But experience has shown that it is not necessary to reach too high a level of institutionalisation. On the contrary, strong regional cooperative systems can become additional obstacles to the prevention of future violent conflicts in Europe. In absence of an overall security structure in Europe, the formation of new powerful cooperative systems can create new unbalances. This also applies to the substate regional level where the risk of creating transborder Euroregions on a purely monoethnic base can open the way to a great number of small ethnic states, with the risk of reopening - instead of overcoming - territorial disputes.

In conclusion, regional cooperation in Europe can positively contribute both to the prevention of conflicts and to post-conflict facilitation of peace, but only in strict interlinkage with existing European institutions and other preventive means and with a rather low degree of political institutionalisation.

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"The Role of Military Tools in Conflict Prevention"

by
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ROLE OF MILITARY TOOLS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

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Diplomacy and economic and financial incentives or sanctions may not suffice to prevent a violent conflict. International actors have to consider using military tools to forestall an eruption of violence, to stop it after it has broken out, or to ensure that the conflict, when stopped, does not degenerate back to the violent stage. This paper will look into military tools of preventing a violent conflict from occurring, stopping it after it has occurred, and ensuring that there is no relapse to violence. Whenever possible, the paper will draw from the experience of the Baltic States and Georgia since their independence in 1991.

To prevent a conflict, military force can be used in several ways. One is deterrence. Traditionally, deploying a substantial force and demonstrating resolve to use it cooled off potential aggressors and kept the peace intact. At times, however, deterrence failed, and parallel concentration of forces contributed to conflict escalation all the way to war. This is all part of standard military strategy, and for the purposes of this paper we will not discuss it any further. The new security system in Europe is going to rest on mutual reassurance, rather than deterrence.

Other military tools include confidence building measures, preventive deployment, arms control, military-to-military contacts, joint peacekeeping, etc.

The applicability of these tools may vary widely, depending on the type and nature of the conflict one has set oneself to prevent. From the mid-1970s, when, with the Helsinki process, conflict prevention in Europe was for the first time approached in multilateral negotiations, and until the end of the Cold War at the turn of the 1990s, the conflict to be prevented was an outbreak of a major war on the continent. It was from the early 1990s on that emphasis was dramatically shifted to meeting new challenges, such as inter-ethnic conflicts, regional separatism, and disputes over minority rights. As things stand today, the main body of conflict prevention measures still deal with the traditional inter-state conflicts, but most of the recent additions to that concern intra-state situations.

At present, for the first time in two centuries, the likelihood of a general European war is negligible. The security community, established following the end of the Second World War, is expanding. For a growing number of states, war has ceased to be an instrument of policy in their reciprocal relations. The relations between the West and Russia, while burdened by many difficult problems, do not give ground to believe that a resumption of military confrontation is probable in the forseeable future. Thus, what remains of the potential for conventional inter-state conflict is possible local collisions in the part of Europe not yet absorbed into the security community.

By contrast, the potential for intra-state violence is much greater.(...)

Another salient feature of the post-Cold War European security landscape is that it is threatened with fragmentation. European security has become very much divisible. In certain regions, such as the Balkans and the Caucasus, war has become a reality. While some countries

already belong to a security community, others feel a security vacuum. Thus, efforts are being made to address regional, subregional and intra-state levels of military security.

As regards the two areas under discussion, i.e. the Baltic States and Georgia, the actual or potential types of conflict there include:

(a) ethnically-driven separatism

This is highly visible above all in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where in 1992-1993 large-scale violence was the result. Other potential "hot spots" in Georgia include Armenian-populated Javakhetia and the Azeri-populated areas in the east (...).

By contrast, there is little evidence of ethnic separatism in the Baltic States. The ethnic Poles in the Vilnius district are content to continue under Lithuanian rule, and revisionist forces in Poland are clearly a fringe group. The ethnic Russian population of north-east Estonia, where they form a majority, has failed to respond to nationalist appeals to establish a local autonomy as an interim step to joining Russia. Neither Warsaw nor Moscow has at any time suggested that it would consider the possibility of such annexations.

(b) refugee problem and conflict over minority rights

The wars and Abkhazia and Ossetia have led to widespread ethnic cleansing. In Soouth Ossetia mixed villages have been "purified". Georgians were chased from most of Abkhazia. The refugee problem stands out as a major destabilizing factor. There is a possibility that the refugees, driven to desperation, might attempt to force their way through to Abkhazia. Where the Georgians remain in Abkhazia, i.e. the Gali district, the problem is protecting their rights.

The situation of ethnic Russians in the Baltic States is not to be compared, of course, with that of Caucasian peoples. The issue of civil rights for non-citizens in the Baltic States, especially in Estonia and Latvia, is perhaps the most serious domestic problem those nations face.

(c) domestic civil strife

For a period of time, between 1991 and 1994, Georgia came dangerously close to becoming a failed state. Although the situation has markedly stabilized since then, a new fragmentation of the country on political, clan or regional lines cannot be entirely ruled out - yet. This scenario is absolutely improbable in any of the baltic States.

(d) international conflict in the region

There is some potential for inter-state conflicts in both regions. As far as Georgia is concerned, it has some reason to fear all its neighbors. Abkhazia and Chechnya ensure that there can be no insulated conflicts in this part of the world.

The sources for such hypothetical conflict in the Baltic States include:

- Border disputes between Russia and the two Baltic States, Estonia and Latvia, and latent Lithuanian claims to Kaliningrad.

- Disptes over boundaries of economic zones between several pairs of Baltic States and Russia.

- Problems with Russian transit through Lithuania to Kaliningrad.

- Widening of the conflict over minority rights in the Baltic States.

The most important consideration, however, is the following. To prevent a hypothetical conflict involving Russia and the Baltic States one would have first of all to ensure that the Balts' integration into "the West" proceeds in a non-confrontational way. Otherwise, no amount of confidence building, arms control, etc. can prevent escalation of tensions, logically leading to conflict.

I. Conflict Prevention

To prevent a political conflict from reaching a violent stage there are two kinds of military tools. Some of them are short-term measures, and others long-term ones. The mission of the former is, by providing timely information about the intentions of one side, to dispel suspicions and calm down fears on the opposite side. The long-term tools are used to create condidence on both sides that the military situation is stable and can not be changed abruptly.

As far as short-term measures are concerned, military early warning is key. Military observers attached to the various fact-finding missions, such as the OSCE, despatched to the areas of potential conflict, collect relevant military information and use their expertise to detect preparations for forceful action, and report to the Organization.

When there are sufficient reasons to believe that a violent eruption is likely, military forces can be ordered to the area to dissuade any potential transgressor and reassure the local population. Preventive deployment of such forces requires, however, that they are:

- politically neutral

- well-disciplined and well-trained for their specific role

- mobile, capable of rapid deployment to the area and redeployment within it.

Needless to say, it is not easy to make such forces available. So far, preventive deployment has been successfully practiced by the United States in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Preventive deployment could be a very strong instrument of preventive diplomacy.

In other cases, a directly opposite measure can have a similar soothing result. Withdrawal of foreign military forces whose continued presence can become a cause of conflict, can defuse a situation. The departure of Russian forces from Lithuania in 1993, and Estonia and Latvia in 1994 removed a major source of tensions in the area. A mere committment to withdrawal is, in and of itself, not sufficient, and a time-table is required. Under a different set of circumstances, a hasty withdrawal can be destabilizing. The departure of Soviet/Russian forces from South Ossetia in late 1991 did little to prevent a conflict there, and the evacuation of Chechnya in late 1991-early 1992 left large amounts of arms and ammunition in the hands of the Chechen.

II. Long-term Measures

Cooperative Security Arrangements

The principal objective of the long-term measures has been increasing transparency and improving predictability of the parties involved. Even as early as 1975 the Final Act of the Helsinki summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe laid down certain confidence-building measures, such as advance notice of military maneuvers and major troop movements, and exchange of observers at exercises. Confidence and security- building measures, or CSBMs, are to provide to the participating sides enough confidence that no forceful action is being contemplated, or prepared against any of them. In this, military transparency, i.e. transparency of capabilities and intentions, is a key factor. Exchange of

relevant information, especially accompanied by adequate and intrusive verification procedures, from observation to on-site inspection are its most valuable tools.

In 1986 in Stockholm agreement was reached on annual exchanges of plans of military activity, and for the first time, inspections. In 1990 in Vienna, transparency reached such areas as the structure of forces, their deployment, as well as weapons and their procurement, and defense budgets. Special attention was paid to preventing dangerous incidents, e.g., created by unnotified flights by aircraft, through excluding their misinterpretation.

The 1990 Paris Charter for a new Europe was adopted alongside with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, the cornerstone of the current security regime on the continent. The confidence building measures contained in the 1992 Vienna and Helsinki documents amplified this arms control instrument. Indeed, arms control is a central element of confidence building. For arms control to be effective, any arrangement has to be verifiable, with on-site inspections provided. Arms control in situations of internal conflicts has its peculiarities. In situations where a third party acts as an arbiter, it is essential that it acts in good faith. Russia's actions in September 1993 in Abkhazia stand out as a prime example of breach of faith on behalf of a third party. Ideally, arms control arrangements must cover the region as a whole. Thus, adaptation of the CFE Treaty logically calls for inclusion of the three Baltic States, currently outside the scope of this agreement.

As a result, it is fair to say that the traditional problem of European security has all but disappeared. Not only the political likelihood of an outbreak of a major war in Europe has decreased to a historical minimum; the forces of various countries have become numerically limited, more defense-oriented and unprecedentedly transparent.

The problems which later arose with the CFE treaty, e.g. as a result of the dismantlement of the Warsaw Pact and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 were tackled by reapportionment of the Soviet quota among the successor states, and through revising the flank limitations. Further adaptation of the treaty is envisaged.

The 1994 Vienna document on global information exchange set forth measures to increase defense planning transparency. These included annual exchange of information on the armed forces, major defense systems, defense budgets (for the previous year, and for five years ahead, with break-downs following the UN pattern).

Agreement among the various states on the norms of behavior in the military field is of long-term importance. The OSCE Code of Conduct, adopted at the Budapest summit in 1994, laid down for the first time principles of the use of force in peacetime and in internal conflicts. These include democratic civilian control of the armed forces, to ensure, through the use of national democratic procedures, that a country's defense potential was commensurate with its defense needs; adequate use of force, and preventing damage to civilians. Use of force against national and ethnic minorities was specifically banned. Deployment of foreign forces was only acceptable on the basis of voluntary agreements.

As a confidence-building measure, military-to-military contacts are very important, for they reduce the error of misperception, minimize the chance of misunderstanding, especially in crisis, and thus bar escalation of conflict by mistake. The value of military-to-military contacts, however, should not be overestimated. Even those officers who have had established excellent professional and personal ties with their colleagues from another nation's military will usually fight against the former friends, if ordered. Both WWI and the Cold War testify to that. Equally, ex-comrades from the same army, sharing much experience, could turn into bitter enemies in an internal conflict, as the break-up of Yugoslavia and of the Soviet Union, including the wars in Abkhazia and Chechnya suggest.

The 1990 Vienna document calls for various forms of military-to-military contacts. They include exchanges of visits by military delegations and senior officers, and establishing contacts among military headquarters, in the form of exchange of liaison teams and ensuring permanent communication. The outreach program of the NATO Defense College in Rome, e.g., includes regular OSCE courses for partner countries, as well as integrated courses with staff-level officers and civilians from NATO and partner countries studying together and building ties. The U.S.-German George C.Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen has been specializing on security studies and such issues as democratic control over the armed forces.

The Partnership for Peace Program represents the most comprehensive agenda, to date, of building military-to-military contacts across the former line of division in Europe. Partner countries have established their permanent presence not only at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, but also at SHAPE in Mons. Perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of the depth of these new contacts is the permanent presence at SHAPE of a Russian three-star general and his staff. Part of the IFOR chain of command, they are housed in the building known as Live Oak, where the Allies used to engage, during the Cold War, in contingency planning with respect to West Berlin.

IFOR is the best-known example of joint peacekeeping. Exercises are one thing, but interacting in a real situation leads to a much higher degree of cooperation. Not only confidence is inspired, but mutual trust is built in this way. Habits of cooperation are progressively internalized, and technical means of communication are dramatically improved. Training for mutual peacekeeping, when their armed forces are still fledgling, can be a powerful means to ensure that the newly-independent states, or the countries which have regained independence, will avoid military conflict between themselves. Of this, the Baltic battalion appears to be a prime example.

Controlling the arms trade is another prevention measure. Uncontrolled arms transfers could be destabilizing. The principle of non-export of arms to areas of potential conflict or to the so-called rogue states is well understood, even if there are differences within the community of nations, especially as regards the definition of these rogue states. With the entry into force in 1996 of the Wassenaar arrangement which has replaced COCOM, there is more transparency and more room for consultation regarding arms transfers.

Conflict Management

Once the conflict has broken out, stopping it becomes a first priority. Stabilizing the situation through stopping the conflict by securing all parties' consent requires an appropriate agreement and a prompt despatch of a peacekeeping force to ensure that the agreement does hold.

Peacekeeping includes monitoring a cease-fire, disengaging the warring parties and creating a buffer zone between them, and progressive consolidation of truce. One instrument of this is establishing a joint military commission to deal with the issues. Once hostilities have broken out, the role of the military is dramatically increased. Thus, military-to-military contacts become essential in ensuring that there is no resumption of violence.

An intersting phenomenon of the post-Soviet scene is joint peacekeeping by the conflicting parties. As the experience of the last several years demonstrates, in intra-state conflict management, peacekeeping activities involving former adversaries, and a third party, namely, Russia, can be reasonably effective. This has been practiced in South Ossetia, since June 1992. Esewhere, this has been tried in Moldova since 1992 and, since August 1996, in Chechnya (in the form of a Joint Kommandantura in Grozny). In all these cases, there has been no return to violence so far.

In Transcaucasus, as well as in Moldova and Tajikistan, the conduct of operations which are designated as peacekeeping, or peacemaking, are mainly the responsibility of the Russian Federation that has deployed its troops to the zones of conflict. In all these cases of third party peacekeeping, there is a role for international organizations which are to monitor the peacekeepers to ensure that the basic principles of the organization are honored.

Since December 1992, the CSCE (now OSCE) has been maintaining a mission in Georgia with the objective of assisting in negotiations between the sides, aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhaz conflicts by political means. The primary goal of the mission is to keep the military side of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict under reliable control. With the consent of the parties, the OSCE mission has been monitoring the Joint Peacekeeping Force established in Tskhinvali under the 1992 Sochi accord. The mission succeeded in establishing and supporting contact with the military command of the Georgian, Ossetian and Russian forces in the area. Its mandate included collecting information on the military situation, reporting breaches of the existing cease-fire and bringing the attention of the political consequences of these or any other military actions to the commanders on the spot. Four times a week, the mission monitors the activities of the Russian, Georgian and Ossetian posts, and conducts inspections of weapons storage areas. It is reported that the participating sides in policing the Ossetian truce are sufficiently open and even amenable to OSCE criticism of their actions. The OSCE monitors are also helping to remove civil quarrels among populations in mixed settlement areas. The mission was also to play an active role in the work of the Joint Control Commission whose task was to develop specific proposals for resolving the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The mission acted as an intermediary in achieving consensus between the two sides on the text of the Memorandum on Security and Confidence-Building Measures signed in Moscow in May 1996, the first important political step toward settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia.

There are no similar provisions regarding the activity of the OSCE mission in Abkhazia, where the OSCE concentrates on the issues of human rights and return of refugees. In the military-related sphere it is the United Nations which takes the lead.

Absence of international observers can have dramatic consequences. The failure of the international community to despatch UN observers to Abkhazia in 1993 facilitated the breach of the cease-fire there with tragic consequences for many thousands of civilians who lost their lives or became refugees.

Such breaches of cease-fire become possible when weapons control becomes lax. The breach of faith by the Russian military authorities in Abkhazia, which, as the guarantor of the Sochi cease-fire agreement, was to have had the custody of the conflicting sides' heavy weaponry, gave the Abkhaz side a decisive material advantage over the Georgian forces, and largely contributed to their military victory.

Stopping arms exports to crisis areas (i.e. where violence has already broken out) is an important measure to prevent resumption of violence. Under the very specific conditions of the break-up of the USSR and the dividing-up of the Soviet military assets, the Russian government transfered to Moldova and Georgia their shares of ex-Soviet weaponry. This emboldened those forces within each state, in a matter of a few months, to proceed to military solutions of the Transdniestria and Abkhazia problems. Bloody conflicts ensued. at the very least, the scale of violence would have been reduced, had those transfers been delayed until political settlements were negotiated.

Even if governments act in a responsible way and do not break sanctions there is a problem of illicit weapons transfers to crisis areas. To halt these transfers, embargos need to be

enforced: boundaries of the crisis area sealed off, and a blockade imposed. This usually necessitates the engagement of border guards, coast guard and air defense forces.

Peace Enforcement

In situations where one, or both sides are unwilling to reach a cease-fire agreement, and the war continues, with a heavy toll of civilian casualties and suffering, imposing a settlement by means of an outside intervention may become the only effective way to stop bloodshed. Peace enforcement may also be a powerful instrument of implementation of a cease-fire agreement.

Intervention "for peace', however, is just another kind of intervention. Helping one side to prevail or to fight off an attack by its enemies can also de-facto lead to the cessation of hostilities. In 1992, the Russian General Lebed used force to make the Moldovan government stop its offensive against Transdniestrian separatists, who had been supported by the Russian military. In 1993, the Russian military virtually secured victory for the Abkhaz separatist forces which managed to drive the Georgians from Abkhazia.

Force can also be used in a non-combat environment as a demonstration to ensure overwhelming superiority of a favored side in a conflict, and thus persuade its opponent to accept its defeat. This was done, e.g., in October/November 1993 by Russian forces who supported President Shevardnadze of Georgia against the ousted President Gamsakhurdia.

Conflict Resolution

The final resolution of a conflict requires certain military measures. It will be some time before the former adversaries regain enough confidence to accept each other as good neighbors or partners in common nation- and state-building. In the latter case, there is a difficult problem of building post-conflict armed forces. What should be the military security arrangements between Tbilissi and Sukhumi, and Tbilissi and Tskhinvali, to ensure that the military element is integrated into the new relationship, and not undermining it?

III. In lieu of conclusion

Conflict prevention is a highly complex task. Military tools of conflict prevention are normally used in combination with non-military ones. At times, they may play a prime role, but their main mission is supportive, i.e. creating the right conditions for a political settlement, its implementation, and final resolution of the dispute.

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"Non-Governmental Organizations and Conflict Prevention"

by
S. Neil MacFarlane
Oxford University

Non-governmental Organisations and Conflict Prevention

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"Peace in the largest sense cannot be accomplished by the United Nations or by Governments alone. Nongovernmental organisations, academic institutions, parliamentarians, business and professional communities, the media and the public at large must all be involved."

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, The Agenda for Peace

I. Introduction

In this paper, I examine the role of non-governmental organisations in conflict prevention in Europe. The fundamental purpose of the paper is to assess the direct and indirect contribution of such organisations in the area of conflict prevention. I examine in particular whether there are any particular aspects where such organisations are likely to be more successful than, for example, government negotiators or mediators from intergovernmental organisations, and what obstacles they encounter in their efforts to contribute to peace building. In addition, the paper covers relations between non-governmental organisations, local governments, and inter-governmental organisations.

I begin with a brief account of theory underlying NGO activity in conflict prevention, and a discussion of the areas in which NGO activity is most likely to be effective. I then go on to take a look at the NGO experience in Georgia as a case study that may (or may not) illuminate the analytical discussion. This leads to a consideration of the effect of attributes of the Georgian society and polity on NGO activity and effectiveness and to a number of concluding remarks on NGO experience in conflict prevention elsewhere in the former Soviet space, and notably in the Baltic countries.

By NGOs, I mean organisations composed of private citizens coming together in pursuit of a common purpose, and independent from government.[1] By conflict prevention, I mean efforts in situations of tension between states, political groups or communities to prevent the translation of this tension into active conflict. This usually involves information acquisition and publicity (early warning), education, informal negotiation and mediation. However, it may also involve activity to mitigate the root causes of conflict - e.g. to eliminate economic disparities and to defuse enemy images. In the former area, NGO-mounted humanitarian assistance may also serve as a confidence building measure.

The empirical observations on Georgian NGOs and on INGO activity are the product of several years of close cooperation with several of them and numerous interviews with NGO personnel between 1992 and 1996. There are few citations of the literature, since there is no literature.[2]

II. NGOs and Conflict Prevention

Why should NGOs be relevant to a discussion of conflict prevention? There are very general and quite specific aspects to this question. At the most general level, the NGO role is part and parcel of the broader concepts of democratisation and democratic governance and their relation to the incidence of conflict. This is dealt with (I assume) in some detail in the paper by

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Renee de Nevers, and so I shall say little about it. It seems relevant to note, however, that the proliferation of non-governmental organisations is part and parcel of the pluralist conception of the rooting of democratic governance within a society. To the extent that citizens aggregate their common interests into effective organisations for their promotion, this limits the power and flexibility of government, not least in the area of conflict. If one accepts the proposition that people in general want to get on with their lives and do not want their activities to be disrupted by conflict, societies with broad and effective pluralist participation are less war-prone than are less representative political systems. This is one basic aspect of the "democratic peace argument" currently so popular in academic and policy discourse on conflict in the post-Cold War era. In addition to their direct effect on public policy, NGOs have an important indirect effect in increasing the awareness of the public at large of the nature and significance of policy issues before government. Multiple independent sources of information enrich the market place of ideas, to borrow Jack Snyder's formulation; the consequent enhancement of the quality of political participation also constrains government flexibility.

More specifically, non-governmental organisations in theory have several attributes that my contribute substantially to efforts to prevent conflict in war-prone societies. Not least is the fact that they are non-governmental. Their activities in negotiation and communication consequently do not carry the baggage of government status. In situations where government may be perceived as less than impartial, for example, independent associations may enjoy greater legitimacy and trust. This is particularly true where, as in the case of Georgia, significant tension exists between various levels of government. Moreover, information acquired and disseminated by non-governmental organisations may have greater veracity, as it does not emanate from government(s).

Second, they are, by definition, parts of the community, and, as such, closer to it, better-informed as to what is going on within it, who the relevant interlocutors are, what the specific nature of grievances are, and often, for reasons of personal and professional ties, better to convey information and options for conflict avoidance than are governments. In addition, they are often made up of people of stature within communities. This may be particularly important in new democracies, or newly democratising states, where the government's own ties to the society at large through, for example, political parties, are underdeveloped.

Third, in many instances, they are functional in orientation, organised to promote certain functional issues (e.g. human rights, the rights of women) or professional ones (e.g. medical, journalist, and legal associations). That is to say, their association is defined not by ethno-social communalities, but by characteristics that cross communal lines. Such functionally based organisations are more likely to benefit from an array of cross-communal ties than are ethnic or community associations. In polities with poorly developed party structures, they may be the only organisations possessing such linkages. As such, they provide a natural forum for communication across communal lines.

At this stage, it is useful to differentiate between indigenous and international non-governmental organisations, both of which are, in the abstract, relevant to a discussion of conflict prevention. The above discussion has focused on indigenous NGOs. The activities of international ones are germane in at least four ways. First, in conditions where local organisations are weak and vulnerable to government interference, as is often the case in democratising or pre-democratic societies, international groups may fill the gap in non-governmental activity. For example, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have played an important data acquisition and information dissemination role in many states where local organisations lack the experience, organisational and financial capacity, freedom of manoeuvre, and often the will to assess human rights violations properly. The broad support and prestige that these organisations possess in the international community gives them a

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degree of access to information that is often denied to local organisations, and allows them to accept a level of risk that might well be too high for indigenous analogues.

Second, international organisations can and do act to strengthen the capacities of local NGOs through training, equipment provision, and financial support on the reasonable presumption that their own presence cannot be permanent and that it is, consequently, necessary to foster the development of local organisations with similar interests and adequate capabilities. International NGOs also assist in acculturating indigenous authorities to the concept of non-governmental activism. Third, in situations of severe inter-communal tension and substantial bitterness, it is often very difficult for indigenous NGOs to operate across the lines of conflict. In this respect too, international NGOs can substitute temporarily for local ones in sustaining and fostering intercommunal linkages, not least through providing neutral venues for such interaction between like-minded people from communities in conflict. Fourth, international NGOs operating in particular areas may assist in conflict prevention through provision of early warning to their home governments or to international organisations, and may mobilise support to pressure their home governments and international organisations to take a more active diplomatic role in the area in question, for good or ill.[3]

It is also plausible in the abstract that NGOs may have a negative role in conflict prevention. At the local level, NGOs may in fact not embrace society as a whole, but may instead serve to consolidate particular conflicting identities within it. In this respect, they become part of the problem, not the solution. A good example from Georgia of this phenomenon is the so-called Mkhedrioni (White Horsemen), a society devoted to the promotion of ethnic Georgian culture and values which became a major paramilitary force in post-independence Georgia, participating in atrocities in Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as organising a substantial criminal network in the country that reached eventually to the highest level of the Georgian government.

Second, even when the intentions of local organisations are pure, they may lack the technical and political skills necessary to perform effectively. NGOs active in conflict prevention in democratising societies are often made up of inexperienced and unprofessional people whose good intentions do not make up for their lack of background and skills. At best, this produces ineffectuality. At worst, the efforts of misplaced idealists may put them in danger and may exacerbate the very conflicts they are attempting to prevent.

With regard to both local and international NGOs, the more actors involved in a process of conflict prevention, the greater the problems of communication and co-ordination among them. This may complicate the process of conflict prevention considerably. Moreover, particularly in resource-scarce environments, NGOs may spend more time competing among themselves for recognition and financial support than they do actually addressing the real problems of conflict-prevention before them. Finally, in conditions where NGOs are heavily dependent on particular sources of finance for their operations, their activities in the field of conflict prevention may come to reflect the preferences of the funder. Where these are detrimental to the process of conflict prevention, so too may be the activities of the dependent organisation.

III. The Case of Georgia

What does the record of international and indigenous NGO activity in Georgia suggest with regard to the actual - rather than theoretical - value of NGOs in the area of conflict prevention? Before answering this question, some background is perhaps useful. In the first place, it may seem odd to ask this question when conflict in Georgia has so clearly not been prevented by anyone's actions. The post-independence history of Georgia has been dominated by two

ethnically rooted civil wars - one involving South Ossetia which lasted from late 1990 until mid-1992, and the second in Abkhazia, which lasted from August 1992 to October 1993.

In neither case are active hostilities occurring. However, the termination of hostilities in both cases was the result of the attainment of the insurgents' principal objectives and of Russian mediation of cease-fires. Both cease-fires are policed by Russian peace-keepers. In neither instance has the cessation of hostilities been followed by a political resolution of the conflict in question. Negotiations on Abkhazia are stalled. Those on South Ossetia are showing some signs of progress, but this is a result of the growing flexibility of the position of the Georgian government, and, with some qualification, their Osset counterparts, as well as the efforts of Russian and OSCE mediation. Non-governmental organisations have played no real role in any of this. This applies at both the national and international levels.

That said, several unsuccessful efforts of non-governmental organisations to prevent these conflicts do merit scrutiny (see below). In addition, non-governmental organisations are active in the effort to prevent resumption of hostilities in both cases, as well as to create a social basis for conflict resolution. And of course, these are not the only fault lines in Georgian politics that carry a potential for escalation to civil violence. The Abkhaz and the Ossets are two of the smallest territorially compact ethnic minorities in Georgia, at about 1% and 3% of the total population respectively. In contrast, Armenians and Azeris both constitute about 5-8% of Georgia's population. There is significant potential for conflict between both communities and the Georgian majority and between the two communities themselves. One of the great mysteries of Georgian politics is why these relationships have been so quiet. Perhaps NGOs play a role here.

Even if one did conclude that the role of NGOs in conflict prevention in Georgia was insubstantial, this may tell us more about NGO activities in the particular case (Georgia) and what needs to be done to strengthen their role there than it does about the desirability and feasibility of NGO participation in peace building per se. For this reason, at least the beginnings of a comparative analysis are provided at the end of the paper.

The Major Indigenous and International Players

Georgia has witnessed an explosion of indigenous NGO activity since independence in 1990-1 and, more particularly, since the deposition of Zviad Gamsakhurdia at the end of 1991. As elsewhere in the Transcaucasus, the NGO presence in Georgian society in the Soviet era was insubstantial. During the era of perestroika, far more organisational activity was focused on party building and the politics of sovereignty than on the creation of non-governmental associations. This is not to say that independent organisations failed to emerge at this time. In fact, many did. But, not surprisingly, given the political context of the time, they tended to be focused on ethno-national revival (e.g. Mkhedrioni) rather than on issues of social peace.

The result was that in 1992, there were few established NGOs, except for holdovers from the Soviet era (professional associations, the Red Cross, etc.), which were in fact quasi-governmental. These were in significant measure discredited by their association with the prior regime; moreover, they suffered from the phlegmatism and inability to adapt characteristic of Soviet social organisations faced with fundamentally new socio-political conditions. Finally, they had little background or experience in the areas of conflict prevention, since the government in the Soviet era retained a monopoly on action in such areas, while there was little open incidence of inter-communal tension. Few international NGOs were active in the pre-crisis phase. Indeed, their involvement in Georgia came later than it did in many other former Soviet states, because of the unwillingness of the international community to embrace the avowedly ethno-chauvinist government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Superficial examination indicates the emergence of a fairly large number of non-governmental organisations dealing with issues relating to conflict prevention in Georgia (See Table 1).

Table 1. NGOs Active in Conflict Prevention Activities in Georgia

The Committee against Human Torture: Monitoring and information dissemination on human rights abuses.

Women's Committee for the Defence of the Helsinki Agreement in Georgia: Monitoring human rights abuses, dissemination, relief for vulnerable groups.

Women's International "White Scarf Movement": Mass action against violence and in favour of peace.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Georgian National Committee: Transcaucasian dialogue on regional conflict, unofficial contacts across lines of conflict, early warning.

United Nations of Youth Net (Georgia): Education in UN Principles, involving Georgian youth in the global "peace-building" process, dissemination of UN materials, promotion of non-violence.

Society "Amirani": Education on causes of civil conflicts, organisation of popular action in conflict resolution .

The Young Lawyers Association of Georgia: constitution-building, advice on legislation, educational reform, promotion of research on legal and constitutional issues, promotion of reform in law enforcement.

International Center for Conflict and Negotiation: research and training in conflict prevention and conflict management, informal dialogue across lines of conflict.

International Society "Women of Georgia for Peace": Peacebuilding, Democratisation, women and conflict, relief for refugees and IDPs.

Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development: Research and dissemination on democratic development, and conflict prevention, advice to international organisations operating n Georgia, organisation of seminars on peace, democracy, and regional security.

Caucasian House: Preservation of and encouragement of respect for the cultures of the Caucasus, encouragement of regional dialogue across communal lines.

Georgian Orthodox Church: Confidence building through humanitarian assistance and income generation in southern Georgia.

Georgian Red Cross: Assistance to vulnerable groups

Source: Directory: Georgian Non-Governmental Organisations Involved in Peacebuilding. Conflict Resolution. and Confidence-Building Related Activities (Tbilisi: United Nations Volunteers, 1995).

This flowering of activity is a result in part of a government attitude towards NGOs that is much more open than that of, for example, Azerbaijan. Registration procedures are transparent. They are not impossible to overcome. There appears to be little government effort to control the emergence of such organisations.

At the international level, numerous NGOs are either supporting and building the capacity of local NGOs, or are independently active in the area of conflict prevention. In the first category, the MacArthur Foundation, for example, is the principal funder of the International Center for Conflict and Negotiation, while the Soros Foundation has played an important role in establishing and sustaining the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development.[4] The International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) assists in the management and co-ordination of Georgian Orthodox Church confidence building activities in southern Georgia. The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly provides administrative and financial support for the activities of its local chapter, as well as for related activities such as those of the Caucasian House. Several German Stiftungs and other European funding bodies have supported specific activities of a number of these groups. One example is the relationship between the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung and the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development.

In the second category, a number of organisations, including the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, the Harvard Negotiations Project, International Alert, and the University of Maryland Center for Conflict Resolution are active in creating opportunities for activists from all sides in Georgia's conflicts to meet in neutral venues to build confidence and identify common ground. Many INGOs have engaged in fact-finding missions to the Republic of Georgia, focusing on a wide array of issues relating to conflict prevention. Among these are research on the human rights situation in Georgia[5], analysis of the roots and development of Georgia's conflicts,[6] and violations of the law of war.[7]

In addition, a number of international NGO humanitarian assistance providers have a confidence building aspect to their activities. For example, M,decins sans FrontiŠres (France) is active in all three de facto jurisdictions in Georgia, in part as a result of a desire to ensure that no party to Georgia's conflicts feels discriminated against in the field of humanitarian action. The International Rescue Committee has lobbied extensively for an expansion of humanitarian action in Abkhazia in part for similar reasons.

NGOs Effectiveness in Conflict Prevention

Despite all of this activity, there is little evidence of any significant immediate impact by these organisations in the areas of conflict prevention or resolution. As already noted, and obviously, the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia were not prevented. It is reasonable to conclude on this basis that conflict prevention activities of NGOs in the pre-conflict phases were irrelevant. There are many reasons for this. The international players were not present during this phase. Most of the local players did not exist.

The major instance in which a local NGO attempted to prevent conflict during this period was an abject failure. This involved the "White Scarf" movement. The movement is based on an ancient Caucasian tradition whereby women opposed to a particular bit of violence would drop a white scarf between the male protagonists. This would - ideally cause them to cease their violence and accept mediation. In September 1993, the newly created movement sent several hundred activists to the front line from Tbilisi by train to re-enact this historical tradition in the hope of ending the hostilities between Georgian government forces and the military formations of the Abkhaz government around Sukhumi. As it turned out the front was moving so rapidly that the train got caught up in the violence and retreated in haste. No one at the front paid any attention. The train retreated with alacrity and the individuals concerned were lucky to escape with their lives. The idealism of the participants was no protection against flying lead.

More generally, this failure was a result of conditions in Georgia as a whole during 1990-93. Disorganisation in government, economic collapse, the collapse of the rule of law, the Soviet legacy of weakness in civil society, the influence of extreme forms of ethno-national chauvinism on all sides, and Georgia's isolation from international society all created infertile ground for NGO activity, particularly in areas so closely related to issues of national identity and personal security.

The more interesting question is whether - as conditions in Georgia have stabilised since 1993 -this activity has prevented the emergence of new conflicts, the potential for which is considerable. For evidentiary reasons, answering this question is difficult. Concerning Azeri-Armenian tensions in southern Georgia, we cannot really know whether conflict would have occurred in the absence of NGO activities. Moreover, NGOs are not the only conflict preventers in the equation. The OSCE and the UN have also been involved. Neither the Azerbaijani nor the Armenian government wants its relations with Georgia to be complicated by the activities of their co-ethnics within Georgia, not least because both are heavily dependent on Georgian infrastructure to mitigate the effects of their own conflict. It is probable, therefore, that they play a restraining role in relations between the Azeri and Armenian minorities in Georgia. The same is true for their attitudes towards minority-majority relations between Armenians and Georgians and Azeris and Georgians. At this particular historical juncture, both governments have an interest in quiet relations between their co-ethnics and the Georgian majority. In these circumstances, not only can we not know whether conflict would have occurred without NGO involvement, but we cannot know what the impact of NGOs, as opposed to other actors has been, to the extent that conflict prevention activities have mattered.

One encounters the same sorts of methodological problems in assessing the role of NGOs in preventing any resumption of hostilities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. None of the principal actors has any particular interest in such resumption. In fact, in the Abkhaz case, perhaps the most obvious instance of conflict prevention after 1993 was undertaken by the Georgian government rather than by NGOs, when it halted a bus convoy of Georgian nationalist militants heading for Abkhazia to "liberate" it in 1995. Again, moreover, there is considerable involvement by international organisations (the OSCE and the UN) and by other national governments (Russia) in restraining the parties. For these reasons, non-resumption is over-determined.

For reasons discussed below, however, I would suggest that the international and indigenous NGO role in conflict prevention has been nugatory. How do we account for this less than impressive record? In addition to the above listing of conditions in Georgian politics and society less than conducive to NGO success, seven other general factors are relevant in answering this question with regard to local NGOs. Most have to do with capacity, and reflect the rather immature level of development of civil society in Georgia.[8] In the first place, as already mentioned in the first section, the people forming NGOs had little understanding of civil society and the role of non-governmental organisations within it. More specifically, effective conflict prevention requires at least the beginnings of an understanding of the theory of conflict prevention, as well as of the psychology of inter-group relations and mediation. Nor did the principals of NGOs have any real idea of organisation, budgeting, and personnel and financial management. All of this intellectual and managerial capital had to be acquired on the run.

Conditions for such learning were not propitious. There was no surplus capital within society to support the activities of non-governmental organisations. At the outset, there was simply no money for simple essentials like office space, desks and phones, leave aside the accoutrements of Western NGO activity - the copier, the computer, and the fax. As time

passed, and international organisations and NGOs developed Georgia country programming, such resources gradually emerged from foreign sources. This, however, occasioned a rather desperate and unseemly competition for resources, not only because of the general shortage of funds for their activities, but because the funds themselves were the only source of hard currency available to people in such organisations. In the desperate conditions of Georgia, access to foreign currency was a ticket to survival.

Consequently, particular NGOs sought to monopolise foreign sources of funding for themselves by undercutting the similar claims of other organisations.[9] There was a certain irony in the vicious conflict that often characterised relations among organisations that claimed to be devoted to conflict prevention. The sense of paranoia in the NGO community that these activities engendered did little to promote co-operation among NGOs or a rational division of labour among them. And of course, all of this meant that the bulk of the energies of NGOs were not devoted to what they claimed was their major purpose. These factors also inhibited the development of effective communication among them and co-ordination of their activities.[10] There was in fact no systematic co-ordination of local NGO activities,[11] and no effort at establishing a rational division of labour among them. Instead, there was a form of NGO "imperialism" in some instances, where single NGOs, irrespective of their personnel and financial capacities, attempted to occupy the entire terrain from marketisation through democratisation, to conflict management and resolution.

A second problem related to funding lay in the fact that the purposes of funders were not necessarily consistent with the objective of mounting coherent and co-ordinated conflict prevention activities. In some instances, the program priorities of the funder did not lie in the area of conflict prevention; consequently, the NGO had to orient its activity in other directions.[12] In many instances, funding is short term and focused on particular programs, making it difficult for the grantee to build sustained and coherent programming.

An additional difficulty emanated from competition for the limited pool of personnel that NGOs drew upon. As already noted, the number of persons with managerial and substantive expertise in the NGO sector was low to begin with. The subset that possessed English, German, or other Western European language skills was even smaller, and these tended to be attractive targets for recruitment by incoming foreign NGOs and inter-governmental organisations.[13]

Effective efforts aimed at conflict prevention, at least between Georgian, Abkhaz, and Osset NGOs were further inhibited by serious logistical problems. Few inter-communal linkages of this type existed prior to independence, because the general underdevelopment of civil society under communist rule. Consequently, such links had to be developed after war had occurred. This was extremely difficult since telephone communication with insurgent areas was extremely difficult or impossible.[14] It was equally difficult to arrange face-to-face meetings, given that the communities were divided by lines of conflict and by security zones manned by peacekeepers. As shall be discussed below, most inter-communal encounters took place outside the country under the auspices of international NGOs.

Even were such encounters easier than they are, it is not clear just what impact they might have. One obvious characteristic of NGOs on all sides in Georgia is their isolation from society at large. They tend to be small and their staffs and leadership are composed of people with little independent stature in society at large. Their dissemination capacities are limited for financial reasons. There is no tradition in Georgia of the population looking to NGOs for information and leadership on social and political issues. And the NGOs have few resources - personal and financial - at their disposal to foster such a tradition.

As noted in Section II, to some extent international NGOs can compensate for these weaknesses typical of the indigenous NGO probl‚matique in democratising states. And, as was seen above, there is substantial and growing INGO involvement in the Georgian case. There is some reason to expect that their performance in the realm of conflict prevention might well be more effective. They are better financed. They possess greater professional resources and experience. As parties external to the society in question, they may be perceived to be more impartial. They frequently bring substantial prestige to the table. They can provide neutral venues for contact between communities in conflict.

Yet, at the risk of being depressingly consistent, international NGOs also share their own set of weaknesses that impede effective conflict prevention. For most, Georgia was a very small component of their overall activities. For many, their engagement was sporadic rather than sustained. The extreme examples are those of organisations that send someone along to write a report on the situation, publish the report, and then disappear from the face of the local map. This is not a recipe for effective program development. Moreover, although INGOs may be superior to their local counterparts in resources and general expertise in the area of conflict prevention, they are inferior in their knowledge if the local context. No INGO had any experience in Georgia prior to 1991. Many arrived in Georgia with their own institutional biases, and this clearly affected their perspective on local realities.[15] Very few of their personnel have language competence in Georgian, leave aside minority languages. They also lacked expertise in the socio-political aspects of the situation in Georgia. One effect of this was that many INGOs working in the country tended to be isolated from the host society, their contacts limited to others in the international community, and to the local NGOs.

In this context, one might argue that the local-international relationship was symbiotic. The locals depended on the INGOs for finance. The INGOs depended on the locals for interpretation, information, and access. In practice, however, this interdependence has often had perverse results, given the competitive environment in which local NGOs operated.

An example suffices to illustrate the point. In one instance that I am aware of, a European quasi-NGO has a local office in Tbilisi. The local office co-operates closely with one Georgian NGO. Another Georgian NGO became involved in a project partly sponsored by the European organisation. This was vehemently resisted by the latter's local representative, who went so far as to claim that the director of this other local NGO had been associated with the KGB. This was deemed by the European superior of the local employee to be sufficient reason not to co-operate with the other local NGO. Knowing the individuals concerned and their circle of acquaintances quite well, I am aware of no evidence to suggest that this accusation was true. Even if true, its significance escapes me, since thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Georgians - including, of course, Georgia's president - had some kind of connection with the security organs. That is the way that totalitarian society worked. The point is that the European concerned, having no independent knowledge of the region and no independent channels of communication, was dependent for information on an individual with an apparent vested interest in undermining the competition.

The final problem to be mentioned is that of co-ordination. As with local NGOs, there were to my knowledge few systematic attempts to co-ordinate the activities of INGOs in the conflict prevention field. Activities of representatives in the field tended to be determined by the pre-occupations of their home offices rather than on the basis of information exchange between INGOs in the field. The result was a fair amount of overlap. The problem of overlap was particularly evident in the human rights field - where various Helsinki Commissions, UNPO, Human Rights Watch were all tilling the field with little apparent awareness of the parallel activities of their counterparts - and in the facilitation of dialogue among conflicting parties. In this area, at various times, two centres of the University of Maryland, the Carter Center,

International Alert, UNPO, the Harvard Negotiation Project, and the Helsinki Citizens Assembly have all sought get a piece of the action. Although I have not participated in these ventures myself, there again appears to be little inter-institutional effort at delineation of responsibility or areas of activity between them. Not surprisingly, the accounts I have heard and read seem rather repetitive; they lack synergy, and they are not cumulative.

Similar problems of co-ordination exist in IGO-NGO relations. The record here is mixed. As already noted, the UNV have been active in establishing contact with local NGOs and in encouraging collaboration among them. The OSCE has always welcomed contact and exchange of information with both local and international non-governmental organisations. The major UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDHA, UNOMIG), by contrast, have to my knowledge displayed little interest in the conflict-prevention and peacebuilding activities of local and international NGOs, apparently viewing them as at best irrelevant and at worst, an annoying complication. This is indicated, for example, by the resignation of the UNV co-ordinator in 1995, when he met substantial resistance from the UN head of mission to his ambitious program for building capacity and linkages among community organisations in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and the rest of Georgia in the hope of generating grass roots peace-building momentum.[16]

All of this said, the INGO community has had and is having some constructive impact on matters related to conflict prevention. The research done on the conflicts, on the political situation in Georgia, and on human rights has been a valuable addition to our knowledge of a hitherto obscure and insufficiently studied region. The dissemination of results has done much to increase foreign public and governmental awareness of conflict-related issues in Georgia. This in turn has affected the policies of other states towards Georgia in a positive manner. And these changes in policy have elicited some positive response in Georgia itself.

Once again, an example illustrates the point. In 1994-5, the British Helsinki Commission reported allegations of torture of incarcerated opposition members by Georgian police officials in connection with a number of "terrorist" trials then in process, and questioned the fairness of the trials themselves. This was picked up by the US Congress Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The Georgian Government realised that this could damage the critical relationship with the United States. Consequently, although rejecting the specific accusations made by the commission, the government accepted that violations of human rights by its personnel do occur and invited the United States mount programmes of assistance in the human rights area for Georgian police and prison officials, as well as requesting that the OSCE monitor the appeals of the defendants concerned.[17] Once again, I do not want to comment one way or another on the veracity of the British Helsinki Commission report or the Georgian response, except to say that there appears to have been abuse of the human rights of imprisoned members of the "zviadist" opposition from 1992-1995. The point is that the activity of this INGO focused international attention on the judicial process in Georgia and this in turn produced a positive response to the concerns on the part of the government. That is the way it is supposed to work.

Parenthetically, the flexibility and generally constructive tone of this government response is quite typical of Georgian government relations with the NGO and INGO communities. To my knowledge, the government has co-operated reasonably consistently in the fact-finding activities of NGOs, as is evident in the substantial number of reports on Georgia produced by the latter on the basis of research with the support of the authorities. There appears to have been little effort to impede the research even of those organisations, such as UNPO and Pax Christi, that could reasonably be expected to produce results uncongenial to the government. Moreover, registration of local NGOs is based on published laws and regulations that do not

impose excessive burdens on people seeking to form an organisation. The contrast with Azerbaijan, for example, is impressive.

To return to INGO effectiveness, a second positive impact lies in capacity-building. It is true that local NGOs remain deficient in many key respects, as just discussed. However, they are slowly growing and multiplying. In time, they will no doubt develop the experience necessary for effective action, including in the area of conflict prevention. That they are getting anywhere is largely the result of INGO support and that of intergovernmental organisations.

In short, although the effectiveness of NGOs and INGOs in preventing conflict in an immediate sense is not particularly impressive, they have played an important information acquisition and dissemination role, and, moreover, they are, haltingly and with great difficulty, laying the basis for an operating civil society. To the extent that the expansion and deepening of civil society impose constraints on conflictual behaviour, they are together having a significant long term effect on conflict prevention.

IV. Conclusion

What does the Georgian case tell us about the broader issue of conflict prevention in Europe? First, and perhaps unfortunately, although serious conflict is most likely in multi-ethnic societies undergoing complex transitions from authoritarianism to democracy and from the command economy to the market, these are societies in which NGOs are least equipped to play a constructive role in conflict prevention. At the local level, they lack experience, professionalism, roots in society, standing in the political culture, and resources for their activities. The dearth of resources, in combination with parlous economic conditions in society at large cause NGOs to expend considerable effort in the quest for cash and in competition with others for it, to the detriment of their programs and of co-ordination of their activities. INGOs in the meantime are hampered by their lack of experience of operation in these societies, their lack of language skills and specific regional knowledge, and by their consequent dependence on local collaborators.

There are in the former Soviet Union varying degrees of economic and political transition. And there are also varying degrees of international experience and involvement. One might expect that the extent to which NGO conflict prevention activities are effective may vary positively movement along these other axes. In the final version of this paper I shall pursue this logic with a number of comparative points about the NGO/INGO experience in the Baltic Republics.

Notes

1 Independence, is of course seldom absolute. Many local NGOs in Georgia have leading members who are also government officials, or who are associated personally with leading members of government. Some receive funding from government. Others receive funding from intergovernmental organisations. And numerous international NGO activities in Georgia are largely funded by official aid budgets.

2 I suspect that the issue is most fully, although still tangentially, dealt with in S. Neil MacFarlane, Larry Minear and Stephen Shenfield, Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping (and Larry Minear

3 For a superb annotated bibliography of research addressing many of these points, and also dealing more broadly with the many roles of non-governmental organisations, see Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance (London: Lynne Reiner, 1996), pp.227-240.

4   The activities of this organisation are also supported by an American quasi-non-governmental humanitarian organisation - the National Endowment for Democracy.

5 See, for example, Egbert G. Ch. Wesselink, Minorities in the Republic of Georgia: A Pax Christi Netherlands Report (Utrecht, 1992); Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, "Georgia: Torture and Gross Violations of Due Process in Georgia," (New York, 1994); "Report of a UNPO Co-ordinated Human Rights Mission to Abkhazia and Georgia" (The Hague: Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, July 1994).

6 See Martha Cullberg Weston, et.al., Georgia on Our Minds: Report of a Fact-Finding Misdion to the Republic of Georgia (Psychologists against Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Race - Sweden, July 1994).

7 Georgia/Abkhazia: Violation of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict (New York: Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, 1995).

8 I do not mean here to diminish the significant progress made by the government of Georgia, and by Georgian society as a whole in the direction of democracy. The Georgian record is very impressive, particularly when compared to its neighbours. To take but on example, all three Transcaucasian republics have had internationally monitored national elections within the past two years (Azerbaijan at the parliamentary level, and Armenia and Georgia at both parliamentary and executive levels). Significant problems have been found in the electoral process of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Georgian election of this year - like that in October 1992 - was certified "free and fair." There were obviously problems in the runup to and the conduct of both Georgian elections. None the less, they were impressive in the extent to which democratic norms were followed. They were all the more impressive, since the country remains divided by two suspended civil wars.

9 A classic example, though one not drawn specifically from the area of conflict prevention is the existence of two separate Georgian Scouts' organisation each vying for recognition from the umbrella international organisation and challenging its counterpart's claim to legitimacy as a scouting organisation.

10 A report of an NGO workshop held in April 1995 pointed to a lack of information about each other's activities as a major impediment to NGO effectiveness in peacebuilding. See "Georgian NGOs and the Peacebuilding Process" (Tbilisi: UNV, April 1995), p.8.

11 The United Nations Volunteers representative in Tbilisi has attempted to organise meetings among NGOs to discuss co-ordination and exchange information. There is little evidence, however, that this had had any measurable effect on NGO activities.

12 In one instance, an NGO seriously interested in education and training on mediation and conflict resolution received a grant from a major American foundation which insisted that the funding be used to promote indigenous research activities. Since the local NGO had no other potential source of revenue, it took the money and has essentially reoriented its activities away from its original function.

13 This problem was even more obvious in the movement of government personnel. In one instance, two senior and very able members of the staff of the principal governmental agency dealing with conflict prevention - the State Committee on Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities - were recruited away by UN agencies. They left for principally because they needed the hard currency.

14 When I last checked (April 1995), there were no phone lines open between central Georgia and Abkhazia, although infrequent connections were possible via Moscow.

15 Although I do not wish to enter a discussion of the merits and demerits of the Abkhaz and Georgian government positions on the 1992-3 war, a reading of the UNPO report on human rights in Abkhazia and Georgia (cited in footnote 4) does suggest greater receptivity to Abkhaz than to Georgian interpretation of various aspects of the conflict. Given that the purpose of the organisation is to enhance global awareness of the situations of peoples lacking formal interstate representation, this is not surprising.

16 Confidential communications.

17 See US Congress Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Commission Hearing to Focus on Human Rights and Democratization in Georgia, "Testimony of Ambassador Tedo Japaridze" (March 28, 1995): p. 23