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PATTERNS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN EUROPE

by Dan Smith

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

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1. European conflicts in global perspective

In the early 1990s, the global, annual number of armed conflicts rose sharply - from 47 in 1989 to 66 in 1992. Since then there has been a reduction, to a total of 50 in 1996, of which 44 were still active at the end of year. In all, from January 1990 through December 1996, the world saw 98 armed conflicts.[1] Only seven of these were between recognised states. A conservative estimate of the death toll in these wars is upwards of 5.5 million people, of whom it is normally presumed that 75 per cent or more were civilians.
Violent conflicts in Europe account for almost all the increase in annual incidence of wars in the early 1990s (see Table 1). The region became one of the most violent in the world.[2] However, the decline in the annual number of armed conflicts after 1992 is also highly concentrated in Europe, and the initial violence of the post-Cold War era has abated.

Table 1
Armed conflicts worldwide 1990-1996

REGION	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Asia & Pacific	20	19	23	20	19	16	18
Central & South America	7	6	5	3	4	5	4
North Africa & Middle East	7	9	9	10	10	10	9
Sub-Saharan Africa	16	21	17	17	22	20	17
Europe	4	10	12	7	5	4	2
TOTAL	54	65	66	57	60	55	50

By the end of 1996, after the end of the Chechnya war, the only armed conflict active in the former Soviet Union was in Tajikistan in central Asia. Nowhere in the Caucasus was

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[1] All figures in this paragraph are either taken from - or update those given in - Smith (1997a), which records 93 armed conflicts for the period from January 1990 through December 1995, and also contains a discussion of definitions and reservations (pp. 118-9). On terminology, I see the distinction used by some scholars between wars and armed conflicts as arbitrary and largely pointless; I use the terms interchangeably to refer to open, organised, armed and deadly conflict between two or more centrally organised parties over political issues of control of government or territory, involving some continuity between clashes, with a death toll of at least several hundred.

[2] In the regional definitions used here, "Europe" includes Turkey and the Caucasus but not the whole of the former USSR.

there an active war. The only armed conflict still active in Europe at the end of 1996 was in Turkey between the government and PKK.

It may therefore be wrong to view the wars in Europe and central Asia as heralds of a new era of violent conflict. They may instead have been relatively short-term products of the process of forming a new political and economic order, at a time when the world economy was in recession and the western political order readjusting in response to the end of the Cold War. It is therefore possible to risk the judgement that the wave of new conflicts of the 1990s is over.

Any optimism generated by this thought should be tempered by two further thoughts. First, on the global level, the old conflicts remain very much with us. Of the armed conflicts active in 1996, over 60 per cent have lasted more than five years, and one-third have lasted for longer than 20 years. These protracted armed conflicts prove extremely difficult to bring to an end. The world, therefore, is not necessarily a new and more peaceful era. Second, in Europe, most of the armed conflicts that began in the late 1980s or early 1990s, and are now inactive, have not really been brought to an end. Rather, they have been suspended.

2. Armed conflicts and conflict non-resolution in Europe

The armed conflicts in Europe in the 1990s (listed in Table 2) are predominantly internal conflicts. Where they involve separate states, they arose in the process of disintegration of a larger state unit - the USSR or SFR Yugoslavia. In the cases of the wars in former Yugoslavia, and of Georgia's wars with Abkhazia and with South Ossetia, and likewise of Russia's war with Chechnya, one party claimed independent statehood and the other denied it. The war between Armenia and Azerbaijan was a straightforward territorial dispute; the violence in North Ossetia between Ingush and Ossetians should rather be called a communal conflict, but it has elements of territorial jurisdiction (Tishkov, 1997). In the cases of the conflict in Spain, in Turkey with the PKK, and the UK, the claims deal with political jurisdiction but are more nuanced; it is difficult to tell how firmly held are the formal demands - in Turkey, by the PKK for autonomy, or in the UK, by the IRA for Irish unity, or in Spain, by the ETA for unity with a portion of France - and to what degree they are or could be negotiable.

Table 2
Locations of armed conflicts in Europe 1990-1996

(x = active conflict)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Armenia / Azerbaijan	x	x	x	x	x		
Bosnia-Herzegovina			x	x	x	x	
Croatia: Slavonia /Krajina		x	x				
W Slavonia /Krajina						x	
Georgia: West		x	x	x			
South Ossetia		x	x				
Abkhazia			x	x			
Moldova / Dniestr Republic		x	x				
Russia: North Ossetia /Ingush			x				
Moscow				x			

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chechnya					x	x	x
Slovenia / Yugoslavia		x					
Spain: Basque	x	x	x				
Turkey: SE region / Kurdistan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Western		x	x				
UK: Northern Ireland	x	x	x	x	x		

These differences notwithstanding, the armed conflicts of Europe in the 1990s evolved out of the internal problems of states, rather than from clashes between states.[3] In the background of most of them - the exceptions being those in Spain, Turkey and the UK - lies the end of the Cold War, though how important it was in leading to armed conflict differs from case to case. The armed conflicts in the former USSR (Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Russia) are inextricably tied to the end of the Cold War, though each in its own particular way. The wars of Yugoslavia's disintegration can be traced in part to changed international conditions, but are largely attributable to internal causes.

In a comparison of the causes of the armed conflicts in the former USSR and former Yugoslavia, a nuanced balance is required. The armed conflicts within the area of the former USSR either helped weaken the USSR, thus helping bring on the end of the Cold War, or were made possible by the collapse of authority from the old centre in Moscow. Though the conflicts have their own causes and dynamics, analytically autonomous from the larger patterns of East-West relations, the internal weakness of the USSR, of which these conflicts and their roots were a part, is central to the story of the end of the Cold War and, indeed, the end of the USSR. By contrast, and contrary to a seemingly widespread impression, the wars of Yugoslavia's disintegration are not products of the end of the Cold War, though, of course, they did not unfold in isolation from the process through which the Cold War itself ended. The break-up gathered momentum from about 1985. It was based in part on the non-viable system of government, with a rotating Federal presidency, after Tito's death in 1980, and in part on the economic divide between a

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[3] This judgement is controversial in the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina, because the government there and its international supporters and sympathisers have bitterly rejected the idea that the war in that country from 1992 to 1995 was a civil war. For reasons that are rather unclear, they seem to see the designation "civil war" as demeaning and as downplaying the importance of the war, and as making the Bosnian government and the Serb forces in Bosnia equally responsible for war. They prefer to regard it as a war of international aggression. From a purely semantic point of view, it can be said that one side may be an aggressor in a civil war as easily as in international war. Moreover, although Yugoslav army and para-military units from Serbia were undoubtedly present and active in Bosnia-Hercegovina from the start of the war in 1992, it is also clear that the leadership of Republika Srpska had a relatively independent political. It is therefore not surprising that the Hague Tribunal was divided on the issue of whether the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina was an international war and whether the Serb army acted as an agent of the Belgrade government (Klarin, 1997). Indeed, the conflict is one in which neither the terms "inter-state" and "international" nor the terms "civil" and "internal" are strictly applicable. These terms imply the common recognition of states and borders and are hard to sustain when states are being formed (such as former Yugoslavia in 1991 and 1992), or collapsing (such as Somalia in 1992 and since), or have little effective claim to rule part of their nominal territory (such as northern Iraq since 1991). The terms may also be too blunt to depict the delicate and undoubtedly changeable balance of power between clearly internal actors - such as Laurent Kabila in Zaire, Radovan Karadzic in Republika Srpska, Mate Boban in the Croatian republic of Herzeg-Bosna, or Milan Babic in Srpska Krajina - and their various external supporters, paymasters and suppliers. The issue that underlies this terminological dispute in the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina is, in sum, by no means exclusive to that war.

relatively wealthy north and impoverished south. These political and economic divisions built on and amplified the ethno-national divisions. The momentum towards eventual break-up was indirectly aided by the US-Soviet détente that began in 1987; this steadily removed the grounds for fearing Soviet aggression, which had been central in the Federation's legitimation. With retrospective knowledge, it can be seen that by late 1989 when the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and Czechoslovkia's velvet revolution, the break-up of Yugoslavia was all but impossible to prevent. By December 1991 when the USSR broke up, dissolution was far advanced and violent. In short, it is not the 1989-1991 period, nor the preceding effort at reform within the USSR, that decisively shaped both the fact and form of Yugoslavia's disintegration. The primary reasons for the break-up are internal: failures of economic policy, the low legitimacy of the post-Tito Federation, and severe regional discrepancies in economic prosperity that roughly coincided with ethnic divisions.[4]

The situation in 1997 is as follows:-

• Renewed violence between Slovenia and Yugoslavia is barely conceivable; the issue over which they fought in 1991 is now settled.

• It is also highly unlikely that there will be a repeat of the brief armed conflict between the forces of the presidency and the parliament in Russia in 1993.

• Although tensions remain between Moldova and the Dniestr Republic, efforts at conflict resolution have probably succeeded in ruling out renewed armed conflict.

• In Spain, sporadic renewals of violence do not currently indicate a high probability of returning to the pre-1992 levels of conflict.

• In Northern Ireland, the peace process is still alive but continues to hang by a thread; if renewed, the war is unlikely to escalate to mid-1970s levels.

• In Albania, international intervention has successfully suspended violent conflict; it is too soon to say whether the violence may return.

• Between Armenia and Azerbaijan, nothing is resolved, although as time passes the removal of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijanian jurisdiction becomes more and more a settled fact.

• In Bosnia-Hercegovina, likewise, nothing is resolved; there is no fighting only because of the presence of the Stabilisation Force (S-FOR). If S-FOR is withdrawn in mid-1998 as planned, there is a high risk of a return of armed conflict.

• In Croatia, though it would be outlandish if Yugoslavia retained territorial ambitions over Krajina, three issues remain unresolved and capable of directly or indirectly provoking violent conflict: return of refugees to western Slavonia and Krajina; resentment in Yugoslavia over the transfer of eastern Slavonia to Croatia; and the potential for disputes and clashing ambitions over the future of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

• Georgia remains unstable, with a great deal of bitterness still over the secession of Abkhazia. With South Ossetia, something almost approaching a *modus vivendi* has been reached. Both conflicts are stabilised by the presence of Russian troops; as long as they remain - and there is currently no reason to expect them to withdraw - renewed fighting is unlikely.

• In Russia, attempts to resolve the disputes that led to between North Ossetia and Ingushetia were rendered fruitless by the rising crisis in Russian relations with Chechnya in the last quarter of 1994. The deal that ended the war with Chechnya in 1996 deliberately deferred discussions to resolve Chechnya's political and constitutional status for five

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[4] The balance of nuance is further discussed in Smith (1997b) and Smith & Østerud (1996); for the so far definitive historical account, see Little & Silber (1995).

years. That approach was wise in 1996, but the breathing space thus granted needs to be exploited, or the issue could return to violence in 2001.

Europe thus offers us more examples of armed conflicts that have been stabilised than of actual resolution and settlement. It is against this background that we can consider how and why further conflicts may erupt or old conflicts re-erupt.

3. The double injustice

Causation is a controversial issue in the social sciences, and it is far from straightforward to understand and evaluate causal processes that are multiple, interdependent and changeable - such as the causes of armed conflicts. It may be worth heeding a warning from a survey of theories of international conflict: it found virtually no agreement among scholars on anything except that, '(T)here is no single cause of war, *although even this view is sometimes challenged.*' (Levy, 1989, p.210: emphasis added).

From a methodological point of view, unnecessary confusion often results from thinking indiscriminately about causes. There is an important difference between the necessary conditions for war, of which there are very few, and the sufficient conditions, of which there are very many, only a few of which apply in any conflict (Welch, 1993, p.8). War is made possible simply by the availability of weapons with which to fight it and the existence of a dispute between two or more parties. What makes war probable depends on specific circumstances in a wide and varied range of times and places.

Even among the sufficient conditions of war, there are different categories. Social scientists mostly want to develop general theories of the causes of armed conflict and are most likely to concentrate on background conditions and long-range causes.[5] The theories and explanations that may come from this sort of work are general, structural and long-term. Examination of the evolution of individual conflicts, however, inevitably moves off the long-term background and examines the political foreground - leaders, their political strategy and tactics, and short-term events. Indeed, in armed conflicts, the parties may have little real notion of the structural background.

There is a concept, however, that depicts a point at which the more short-term and subjective considerations of political actors intersect, or at least coincide, with the longer-term and, we can hope, more objective (at least, less personally committed) assessments by scholars. That concept is justice.

Lying behind most armed conflicts today there is a burning and easily exploited sense of double injustice. Quantitative research indicates that economic conditions are the most important long-term causes of intra-state armed conflicts today; the same research shows degradation of renewable resources to be an important secondary cause - specifically soil

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[5] Among the main explanations explored in contemporary research, ethnic, economic, political and environmental factors feature strongly. The theory of 'group entitlement' (Horowitz, 1985) pulls ethnic and economic factors together. 'Relative deprivation' theory (Gurr, 1970) incorporates economic and political forms of deprivation (of wealth or power. Research on links between environmental degradation and conflict explores the capacity of states and societies to adapt to changing circumstances without violence (Homer-Dixon, 1994). Research on the relationship between political system and peace starts with the finding that democratic states almost never go to war with each other (Russett,1993). It has been contended that this conclusion is based on a misguided research focus (MacMillan, 1996), but the empirical finding is widely accepted, even if theoretical and conceptual clarification is still in process (Starr, 1997). The question now is whether democracies are as peaceable with themselves as with each other, a view put forward by Rummel (1995) and disputed by Risse-Kappen (1995).

erosion, deforestation and water scarcity (Hauge, 1997; Hauge & Ellingsen 1996). There is also a strong association between armed conflict and extreme abuse of human rights: in the first half of the 1990s, three-quarters of states with records of extra-judicial execution were involved in armed conflict, and two-thirds of all active armed conflicts in that period involved such states (Smith, 1997a, p.97). Regardless of the direction of causation,[6] the presence of war leads to an expectation that extreme abuse of human rights is occurring, and *vice versa*. A combination of economic and political injustice underlying conflict is also found by Auvinen (1997) for the 1980s.

Ethnic diversity as such does not seem to be a cause of war, for while the least war-prone states in the 1990s were those that were ethnically most homogenous, the most war-prone states were not the most diverse (Smith, 1997a, p. 30). However, ethnic difference is visible and often part of the language of group identity and common prejudice. This makes it easy material for mobilisation by political leaders. Quite often, a sense of ethnic identity only emerges in the unfolding of the conflict, and then coheres around resentment and grievance. Against the cosmopolitan assumption that self-interest explains nationalism, Horowitz (1985, p. 131) stresses 'the willingness of ethnic groups to sacrifice economic interest for other kinds of gain.' It is, of course, in the name of something that is, rightly or wrongly, regarded as justice that economic interest is most likely to be satisfied. And it is in the strength of emotion that grows from the combination of group identity with a sense of right and a sense of being wronged that ethnic politics, once mobilised, can lead to irreconcilable hatred and to protracted, unmanageable conflicts.

How can these various strands be brought together? An archetypal account of how conflicts unfold would start with the difficulty ordinary people in much of the world in finding the basic minimum of economic and environmental necessities – a living wage, clean water, good soil. A privileged elite has too large a share of a resource base that is too narrow. The methods that elite uses to defend its privilege establish the link between poverty, inequality and the abuse of human rights. Here lies the double injustice. The denial of basic political freedoms forces people to chose between accepting injustice and attempting to secure a fairer share by violent means. At the same time, economic problems, whether chronic or critical, produce fractures among the elite; groups splinter off, determined to do better for themselves. As conflict unfolds, emerging political leaders often find that the easiest way of mobilising support is on an ethnic basis.

Being archetypal, this account does not apply to any real armed conflict. Suitably modified for local details and the chronological order of events, however, it applies to almost all. In Europe as throughout the world, injustice - actual or perceived - is the source of armed conflict.

4. Wars that return

There is a further inference for armed conflicts Europe that can be drawn from looking at global patterns. The world is tragically marked by broken peace agreements and ceasefires, by wars that return long after most people believed they were over. Among recent examples outside Europe are Angola, Burundi, Colombia, Israel, Liberia, the Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka. Among European examples are the 1995 agreement

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[6] Uneven reporting of human rights abuses may make it unlikely that the issue of the prevailing direction of causation could be resolved through quantitative research. Case studies suggest both directions are common.

between Russia and Dzhokar Dudayev's Chechen government, and the 1992 ceasefire between Croatia and Srpska Krajina. Among mid-1997 examples of peace processes breaking down are Cambodia, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. One of the features of many of these examples is that when wars return, they do so with increased ferocity and destructiveness.

Wars return for a variety of reasons:-

• It may be that the commitment to a ceasefire or even a more ambitious peace agreement was not sincere on one or both sides. One set of examples of this is series the ceasefire agreements successively made and broken by Croatia and Srpska Krajina in 1991.

• Or it may be that the commitment was genuine but conditional. For example, in Angola in 1992, Jonas Savimbi seems to have been committed to peace and elections only if he won the latter.

• Internal divisions in one or both parties may also lead to changes as the balance of power shifts; an example here is the way that political change in Israel in 1996 destabilised the peace process tenuously established in Oslo in 1993.

• A variation on this is that new parties enter the conflict on the basis of rejecting the peace terms (or already existing groups gain more influence through their greater militancy), as *Hamas*, *Hizbollah* and Islamic *Jihad* have in the Israeli Occupied Territories since 1993.

• Underlying all these reasons, however, and embracing both these and other examples, is the problem of conflict issues that have not been resolved.

When the issues that divided the parties remain politically live issues, and in the absence of a new set of rules for pursuing disputes without lethal violence, there is a permanent risk of war returning.

5. Zones of concern

Prediction is a notoriously tempting trap. The challenge for analysts and policy-makers alike is to find a mode of looking ahead that does not involve a crystal ball, yet allows more than a series of weak-kneed "perhapses". It is in that spirit that this section of the paper is offered.

In terms of its usefulness for looking ahead, all that has been said in the paper so far can be reduced to three propositions:-

*   Armed conflict arises out of injustice;
*   Inter-state armed conflicts are rare;
*   Of European armed conflicts active in the 1990s, few have been settled.

To expand a little, if the trends of 1990 through 1996 persist, the next several years will probably bring us few inter-state wars and perhaps fewer armed conflicts than in the early 1990s. Most armed conflicts will probably be largely internal, though several will flow across national boundaries, especially when state authority is weak or non-existence. These conflicts will continue to concentrate among the poorer and less democratic countries in the world, and it is all too likely that ethnic mobilisation will make them both protracted and intractable.

On this basis, the likely danger areas will concentrate in eastern and south-eastern Europe. This is particularly so when the possibility of intervention is raised - whether preventive, wart-time or post-war intervention. The return and escalation of violence in the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain is certainly not to be ruled out, but Ireland, the UK and Spain are likely to seek to manage these conflicts within existing

frameworks. They will place considerable emphasis on national and EU contexts, and, as in the case of Northern Ireland, some resort to international assistance in facilitating negotiations. In other words, the management of these conflicts will be largely internal.

By contrast, conflict management capacity in eastern and southern-eastern Europe is relatively limited and fragile. International intervention is more likely to be necessary. There is every reason to expect it to continue to be a major item on Europe's international security agenda. Accordingly, capabilities, training and doctrine for intervention will be crucial parts of military capacity among NATO countries. The alliance's members require, between them, a capacity for intervention at all points along the spectrum of preventive, war-time and post-war intervention. Though the tasks at each point are somewhat different - in part depending on how forceful an approach is taken to war-time intervention - the distinction between the different kinds of intervention should not be overdrawn. As well as differences, there are important similarities. In the transition from war to peace, for example, the aim is always to construct a transition that does not pave the way on from peace to war again. It is, in that sense, a preventive strategy. Much of the framework of forces, training, preparation and doctrine needed for war-time intervention is also necessary for discussing preventive intervention. This is particularly important when we consider the frozen or suspended conflicts - ones where there is currently little or no fighting, but no real sign of resolution.

Among the items of unfinished business in the break-up of the USSR are the borders, security and status of Russians living in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as relations within Ukraine and between Ukraine and Russia. The three Baltic countries are the target of a significant, focused and co-ordinated Nordic regional foreign policy. This may act as a brake on irresponsible and confrontational policies in either the Baltic countries or Moscow. In general, despite problems in ethnic relations in Estonia and Latvia, it is hard to envisage the situation of Russians deteriorating so far or the behaviour of political leaders altering so drastically that open armed conflict breaks out. In Ukraine, though there are also internal and external difficulties, earlier worries of the country breaking up have not been justified, and there are some grounds for seeing the emergence of an underlying stability, despite heated political rhetoric and evident economic shortcomings (Bukkvoll, 1997).

If it is right to regard the three Baltic countries and Ukraine as relatively unlikely to produce violent conflict within the next few years, this focuses attention on the littoral region of the Black Sea and the Balkans. By implication - or extension - it also directs our attention to the relationship between Greece and Turkey and to Cyprus.

It seems unlikely that, having been managed without open violence for over two decades, the underlying Greek-Turkish rivalry is going to explode into open violence. Both countries' governments, whatever their political complexion or constitutional basis, have every incentive to avoid open armed conflict. It cannot be ruled out that Cyprus, despite current negotiations, sees renewed political violence; it is less conceivable that either of the major regional powers gets directly involved.

Difficult problems of transition from state socialism to a more free market economy could create new problems in both Bulgaria and Romania, as they have in Albania in 1997. In Bulgaria, a history of ethnic tensions and conflict (Poulton, 1991) could be called on by political leaders, and Bulgaria might then come remarkably close to the archetypal causal account advanced above. Not only in 1989 but also since, Romania has shown a capacity for violent politics, which could also suggest that the road out of the 20th century will not be completely free of violent obstacles. In both cases, however, the passage of time is an

aid to peace. The more time goes by, and, especially, the more that difficult problems are confronted and resolved without resort to open armed conflict, the less likely it is that open violence will eventually erupt.

We therefore finally come - unimaginatively perhaps - to the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Turkey and the Caucasus as the zones of greatest concern. Among these, only the case of Turkey stands as a current example of a hot war. Turkey has more than 30,000 troops in northern Iraq at the time of writing and much of its military force is committed to the south-eastern region of Turkey and the war against the PKK.

For as long as Turkish politics are shaped by the founding Kemalist project and its version of nationalism, with its attempt to obliterate the Kurdish sense of identity, there will continue to be violent resistance from some Kurdish groups. This is a war the Turkish state cannot win, though it will almost certainly not lose it either. The need, therefore, is for a careful and long-term approach to reconciliation. The problem is that Kemalism is under attack from Islamism, which has gained enough popular support in Turkey to gain success at the polls and form a government. The strength of Islamism among some parts of the population only underlines the importance of Kemalism for the military leadership, much of the Turkish establishment and large sectors of the population. In the process of reaffirming Kemalism, and especially in the process of doing so by arbitrary military *fiat*, the war against the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) is likewise reaffirmed in what may be thought of as a political *ricochet* effect. In the short-term, given the current emphasis on resisting Islamism in the name of the secular state created by Kemal Attaturk, it may be difficult to expect much progress towards ending violence between the Turkish state and militant Kurdish organisations..

There were two possible interpretations of the 1995 Dayton Agreement on Bosnia-Hercegovina. One was that it outlawed ethnic cleansing and endorsed the integrity of federal Bosnia-Hercegovina. The other was that it endorsed ethnic cleansing and left open the possibility of dismembering Bosnia-Hercegovina, dressing this up with a fig leaf of language about refugee return and war crimes trials that has, predictably, not been implemented. In this more cynical interpretation, the justification for Dayton was that the killing stopped, but there was no confidence about anything else. The leaders of the powers whose forces are committed to the Stabilisation Force (S-FOR) have made clear their own dissatisfaction with the failure of the three political leaderships in Bosnia to resolve their differences and work properly together in one integrated unit. This may indicate that they believed and believe in the more idealistic interpretation. It also seems to indicate an assessment of Bosnia-Hercegovina by mid-1997 that there has developed a momentum towards renewed war that is, for the moment, held in check only by the presence of S-FOR. On this reading, the apparent American commitment to withdraw US forces in S-FOR in mid-1998, and the apparent commitment of the British and French governments to follow suit, portends renewed warfare.

As indicated already, such a development could draw in both Croatia and Yugoslavia. It is a grimly fascinating exercise to speculate about whether, at that point, the two states might fight as virtual allies. If so, it would be with the aim of dividing Bosnia-Hercegovina (most or all) between them, thus fulfilling the agreement between Presidents Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic allegedly made at their April 1991 meeting at Karadjordjevo Villa.

Even with Croatia and Yugoslavia involved in this way, it is unlikely that Slovenia would be drawn in. Many observers, however, believe that ethno-nationalist issues in the area of the former Yugoslavia will not reach some sort of stability without passing through a

new round of violent conflict in Kosovo, where the first violence occurred after the death of Tito, where there is evidence of systematic and extreme abuses of human rights and where each month brings several deaths from political violence. It has long been feared that escalation in Kosovo would result in an out-flux of refugees into Macedonia and possibly Albania. In Macedonia, large numbers of refugees would be both an economic burden and a proximate cause of escalating ethnic tensions, possibly leading to armed conflict. In Albania, large numbers of refugees would be a severe social and economic burden, in a country whose economic fragility was dramatically demonstrated in 1997, along with an equally dramatic demonstration of the close links between economic fragility, social instability, political dissatisfaction and widespread violence. In both Albania and Macedonia, international intervention seems a pre-requisite of stability. In Macedonia it was, from the outset in December 1992, designed as a preventive deployment; in Albania, it began as a stabilising force, which must develop its agenda into preventive deployment if it is to be successful.

In the Caucasus, the basic prognosis starts from the same basis as that in Bosnia-Hercegovina: the withdrawal of foreign stabilising forces would probably be the prelude to a renewal of violence. The withdrawal of Russian forces, however, is far less of a prospect than the withdrawal of S-FOR from Bosnia. Following the break-up of the USSR, Russia was able to use peacekeeping as a means of establishing regional influence (Baev, 1996). It is most unlikely that anything except an extreme crisis of power in Russia would lead it to abandon this much-prized foreign and security policy asset. It is at this point - in understanding the inter-relatedness of everything in the Caucasus and the former Soviet Union - that the perils of prediction become starkly clear. It is therefore at this point that the attempt at a less predictive form of looking ahead should be arrested.

6. Overview

Putting forward a regional survey such as that in the previous section, an author will hope that readers take due note of the use of terms such "perhaps" and "probable", as well as the repeated use of the conditional tense. Both optimistic and pessimistic expectations may be confounded, and it often seems that retrospective knowledge allows one to see that the least expected development was always the most likely one. That said, from available evidence, among possible zones of future violent conflict in Europe, those that are more likely than others, *but still not certain*, are precisely those zones where there has been recent violent conflict. There are currently no good reasons to expect armed conflict in new locations; unfortunately, there are no good reasons either to expect long-term resolution for most of the recent conflicts, which have been suspended rather than ended. The end of the Cold War engendered great optimism, which was soon qualified - and in many minds replaced - by a more gloomy assessment. The end of East-West confrontation seemed to have brought on a new wave of ever more appalling and violent conflicts, many seemingly rooted in long-lasting ethnic hatreds. The big threat of the Cold war had been, it seemed, replaced by lower level but more acute threats.

These volatile readings of security characterised much strategic discussion in the early 1990s. Perhaps we can now opt against both of them. The security environment has changed markedly both with and since the end of the Cold War. The dimensions of security policy in Europe must reflect the dimensions of the security challenges Europe faces. Helping identify those dimensions has been the task of this paper. The most direct

operational conclusions to be drawn from it confirm the importance of rounded intervention capabilities in the foreseeable future.

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