CONFERENCE REPORT

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND EUROPEAN SECURITY:
LESSONS FROM THE PAST AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Ms. Maria Alongi
Rapporteur

October 18, 1996

****

****

Women in International Security (WIIS) is an international, non-partisan educational program and professional network, dedicated to the advancement of women in the field of foreign and defense policy, international security studies broadly defined. Founded in 1987 by Catherine McArdle Kelleher, now with the Department of Defense, WIIS offers a comprehensive set of programs designed to educate the international community about the roles and contributions of women working in the field of international security. The program includes women in the military, in government, in policy-making and diplomatic areas, private enterprise, academia, and the mass media. Ongoing seminar series and conferences provide mechanisms for women to contribute directly to the international security dialogue. The WIIS (*pronounced "wise"*) computerized databank includes over 4000 listings worldwide. WIIS publications offer professional development and substantive information, including directories on fellowships and internships, and an anthology of case studies on ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

****

****

PREFACE

On October 23-25, 1995, coinciding with the Bosnia peace talks being held in Dayton, Ohio, Women in International Security (WIIS), an international, nonpartisan educational program; The Friedrich-Eberet Foundation; the U.S. Institute of Peace; and the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute sponsored a conference, "Ethnic Conflict and European Security: Lessons from the Past and Implications for the Future." Among the participants and attendees were scholars and policymakers from the United States and Europe concerned with the crisis in the Balkans and the larger ramifications of ethnic conflict for European security.

This rapporteur's summary, compiled by Ms. Maria Alongi, captures the primary themes of the conference to include linkages between ethnicity and instability in Europe, the role European and transatlantic security institutions can play in mitigating those tensions, and the various positive roles Russia and the United States can play in resolving or lessening the impact of ethnic conflict. Ms. Alongi concludes that the nature of the threat posed by ethnic conflict to European security is bound inexorably to a political manipulation; an ethnicization of politics. And while the Balkan crisis held the potential for catapulting Europe back to July 1914, the way the international community reacted to head off a further deterioration in the situation provides some basis for optimism.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to present this overview of the conference. The opinions summarized in the following pages are those of the participants and do not represent official positions of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Army.

RICHARD H. WITHERSPOON
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

iii

ABOUT THE RAPPORTEUR

MARIA ALONGI currently is Special Assistant to the Defense Advisor at the U.S. Mission to NATO. She served as rapporteur and consultant to Women in International Security (WIIS) for this project prior to assuming her current position.

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND EUROPEAN SECURITY:

LESSONS FROM THE PAST AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction.

With the outbreak and intensification of a number of ethnically defined conflicts on the European continent since the fall of communism, a conventional wisdom has formed that makes ethnic tensions and instability in Europe almost synonymous. This prevailing notion of an ethnic threat to European stability also has affected the debate on European and transatlantic security institutions. Indeed, the capacity to prevent and respond to ethnic conflict has been a major consideration in the process of institutional development undertaken by several key political and security organizations, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As further proof of the centrality of ethnic questions in European security, the effectiveness and continued relevance of these organizations has often been linked to their responsiveness, or lack thereof, to the most prominent ethnic conflict in Europe: the Balkan crisis.[1]

Is this linkage between ethnicity and instability in Europe in fact correct? And, does our evaluation of the European security processes and organizations reflect their actual and potential capacity to manage the problem? In order to evaluate the impact of ethnicity on the tensions and conflicts affecting European security and the role of security organizations in mitigating that impact, Women In International Security, the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College convened a conference in Washington, DC, on October 24-25, 1995, entitled "Ethnic Conflict and European Security: Lessons from the Past and Implications for the Future." The two-day discussion, which analyzed the sources of ethnic tensions in Europe as well as the institutional developments in the European security framework, yielded four principal conclusions:

• First, greater precision is required when discussing ethnic conflict in the context of European security. The ethnic problem in Europe is multifaceted: stemming from different causes, involving a variety of issues, and thus requiring different approaches. In addition, although ethnic tensions are a prominent feature of the European security landscape, not all present a threat to security and stability. In sum, not all ethnic problems should be equated with ethnic conflict.

• The threat to security and stability in Europe arises not

1

from the presence of ethnic tensions in regional relationships, but from the exploitation and manipulation of these tensions for political ends--a process that can be termed the "ethnicization of politics."

  • The international community has not yet developed appropriate mechanisms to respond to challenges of an ethnic nature. Although certain effective tools to manage the centrifugal forces that ethnic tensions have produced already exist, prior to the implementation of the Dayton accords, responses have been halting, *ad hoc*, and inconsistent. In addition, in certain cases, international responses to ethnic conflict have actually aggravated the problem.

  • The inconsistent approach of the international community to ethnic demands and grievances reflects to a large extent the inadequacy of existing norms for international behavior in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, there is an inherent dichotomy in the current international approach to ethnic questions, which is based on the potentially contradictory norms of the inviolability of borders, ethnic and minority rights, and the right to self-determination. It is incumbent upon the international community to reevaluate how these norms are to be applied in response to ethnic questions.

Ethnicity and Security: Linkages and Tensions.

  The optimism fueled by the end of the Cold War and rejection of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union was quickly muted by the emergence of tensions and conflicts in the former communist states. As analysts struggled to define the forces that would shape international relations and affect security in Europe, nationalism linked to ethnic identity emerged in the literature as a key defining factor.[2] Yet, as many of these analysts also highlight, the relationship between increased ethnic consciousness and instability is not clear-cut.[3] Indeed, the relationship among ethnicity, nationalism, and conflict generates vastly different analyses. While some experts believe heightened ethnic consciousness fosters nationalism, which in turn can lead to secessionist movements and conflict, others assert that state failure itself will spur people to seek different means to organize themselves, fomenting nationalism and possibly national conflict.[4]

  Recent experience in Europe also suggests that ethnic questions are only one component of a number of factors and dynamics that result in conflict between and within states. Although the conflicts in the Balkans, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Chechnya indicate that ethnicity plays a distinct role in the breakdown of security, there are also a number of cases on the

European continent in which ethnic tensions between and within states have been managed so far without resort to violence. Poland, for example, has not reacted in a confrontational manner to laws limiting the rights of Polish minorities living in Lithuania and Belarus. The identification of the Russian population in Crimea with Russia has also not led to confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, despite the sometimes elevated tension between the two countries. And, despite the 1990 clashes between Hungarians and Romanians in Romania, the two governments also avoided confrontation over the status of the 2 million ethnic Hungarians in Romania. Indeed, Romania adopted a series of measures designed to ensure some limited rights for the Hungarian population within its borders.

The above cases also highlight the complexity of the ethnic problem in Europe. Under the heading of "ethnicity" in Europe are often subsumed questions relating to a state's treatment of minority populations of different nationality within its borders, a state's relations and aspirations towards its own minorities living outside the borders, relations between different ethnic groups that share national borders, and even, as demonstrated by the identification of the Balkan war as an ethnic conflict, relations among groups of similar ethnicity but with different religious and cultural traits. As a result, as conference participant Heather Hurlburt suggested, the conventional wisdom surrounding the question of ethnicity in Europe suffers from paradoxical and sometimes clearly contradictory notions. Ethnic conflict is ascribed as often to historical regional enmities as to systemic changes resulting from the end of authoritarian regimes. It is thus described alternatively as an "old" and "new" problem. Another paradox involves the international community's treatment of the problem, which so far has focused on the recognition and preservation of the collective rights of a minority group. Although designed to stabilize interethnic relations, this approach, in the opinion of several conference participants, may generate an adverse effect. First, it singles out and therefore elevates ethnicity among the many factors-- linguistic, cultural, and religious--that make up the identity of a population. Second, the emphasis of the international community on minority rights may encourage groups who feel disenfranchised to organize along ethnic lines so as to attract the attention and assistance of the international community in pursuing their goals. In developing appropriate responses to the ethnic problem in Europe, it is therefore necessary to reexamine widely-held beliefs about ethnicity and conflict in Europe and distinguish the issues concerning ethnicity in the European security context.

Ethnic Issues in the European Security Context.

Conference participants identified three distinct issues and

problem areas in ethnic relations in Europe:

 • power struggles among substate groups that identify themselves along ethnic lines as a result of the collapse of state authorities, exemplified by the Balkans;

 • the potential that the status of an ethnic minority within a state might provoke irredentist claims by another state, a situation that might arise in regions of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics; and,

 • tensions that occur within a state as a result of the state's resistance to demands by minority or other groups for special ethnopolitical status, examples of which abound on the territory of the Russian Federation.

 Conference participants debunked the idea, prevalent in the public debate, that enduring ethnic differences fomented the conflict in the Balkans. Indeed, as several experts highlighted, the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of Slovenia, was ethnically mixed, with at least one seventh of the population of mixed heritage. The conflict in the Balkans can be best understood instead as stemming from the deterioration of existing state power structures brought about by the discreditation of communism. In her book, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, Susan Woodward takes the analysis of systemic change even further, and argues that the deterioration of the power structures in Yugoslavia predates even the end of communism, and has deeper roots in the transformation of the global economy that burdened the Yugoslavian state with a debt crisis that undermined its authority. In Woodward's opinion, the subsequent change in the international order brought about by the demise of the Soviet Union magnified a state crisis already in progress.[5] Conference participant Mjusa Sever, of the Slovenian Libra Institute, also argued that the source of the crisis in the Balkans lies in the decline of communism. In Sever's opinion, elites in Yugoslavia, confronting a challenge to their power base, sought to create new support for themselves by rallying people around the nationalist cause,[6] thus radicalizing the political debate.

 Effective manipulation of information contributed to making ethnic differentiation and nationalism an integral part of the post-communist politics in the former Yugoslavia. Panelist Ana Husarska, a journalist who has covered the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, found that public perceptions among Bosnian Serbs were strongly influenced by nationalist propaganda, as well as the efforts of Bosnian Serb authorities to limit the people's exposure to a variety of views on the developing crisis.[7] Finally, the initial response of the international community to the changes sweeping Eastern Europe in the aftermath of communism

may have affected the splintering and radicalization of politics in the former Yugoslavia. Several speakers made the point that the recognition by the West of claims of independence by the Baltic countries encouraged those in the former Yugoslavia who sought independence as a means of extracting themselves from a system that did not work and, in some cases, from human rights abuses. Mjusa Sever further argues that when the international community at the outbreak of the crisis in the Balkans pressed for maintaining the integrity of Yugoslavia, it dealt a setback for moderate reformists, for it lent legitimacy to existing power elites.

A second expression of the ethnic problem in Europe is the presence of large minority populations within established states--a situation that occurs in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Baltics. Here, a number of ethnically distinct groups reside outside national borders, such as Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia, and Vojvodina; Turks in Bulgaria; and Russians in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the Baltics. In addition, several Central and East European countries have sizable populations of the stateless Roma (gypsies). The demands of these minorities for special status, and the treatment of these groups by the state, constitute potential flashpoints for the degradation of inter-state or intra-state relations. Indeed, several post-communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe articulated claims towards national minorities residing outside state borders, raising fears that this expression of "ethnic nationalism" would turn into irredentism and foment instability. Former Prime Minister Antall of Hungary, for example, repeatedly stated that he was president of the five million Hungarians residing outside state borders, and, despite Hungary's adoption of the OSCE (then known as CSCE) pledge that borders cannot be changed by force, the government repeatedly refused to explicitly recognize the borders of neighboring states.[8]

Despite this situation, conference participants concurred that the potential for instability in Central and Eastern Europe is greatly diminished by the yearning of the Central and East European countries to become integrated into the Western community of nations, symbolized by membership in the European Union and NATO. Indeed, minority rights questions in the region have been handled largely through negotiation and agreement. In 1993, Hungary and Ukraine ratified a 1991 treaty on friendship and cooperation, which rejects territorial demands by either party against the other and includes provisions for the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine. In addition, dialogue is underway between Hungary and Slovakia, and Hungary and Romania--belying earlier expectations of a potential escalation of tensions.

Conference speaker Charles Gati argued that threat

5

perceptions in Central and Eastern Europe provide a powerful push toward integration in Western security structures. Relative economic deprivation--following the high expectations generated by the end of communism-- have indeed created a backlash against minority populations, which are often scapegoated for economic or societal failures. Yet, a more potent dynamic in these countries is created by the perception of a longer-term threat to their territorial integrity by Russia. Gati pointed out the widely-held belief in Central and Eastern Europe that a downcast Russia will eventually seek to regain lost status through territorial aggression. Thus, countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic states actively seek entry into NATO as a hedge against future insecurity. In the opinion of Gati, this aspiration has contributed to keeping ethnic tensions in check, as regional tensions have come to be perceived as incompatible with "entry into the club."

Likewise, Ukrainian-Russian relations on the question of minorities have remained stable, despite the 1994 efforts by Crimean regional president Yuri Meshkov to hold a referendum on whether Crimea should become an independent state "in union" with members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and his pronouncements about potential reunification with Russia. Conference participant Elizabeth Pond argued this expression of Crimean nationalism owes more to the aspirations of the Russian population in Ukraine for economic well-being than to a desire to rejoin Russia. As Pond pointed out, Russians in Ukraine largely supported the 1991 vote on Ukrainian independence, primarily in the expectation that the Ukranian economy would undergo reform and grow faster than Russia's. As the Ukranian economy languished and these expectations were proven wrong, desire for change was channelled into expressions of nationalism. According to Pond, nationalism in Crimea is not likely to receive great support from Russia, which has not demonstrated a great deal of solidarity towards Meshkov, or the remainder of the Russian population in Ukraine; yet this situation could change if the economy in Ukraine deteriorates further. A hopeful sign is the movement among certain Russian intellectuals in Ukraine to develop a "western-oriented Slav identity" for Ukraine, which envisions greater political and economic ties with Western Europe, even if short of joining Western institutions such as the European Union and NATO.

Thus, a consensus emerged at the conference that, as long as irredentism is perceived as hindering economic development, in the form of closer relations with the more stable and prosperous part of Europe or regional cooperation for example between Russia and Ukraine, tendencies toward excessive nationalism will be moderated. In this context, efforts by security institutions to develop standards for cooperation on political and security issues among countries in the region--such as the emphasis on

6

"good neighborly relations" by the OSCE and NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program--can provide additional moderating influences.

A different dynamic is at work in Estonia, where a series of factors contribute to making the status of the large Russian minority a source of tension between this country and Russia. First, the Russian population in Estonia constitutes a majority in certain regions of the country--up to 82 percent in county Ida-Virumaa, for example--and furthermore it has retained a distinct Russian identity, as 62 percent of these people were born outside of Estonia.[9] Second, Estonia has articulated a very restrictive definition of citizenship that excludes a great number of its ethnically Russian residents. Third, Russian policy towards its diaspora contributes to strengthening the ties of the Russian population in Estonia to Moscow and therefore discourages whatever integration could be initiated by those willing to do so. As a result, avoiding the intensification of the ethnic question in Estonia will owe as much to Estonian actions and policy toward the Russian minority as to the treatment of the issue of Russian minorities abroad in Russia.

Indeed, a key factor affecting relations between the ethnic minority and the rest of the population in a state is, according to panelist Leila Alyeva, the identification of the minority group with the interests of the state in which it resides, regardless of the ethnicity of the majority population. Alyeva cited the case of Azerbaijan, where ethnic Russians have formed political groupings that have supported the policies of the state even when these did not coincide with those of Russia. Loyalty to the state by minorities, cultivated in turn by policies of integration on the part of the state, have contributed to diminishing the potential for ethnic rivalry in Azerbaijan, in the opinion of the speaker.

Loyalty by the minority to the state in which it resides is also, however, affected by the policies of the state from which the minority originates. Klara Hallik pointed out in her presentation that Russia is engaging in an activist policy towards its minorities abroad, and particularly in Estonia, which discourages integration by ethnic Russians. She further argued that influencing Russians abroad has become part of Russian foreign policy. By this line of action, Russia hopes to accomplish these goals: maintain some level of control over a former territory, and allow the minority to retain a link to the mother country short of repatriation, which would weigh heavily on Russia's currently strained resources.

Analyst Tatiana Shakleina suggested that Russia's position on ethnic issues is still taking shape and will largely depend on the evolution of the country's foreign policy, a question that is

in turn tied to the development of Russian politics. Shakleina describes different positions by groups on the Russian political spectrum that vary from isolationism, to support for Western orientation by Russia, to an activist foreign policy that is primarily oriented toward Russia's eastern and south-eastern borders. According to this perspective, which group prevails in the coming elections, and which view of Russia's place in the world prevails, will affect the treatment of the ethnic question.[10]

A third aspect of the ethnic problem in Europe is the status of the Russian population within non-Russian regions of the Russian Federation. Leokadia Drobizheva cites a study that counts 150 intergroup conflicts on the territory of the fomer Soviet Union, of which 30 involved open confrontation, with the Chechen crisis perhaps the most virulent.[11] Yet, Drobizheva and several other conference participants cautioned against viewing the problem of nationalities in the Russian Federation as a harbinger of widespread ethnic conflict. Although the Russian government today confronts a number of challenges from non-Russian peoples who seek different levels of autonomy, not all such demands will result in conflicts of the magnitude of the Chechen crisis. Indeed, as Marjorie Balzer pointed out, the Russian central government has engaged in negotiations and concluded treaties with several regional governments seeking greater autonomy, such as Tatarstan and the Sakha Republic.

Ethnic issues in the Russian Federation are best understood in the context of adaptation by the people that formed the Soviet Union to the realities of a new political system that is still taking form. One aspect of this political transformation that has contributed to the ethnic problem in the Russian Federation is the dissonance between the old, Soviet constitutional approach to ethnic matters and that of the new Russian state. While the Constitution of the Soviet Union included the right to self-determination, the Constitution of the Russian Federation does not contain the right to secession, and the state has actively inhibited the realization of self-determination.[12] Yet, this very different legal approach to minority questions also reflects the altered ethnopolitical map of the Russian Federation. In the old Soviet state, about 49 percent of the population was made up of non-Russians holding different ethnopolitical status, with some residing in union republics, others in autonomous republics, and yet others in national administrative units, such as okrugs and oblasts.[13] Today, 18 percent of the total population is ethnically non-Russian, although it occupies 53 percent of Federation territory.[14]

Another aspect of the ethnic question in the Russian Federation, in the analysis of Marjorie Balzer, is the development of a new set of relationships between the central

8

Russian government and the regions in the periphery. Balzer argued that at least two secessionist movements in the Russian Federation, in Tuva and the Sakha Republic, lost momentum when their claims to the right secession were articulated by nationalist parties as part of their constitutions. Balzer concluded that support for ethnic nationalism in these cases reflected pride in national identity rather than a real desire for severing economic and political ties with the Federation. The resolution of questions surrounding the control of natural resources and the fiscal responsibility of the regions toward the central government will also alleviate sources of disagreement between the center and periphery, and moderate centrifugal tensions in these regions of the Russian Federation.

The picture in Russia is not all positive, however. Indeed, the tensions in the Caucasus region provide the greatest potential for the spread of ethnic conflict in Europe. The inability of the Russian government to negotiate a resolution to the Chechen crisis may, in the opinion of several conference participants, highlight the weakness of the Yeltsin government and spur other latent conflicts to reignite. In addition, the failure to put down the rebellion quickly, and the resulting loss of life, both Russian and Caucasian, have the potential for creating political instability within the Federation. The conflict, which has received extensive media coverage, has highlighted for many the willingness of the Russian government to use force against its own citizens, diminishing backing for the Yeltsin government by democratic forces. The result, unexpectedly, may be the marginalization of democratic elements in Russian politics, as Yeltsin seeks other sources of political support.

The Nature of the Problem: The Ethnicization of Politics.

Although the expression of the ethnic problem in Europe is multifaceted, and its causes are diverse, it is possible to distinguish several common factors that determine whether tense ethnic relations will turn into a conflictual situation. The range of ethnic issues in Europe and the limited examples of armed confrontation that have resulted indicate that the simple existence of ethnic grievances and nationalist claims does not, in itself, produce conflict. The cases in which conflict has erupted violently, in the Balkans and in the Caucasus, share a mixture of ethnic grievances, highly unstable political systems, and underdeveloped democratic institutions. In each case, the exploitation of ethnic grievances by political leaders for political ends--a process that can be termed the "ethnicization" of politics--contributed to a highly-charged domestic environment in which immature democratic processes and institutions could not manage to adjudicate competing demands fairly. In each case as

9

well, mistargeted international intervention aggravated the situation.

In the former Yugoslavia and in Chechnya, cultural and ethnic divides formed along preexisting economic and political cleavages. In the former Yugoslavia, the decentralized system of economic and political power developed during the Tito years had led to deep economic differences among the constituent republics. As Susan Woodward argues, these economic and social differences were largely at the individual, rather than national, level and reflected the public-private sector divide in the economy rather than ethnic identity. Yet, as a result of the economic displacement created by the introduction of market reforms and the coincidental economic crisis of the 1970s, internal migration in search of employment or higher education resulted in living patterns in which socio-economic status coincided with cultural-ethnic identity.[15] Thus, perceptions of relative deprivation became regional, as different groups were thought to be relatively better off than others, and increasingly ethnic in nature.

Economic powerlessness and perceptions of other groups' behavior play powerfully in the intensification of relations between Russia and the Caucasus, as well. The rapid deterioration of the standard of living in the former Soviet Union that accompanied political change and economic reform coincided with the emergence of a black market economy widely perceived to be controlled by Caucasian elements. The association of criminalization with ethnicity in Russia led to a deterioration in ethnic relations, exemplified by the campaign of expulsions of citizens of Caucasian appearance from Moscow and other Russian cities beginning in 1993.

Elite exploitation of these sentiments, coupled with immature democratic processes, also contributes to the deterioration of intra-state and inter-state ethnic relations. Woodward argues that in the former Yugoslavia, primarily in republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia, nationalism was promoted by the inability of citizens to organize along political lines. The process of political and economic decentralization was not accompanied by political liberalization. Thus, unable to organize along party lines that competed with the preeminence of the communist party, people drifted toward nationalist organizations. Leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic, in turn, tapped into the emerging nationalism to press for their political cause. Mjusa Sever also places responsibility for the escalation of ethnic tensions on political elites, arguing that many proponents of ethnic nationalism in the former Yugoslavia were former communist party leaders who seized upon a different ideology in an attempt to find new bases of support.

10

As in the Balkans, the manipulation by elites of ethnic tensions fed into the management of the conflict between the Russian government and the break-away Chechens. As conference participant Leokadia Drobizheva remarked, depiction in the media of Caucasian involvement in criminal activity in Russia coincided with developments in the Chechnya crisis, so that during periods of negotiation between the Russian government and the Chechen rebels, the number of Caucasians reportedly involved in crime fell dramatically.

Another common thread in the intensification of ethnic conflicts is the reaction of the international community. International responses to conflicts of an ethnic nature have largely been shaped by competing norms: the inviolability of borders, a central aspect of the normative construct for European security enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, and support for the rights of minority groups, represented in Europe by the establishment of an OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities. In the opinion of several conference participants, the early attempts by the international community to shape its responses to ethnic conflicts in Europe--primarily in the Balkans--on the basis of respect of these norms complicated the resolution of the crisis. Several conference participants, for example, argued that the early efforts of the international community to prevent the recognition of the claims of independence of the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia, while also supporting claims of self-determination by particular groups, facilitated an outcome in which self-determination was perceived as possible only by force.

Conference panelist Paul Goble argued further that institutionalizing international support for claims of minority groups--through the creation of the office of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities--fosters demands for self-determination by aggrieved groups when other mechanisms for addressing valid grievances by national groups on bases other than ethnicity do not exist or are not given equal visibility. Goble reflected that claims of an essentially economic nature could find expression in ethnic demands if greater efforts are not made to elevate the profile of other international organizations that address grievances that cut across ethnic lines.

The international community may also unwittingly aggravate a crisis by engaging discredited leaders in diplomatic initiatives. Mijusa Sever argued that the West failed in its response to the Balkans because it communi- cated with the representatives of the old regime, rather than the emerging democratic forces. The West was not prepared to deal with a country undergoing a systemic change. It sought to keep the country together, in keeping with its policy of maintaining existing borders intact, and continued

11

to interact with state authorities, which were no longer legitimate. In so doing, it imbued them with legitimacy and bolstered their position.

Finally, panelist Warren Zimmerman argued that the international community bears responsibility for the intensification of the Balkan conflict for having refused to intervene militarily at the early stages of the crisis. Zimmerman argued that the inaction of outside powers in response to military attacks on civilian targets emboldened the aggressors and allowed the escalation of violence. This, in turn, further impeded an international response by raising the risk inherent in intervening in a more violent conflict.

The Role of International Security Institutions and Processes.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, European and transatlantic organizations and mechanisms have undertaken a process of adaptation to the new conditions on the European continent that has produced a host of new acronyms--such as OSCE, Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), and PfP. This process of adaptation has sought to reflect the changing nature of the challenges to European security from the Cold War bipolar confrontation to the emergence of regional tensions and the challenges inherent in the political and economic transformation of entires societies.

Since 1991, NATO has undertaken a transformation designed to increase its capacity to respond to contingencies other than collective defense. At a ministerial meeting held in Oslo in 1992, NATO stated its intent to support the United Nations and OSCE in peacekeeping with its military capabilities. The significance of this statement was great for the Alliance, for it was the first indication of its will to move beyond the function of defense of member states to undertaking operations of a regional nature--so-called non-Article V contingencies. Since then, the Alliance has been engaged in a process of adaptation to be able to respond to the new challenges of the European security environ- ment. The process of adaptation is two-fold, and is in response both to the desire for entry into the Alliance by new members and to the demand that it be able to respond effectively to regional contingencies that fall short of collective defense but that affect security perceptions in Europe--such as the Balkan conflict. NATO is thus currently engaged in a study designed to suggest changes to its military and political structures to take in new members and integrate militarily those that have not been integrated, and to take on new tasks of a non-Article V nature.

If the experience of post-World War II Europe is an

indication, NATO enlargement is promising for European security because it could work to increase security cooperation among neighbors. Of course, an important caveat for European security is to simultaneously increase cooperation with those states which will not become members, so as not to create security vacuums. In this context, the PfP initiative is an important development both to prepare potential new members for entry and to avoid security vacuums. Preparation for membership is done by including Partners in Alliance processes of consultation, through meetings in expanded Partner format, and transparency, through the process of sharing information on defense plans. NATO has indeed institutionalized transparency in defense matters among its members during the past 40 years through the routine exchange of information regarding defense capabilities and plans. Partners are now sharing similar information with each other and with the alliance through the Planning and Review Process (PARP).

PfP also can work to avoid the perception of insecurity by those who will not become members because it was established and is viewed by NATO as a continuing program even after NATO enlargement is concluded. PfP was set up by NATO to offer a permanent relationship with the Alliance short of membership. PfP could then be viewed as a means for crisis prevention. By increasing transparency and opportunity for consultation, it can diminish the potential for crisis and escalation of tensions.

PfP can also contribute to a potentially key factor to avoiding ethnic conflict: democratization--even if in a limited way. By signing on to PfP, partners commit to establishing civilian and democratic control of the military and defense establishment. NATO as an institution, and NATO members individually, have undertaken a series of exchanges with partners on the wide range of procedures and traditions among established societies that contribute to embedding defense planning and the military within democratic structures. This could be an important factor in stabilizing areas of ethnic and nationalist tensions, where there exists the potential for the politicization of the military.

NATO's involvement in Bosnia constitutes so far the most successful case of crisis management in Europe. NATO organized and forms the core of the Implementation Force (IFOR) that is implementing the provisions of the Dayton peace settlement among the parties in the Balkan conflict: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Although the IFOR mission is so far the test case for conflict resolution in Europe, its impact on the wider European security framework awaits completion of the mission.

The OSCE has also undergone a great deal of change to adapt to post-Cold War European security challenges. In 1992 the then-

13

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe began its evolution by establishing the office of CSCE Secretary General and a permanent secretariat. These steps gave permanence to an organization that had been influential in European security since the early 1975, but that had been originally structured as a "loose consultative process."[16] In 1992, as well, the then-CSCE added an Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which had earlier begun as the Office of Free Elections, set up in 1990 primarily to monitor polls in the emerging European democracies. As discussed above, the OSCE has also instituted a High Commissioner for National Minorities charged with monitoring minority issues and troubleshooting in cases in which ethnic tensions have flared up. Perhaps the most directly relevant developments to prevention of ethnic conflict to emerge from the OSCE evolution are the establishment of Conflict Prevention Center (CPC) and the FSC. Among the CPC's main tasks is the monitoring of crises and the mediation of disputes, while the FSC is charged with facilitating confidence-building and military transparency among OSCE member states.

As many analysts have remarked before, the organization has some inherent limitations in its all-inclusive membership and cumbersome decision-making procedures, which make consensus difficult to achieve. Yet, the organization has taken up tasks, such as monitoring missions in areas of instability and regional discussions on arms control and stabilizing measures that are promising for crisis prevention. A test case for the effectiveness of both these commitments is in the Balkans. OSCE monitors have been deployed in Kosovo, and the OSCE serves as the umbrella forum under which the disarmament and arms control provisions included in the settlement agreement between the parties to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Dayton Accords, are being negotiated.

The adaptation of a nonsecurity European institution, the EU, is equally significant to future European security. If the prospect of becoming part of the prosperous part of Europe has acted as a moderating force in tense regional relationships, the organization has a great potential for improving stability on the continent. Yet, as Catherine Kelleher, Jane Sharp, and Lawrence Freedman remark, the capacity of the EU to continue to influence security affairs is limited by its ability to take on new members in a timely manner. If it proves incapable of doing so, its credibility with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be damaged, and its moderating influence will disappear.[17]

Conclusion.

Close examination of the nature of the ethnic threat to European security reveals the importance not simply of the ethnic

14

aspect of a crisis, but of the susceptibility of the crisis to political manipulation--the ethnicization of politics. In the most severe cases of ethnic conflict in Europe to date--the Balkan crisis and Chechnya--the breakdown of political authority and profound systemic change facilitated the exploitation by political leaders of preexisting ethnic tensions, exacerbated by political and economic cleavages, and elevated the crisis to conflict. The Balkan crisis in particular suggests that the nature of the response of the international community can have a significant impact on development of the crisis. It also highlights the importance of developing appropriate tools to prevent or manage of the crisis.

The development of European security institutions so far suggests that a great deal of progress has been made in establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention, while crisis management and resolution tools are less developed. A largely untapped potential for crisis management rests in establishing mechanisms for involving grass roots groups and non-elites in preventive diplomacy. This approach may alleviate the problem, cited as a key aspect in the denouement of the Balkan crisis, of imparting undue legitimacy on political leaders who exploit ethnic tensions by making them the only interlocutors of the international community.

In addition, normative questions raised by ethnic conflicts, such as the relative weight of national self-determination in relation to the commitment to respect borders, and minority rights *vis-à-vis* individual rights have not been addressed fully. In order to establish better tools for institutions, such questions will have to be resolved to provide guidance for third parties in formulating policy responses to situations of ethnic tensions and conflict. An equally important normative exercise for the international community will be to reexamine assumptions about the early use of force as a measure for conflict resolution. Ultimately, as the end-game of the Bosnia conflict may demonstrate, the influence of the international community in conflict prevention and management may rest on the credibility of its commitment to back its words with force.

ENDNOTES

1. Recall, for example, the statement by Senator Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) that NATO should go "out of area or out of business," ("NATO: Out of Area or Out of Business," speech to the Overseas Writers Club, Washington, DC, June 24, 1993).

2. See, for example, Jonathan Dean, *Ending Europe's Wars: The Continuing Search for Peace and Security*, New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1994, pp. 113-116.

15

3. Jonathan Dean, for example, argues that conflict related to ethnic minority questions is more likely to arise when a combination of other factors exists, including the relative development of democratic institutions, economic well-being, and the size of the minority population. *Ending Europe's Wars*, p. 116.

4. For two competing interpretations of the link among ethnicity, nationalism, and conflict, see Anthony Smith, "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism," *Survival*, Spring 1993, pp. 48-49, and Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival*, Spring 1993, p.20.

5. Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995, pp. 15-20.

6. Mjusa Sever, "Ethnicization in Politics: Lessons of the Balkan Crisis and Implications for Other Potential Conflicts in the Region," paper presented at the WIIS, USIP, U.S. Army War College conference on *Ethnic Conflict and European Security: Lessons from the Past and Implications for the Future*, October 24-25, 1995.

7. Husarska described her first-hand experience with an informal system of censorship on the part of Serb authorities in Bosnia, who prevented the access of journalists who did not depict the Serb cause sympathetically.

8. Jonathan Dean, *Ending Europe's Wars*, p. 117.

9. Klara Hallik, "Russians in Estonia: A Minority of Estonia or Russia?", paper presented at the WIIS, USIP, U.S. Army War College conference, October 24-25, 1995, p. 1.

10. Tatiana Shakleina, "Russia and Post-Soviet States: Ethnic Problems and Foreign Policy," paper presented at the WIIS, USIP, U.S. Army War College conference, October 24-25, 1995.

11. Leokadia Drobizheva, "Ethnic Tensions: Sources and Perspectives," paper presented at the WIIS, USIP, U.S. Army War College conference, October 24-25, 1995, p. 10.

12. Drobizheva, p. 3.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

14. Figures cited by Paul Goble, in comments delivered at the WIIS, USIP, U.S. Army War College conference, October 24-25, 1995.

15. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, pp. 42-45.

16. Jonathan Dean, *Ending Europe's Wars*, p. 204.

17. Catherine M. Kelleher, Lawrence Freedman, and Jane M.O. Sharp, *The Political Context of Conventional Arms Control*, Nomos, forthcoming.