Exiting the Communist Brotherhood:
Ethnic Kin-Group Conflicts in Transitioning Southeast Europe States

I. Ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, 1989 to 1998:
From Solidarity to Negotiations

Background Conditions

Dating from the 9th century, when the Magyars settled in the Danube plain, Slovakians lived under the domination of Hungarian feudal lords. In 1867, a policy of forced magyarisation of the Slovakians was begun that lasted many decades. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, the establishment of the first Republic of Czechoslovakia, and the subsequent Treaty of Trianon broke Hungary's hold on the area. This 1920 agreement carved up the Hungarian territory, leaving large groups of Hungarians as minorities in other countries. The Hungarian population of Slovakia was now incorporated into the newly formed Czechoslovakia. In World War II, Hungary sided with the Axis powers, and for a brief period, Hungary regained control of Slovakia. After the war, however, many Hungarians were blamed for collaboration with the Nazis and expelled from Czechoslovakia. This reduced their numbers to approximately what they are currently, which is 11% of the population. In 1947, an agreed Czech-Hungarian border was fixed.

The Slovaks had seen the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 as a way to escape Hungarian domination, but they were still under Czech tutelage. Slovak nationalism, which had taken organized form in 1914, continued to swell. Even with the incorporation of Slovakia into a federal Czechoslovakia, the two groups never saw the need for ethnic unity.

Course of the Conflict

Pre-Existing Order

Under communism, the Czechoslovakian government maintained tight control over ethnic issues. The Hungarian minority in Slovakia was well-represented in the Czechoslovak Parliament and enjoyed support from the federal government In theory, all Hungarians and Slovaks were linked as equal members in the same international community as were all other “workers” throughout the Soviet bloc if not the whole communist world. But when post Cold War Czechoslovakia became a democracy, Slovakia’s already growing desire for independence intensified in part because the Slovak republic remained relatively undeveloped and it experienced discrimination in jobs and industry. Their relationship with the Czechs served to heighten the Slovakians’ nationalism, which after the fall of communism was turned toward Slovakia’s ethnic minorities.

Unstable Peace

Shortly after the fall of communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, the leaders of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland met in the city of Visegrad, Poland to discuss the potential for cooperation in numerous areas, including security, economics, environment, and minority issues. The goal of this cooperation was to restore the countries’ independence and democracy, as well as develop a plan for integration with the West. Although not a formal structure, the Visegrad Three (later the Visegrad Four with the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia), provided a framework for regional dialogue and cooperation on many controversial issues, including ethnic questions.

The uncertain relations between Hungarians and Slovakians in Slovakia following the sudden collapse of the highly disciplined communism of Czechoslovakia in December, 1989 were typical of the kinds of ethnic questions that were arising. Yet in subsequent years, the relations between the governments of Slovakia and Hungary periodically exacerbated these tensions more then they restrained them. Tensions arose between them even before the Slovakia because fully independent in 1993. Czech national multi-party elections in the spring of 1990 elected as Slovak Prime Minister the popular Interior Minister, Vladimir Meciar, who was committed to Slovakian independence. Fearing that the federal government's economic policy of rapid marketization and privatization of the communist economy would put Slovakia at a severe disadvantage, Meciar immediately demanded devolution of the authority of the Republic's economic ministers. In addition, Slovakia demanded greater representation in foreign policy issues and unilaterally created a Commission on Foreign Policy. Presiding over an economically and politically inexperienced Slovakia, Meciar used the issue of ethnicity to garner and consolidate a political base. As the Slovakian nationalist movement grew, the local Hungarian minority, fearing marginalization, opposed the idea of Slovak independence.

The two groups' relations continued to deteriorate due to mutual insecurity and rising nationalist sentiments. During the 1992 election campaign, Meciar's use of nationalist rhetoric aroused further concern among the Hungarian minority. Re-activated ethnic Hungarian associations were spurring some of the Slovak nationalism. Hungarian politicians continued to win local elections and control a number of towns. Hungarian leaders in Slovakia denied their support to the new Slovakian legislative program because of its failure to guarantee minority rights, and they opposed the movement for Slovak sovereignty. Then in January, 1993, the Czech and Slovak republics were created out of the separation of the two areas by an act of peaceful disengagement that was brokered by the two communities' political leaderships and passed by the federal parliament. This action not only deprived the 600,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia of the political support they had enjoyed from Prague, but confronted them with an increasingly assertive ethnic Slovak majority in Slovakia. Anxiety and suspicions grew, aided by the Slovakians' insecurity about their new national identity and the knowledge that they, too, were no longer protected by a Prague government.

Over these years, the government and leaders of Hungary took considerable interest in the fate of the 3 million ethnic kin living across its borders in Slovakia, Serbia and Romania. The climate in Slovakia was exacerbated by Hungary's own post-communist foreign policy. Despite.assurances from Budapest about the permanence of the Hungarian-Slovakian border, ambiguous statements made by Prime Minister Josef Antall and subsequent Hungarian leaders about the ultimate unity of all Hungarian people served to aggravate suspicions. In 1990, Antall publicly declared himself as prime minister, in spirit, of all Hungarians, with a duty to support them regardless of country of residence. For the ethnic Slovakians, such rhetoric engendered fears of the disloyalty and irredentism of the Slovakian Hungarians. Slovakia also criticized Hungary for its treatment of its own Slovak minority. But Slovakia's innuendoes about the loyalties of the Hungarian minorities, discriminatory statements and policies, and refusal to acknowledge group language and other rights or adopt measures of educational or cultural autonomy also generated a good deal of tension between the two ethnic communities within Slovakia, and thus between the two states. In sum, the kin-group affinities across their border were at the heart of the relations Hungary and the new state of Slovakia.

Simultaneously, disagreements between the Hungary and Slovakia governments over a joint infrastructure project fed the tensions affecting ethnic relations within Slovakia. A dispute had arisen between Hungary and Czechoslovakia over the huge Gabcikov-Nagymaros hydroelectric project they had begun in 1977 to dam the Danube. In 1989, after growing pressure from its own environmentalists, Hungary cancelled part of the project, and sought to re-negotiate the treaty, saying it would annul it if the negotiations failed. By 1991, the Czechoslovakian part of the project was done but the Hungarian part was only a third done. At the time, Meciar was Czechoslovakia's federal commissioner in charge of the project. The dealings between Slovakia and Hungary over the dam, although predating independence, marked Slovakia's first forays into an independent foreign policy. The future of the project became a symbol for sovereignty in the Slovakian drive for independence during the 1990-91 debate over the possible dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

Meciar also used the dam issue in his 1992 campaign for Prime Minister. When Hungarian-Slovakian talks broke down in early 1992, Hungarian Prime Minister Antall unilaterally annulled the Treaty and pulled Hungary out of the project in May. The Czech and Slovak authorities went ahead with a variant of the original project involving a minor diversification of the Danube. But in Hungary's eyes, the Danube diversification decision violated the Treaty of Trianon and the 1947 Paris Peace Conference, which defined the Czechoslovakian-Hungarian border.

Conflict Abatement and Settlement

Subsequently, the settlement of the dam dispute and various efforts to moderate ethnic relations within Slovakia reflected the influence of international third parties as well as occasional positive actions by the primary conflict actors. After Czechoslovakia unilaterally continued a version of the dam project, following a war of words, various offers and counteroffers were made, but rejected. Antall, not believing that Slovakia would actually proceed, did not react until a few days after the actual water diversification began in October. Antall then vowed to take the issue to the International Court of Justice, asked that a Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) emergency mechanism be activated, and wrote to the United Nations Security Council to alert it to what he regarded as a grave situation. Shuttle diplomacy in Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest failed to stop the dam construction. The Slovaks, arguing they needed the diversification for flood prevention and navigation purposes, offered joint use of the facilities, but this was rejected.

Finally, however, pressure and mediation from the European Community (EC) resulted in an agreement in October 1992, in which the parties agreed to resolve the crisis. Slovakia agreed to stop construction, re-divert 95% of the water to its original course, and wait until experts looked into the project's environmental, shipping and hydroelectric implications. When the experts assessments led to further disagreements that were largely technical in nature, the parties in 1998 put the issue up for binding arbitration before the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Clearly, the London Conference agreement showed the impact of the European Community. It was hailed as a promising signal of cooperation in view of the upcoming renegotiation of the association agreement between the EC and Slovakia. As both countries had been selected as part of the first round of Central and Eastern European candidates for European Community admission, both had an incentive to temper their behavior toward each other.

EC pressure also came to bear on the internal Slovakian issues. In 1993, the then European Union launched an initiative, known as the Stability Pact, which was meant to serve as a mechanism for wielding EU influence in border and minority disputes among potential members. To this end, the EU held a series of bilateral meetings and roundtable discussions with these countries. Under the auspices of the Pact, Hungary and Slovakia signed an agreement in 1995 calling for the inviolability of borders and guarantees of minority rights.

This agreement, however, merely created a framework for relations between the two countries without resolving the dispute. Implementation of this agreement remains delayed by disagreements over the composition of a joint committee on minorities. Hungary insisted that ethnic Hungarians be included on the committee, while Slovakia maintained that minority representation was not necessary. Thus, international incentives have fostered cooperation on the Hungarian minority’s grievances, but have not been able to maintain momentum in resolving them.

More widely, however, in a period when Yugoslavia was observed falling into several ethnic wars, Slovakia and Hungary both recognized the dangers of a possible escalation of their conflict and its detrimental effects on their economies, international reputation, and political stability. This prompted a number of bi-lateral efforts to keep a dialogue open on the minority and related issues and to keep major crises from developing. These actions include the establishment of a “hot line” between the two

Prime Ministers in 1992, proposed bilateral treaties on minorities, joint parliamentary committees on the Danube, a joint bank, an inter-ethnic roundtable, and a military cooperation agreement. Despite its earlier statements, Hungary stated that it has no territorial claims, but nonetheless remained committed to protecting the human rights of its ethnic kin. Additionally, Hungary made a point of passing a comprehensive and liberal law regarding its (admittedly smaller) minorities, in the hopes of providing a model for its neighbors.

Slovak electoral politics have also sometimes been part of the solution, not only the problem. In 1994, Meciar's government was temporarily ousted by a no-confidence vote. The new governing coalition, led by Jozsef Moravcik, was supported by ethnic Hungarian parties. The new leadership reversed many of Slovakia's discriminatory policies and made an effort to conform with the Council of Europe's (COE) recommendations on the protection of minorities.

Nonetheless, the return of Meciar seven months later, marked a return to nationalist policies and an increase in the tensions over the issue of the Hungarian minority. Thus, despite some steps forward, the Slovakians' record regarding Hungarian minority rights has remained a problem. Even after Slovakia was criticized by the CSCE and the Council of Europe for enacting such measures as removing Hungarian names from towns and streets, Slovakia's follow-through in implementing these bodies' recommendations has been weak. The several visits of the OCSE High Commissioner for National Minorities to pressure the government to adopt certain standards for minority rights have often been circumvented. The 1997 Slovak language law, which restricts the use of Hungarian and other minority ethnic languages, remains a point of contention.

In September 1998, Meciar was again voted out of office. Currently, the new Prime Minister, Mikulas Dzerinda, heads a four-party governing coalition, which includes the Hungarian Coalition Party. This may portend a further easing of the internal and thus the inter-state tensions.

In sum, although some measures have been taken between Slovakia and Hungary and within Slovakia to resolve its ethnic disputes, the issues remain. What progress has been made has largely resulted from politicians responding self-interestedly to gains that are offered by international third parties or from internal electoral politics. With Hungary becoming a member of NATO and picked out over Slovakia as a prospective member of the EU, the two nations hardly could share yet any new common identity as belonging to the new Europe, to replace that once formed by communist doctrine. Nevertheless, the expectations of these tensions escalating further have been significantly reduced. Although at times verging on crisis, Hungary-Slovakia relations began and remain basically at the level of diplomatic negotiations, and intra-Slovakia relations continue to be tense. But neither conflict has escalated to a point where violence erupted or was expected imminently.

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II. Ethnic Serbs in Macedonia, 1991-1999:
From Unstable Peace to Crisis

Background Conditions

From ancient times until the end of the Greek civil war in 1949, the area known as Macedonia was the field of recurring conquests, insurgencies, or terrorism sponsored by waxing and waning empires and neighboring states emerging out of the Ottoman Empire. Current Macedonia's first historical identity was as part of the much larger Kingdom of Macedonia believed to have been established in the 6th Century B.C. and expanded by Alexander the Great in the 4th Century B.C. For centuries thereafter, the territory known as Macedonia comprised a southern area now in Greece, slavic Vardar Macedonia to the north, and eastern Pirin Macedonia within present-day Bulgaria. This area was taken over by the Roman Empire in 168 B.C., invaded by the Slavs in the 4th Century, captured by the Bulgars in the 9th, mostly absorbed into the Byzantine Empire in 1018, controlled by the Serb tsarist empire in the early 14th Century, and conquered by the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. The Ottoman Turks retained control until the early twentieth century.

A distinctly indigenous Macedonian national consciousness did not arise until intellectuals from the area began to articulate the notion of a distinct local culture in the late nineteenth century. In 1893, a local political movement called the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO), fought for Macedonia's independence from the Ottoman Empire. This movement established a short-lived Republic of Krusevo in Macedonia, but within weeks, their nationalist Ilinden Uprising in 1903 was quashed brutally by the Turks.

As the Ottoman Empire declined, the ascendant Balkan states Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece supported guerrilla activity against the Turks on behalf of their respective nationalist causes, with several alliances shifting among them. In the First Balkan war of 1912, they expelled the Turks, agreed to divide the area, and granted independence to

Albania. Serbia was ceded the area comprising present-day Macedonia, but this was challenged in the Second Balkan War of 1913, when Bulgaria tried to annex the Serbian portion. Its defeat led to repartition of the larger area among Greece and Serbia, with a smaller eastern portion going to Bulgaria. As a result of World War I, the area of present-day Macedonia was placed under the Kingdom of Croats, Serbs and Slovenes, in which it was called South Serbia.

Only when the Comintern created the Macedonian communist party within the Communist Balkan Federation in 1924 did the current boundaries begin to be regarded as a particular political jurisdiction. Yet during World War II, the Nazis captured Macedonia from Yugoslavia and gave its control to Bulgaria.

Course of the Conflict

Pre-Existing Order

It was not until 1944 when Tito declared the existence of a "People's Republic of Macedonia," did the area first achieve some political and legal foundation. This action was taken in response to the demands of the increasingly self-conscious group of communists within the partisan movement who came from the Vardar area. It reduced Serbia's size, but retained control of Macedonia for Federal Yugoslavia against Bulgarian and Greek interests. In 1946, the area became an autonomous republic with its own constitution within the new Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). To link Yugoslavia while curtailing the Serbs' hegemony, who were sixty percent of the population, Tito granted more cultural autonomy and political authority to all the republics, including Macedonia. Though that republic encompassed Albanians, Turks, and other groups, it was more tightly tied to the ethnic Macedonian majority, who were Orthodox, when Tito in 1967 revived an ancient bishopric that had existed at the southern city of Ohrid. This made the Macedonian Orthodox Church autocephalous. The 1974 Yugoslav Constitution bestowed yet more financial, judicial, and educational autonomy to the republics, and granted them authority over their own defense forces.

Unstable Peace

The collapse of communism was accompanied by economic decline throughout Yugoslavia, resulting in discontent directed toward the Federal government where Serbs were gaining greater influence. But Macedonia did not experience the same level of resentment toward the Serbs as was felt in the other republics. Most ethnic Macedonians at that time were pro-federation and shared with Serbia a wariness toward the intentions of the ethnic Albanians who lived on both sides of their common border. Indeed, their first free parliamentary elections in November 1990 heard both Macedonian communists and nationalists approve of Albanian harassment, so the Albanians boycotted the election. Additionally, like Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia was a poor republic that was heavily dependent on the federal redistributive policies coming from Belgrade, so President Kiro Gligorov was not inclined to secede.

Unstable Peace

In June,1991, Gligorov proposed a loose confederal Yugoslavia, but by that time, Yugoslavia's *de facto* dissolution was proceeding through armed hostilities between Slovenia and Croatia, on the one hand, and the federal government in Belgrade, on the other. As a result, Macedonian leaders concluded they, too, must secede lest the Macedonians be left as a minority in a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia. In September, the government held a referendum in which 95% of the 72% eligible voters, including ethnic Macedonians living abroad, approved independence. Although the republic's Albanians as well as Serbs boycotted the referendum, the government declared sovereignty in November, held its first multi-party elections, and requested EC recognition and United Nations (UN) membership.

When Macedonia severed its ties to Yugoslavia, the potential for violent conflict increased not only with its former federal government, but several other fronts as well. This stemmed from its political identity being largely undefined in a new and uncertain environment of revived and contending nationalisms. Independence Day September 8, 1991 was a political apotheosis for Macedonian nationalists, culminating their own particular search for a sovereign state. But the fact that Macedonia had never before had its own exclusive government created considerable uneasiness. The Serbian, Albanian, as well as Bulgarian nationalisms that were also active in the region could upset the new country's uneasy internal ethnic relations and/or invite intrusions from a neighboring state. As a pretense for aggressive actions against Macedonia, some of these nationalist movements could cite a past era when their ancestors had founded a political entity in the larger Macedonia region, and they could point to historical moments when opposed groups or states suppressed their cultural distinctiveness. Thus, the basic threat to Macedonian stability was not internal ideological, economic, or even cultural cleavages, but a more immediate matter of its future political control. How would a free-standing Macedonian state, in which about 64% of the population was ethnic Macedonian, relate to and integrate the several other ethnic groups living within and across its borders?

Although Macedonia thus faced threats on several sides, the most pressing question was how a contracted Yugoslavia, dominated by the Serbs, would react to Macedonia's independence. The Serbian political elite led by President Slobodan Milosevic had already been forced by Slovenia's break-away to give up trying to restructure the emerging post-communist Yugoslavia under Serbian hegemony. But another "Greater Serbia" vision, promoted by radical Serbian nationalists, favored uniting those areas inhabited by self-declared ethnic Serbs, such as the Krajina in Croatia, together with areas like Kosovo and Macedonia that had few Serbs but were regarded as part of Serbia historically. The leader of the Serb Radical Party, Vojislav Seselj, said in 1991, "Three states will come out of Yugoslavia, -- -Greater Serbia, Small Croatia, and even smaller Slovenia...And Macedonia has always been the Serb territory..Macedonians, Moslems, and Montenegrins are fictitious nations." Many Serbians referred to Macedonia by its interwar name, South Serbia, and still viewed Macedonians as having no distinct identity and their language as Bulgarian. The Serbian Church had never recognized the Macedonian Church.

Yet in late 1991 and early 1992, despite increasing ethnic consciousness on both sides and the potential for tensions right after independence, no hostilities between Macedonia and Serbia broke out. Pursuing a policy it called "active neutrality," the Macedonian government pledged friendly relations with all neighbors. After parliament voted that the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army (JNA) should leave, Gligorov negotiated an agreement that removed it by April.

But this peaceful departure was mainly possible only because Milosevic could not afford to keep troops both in Macedonia and fight the Bosnian war. He also reasoned that, left economically dependent and exposed to the depredations of what were known as the "three wolves" (Albania, Bulgaria, and Greece), Macedonia would crawl back to Serbian protection. This view was later reinforced by the collateral effects of the economic sanctions against the FRY of November 1991 and May 1992. Hence, although there appeared to be no immediate threat, because the JNA took every weapon and piece of equipment it could carry and destroyed the rest, the new Macedonian state was defenseless. The negotiated pullout left Macedonia vulnerable in the face of possible Serb aggression, such as upon conclusion of the war in Bosnia. Also, Macedonia’s efforts to be recognized by the U.S. and the EU and others as a sovereign state and thus deserving the protection called for under the UN Charter had been thwarted by the Greek government.

Consequently, as soon as mid-1992, Macedonia and members of the international community began to fear that the war between Serbians and the Bosnian government might "spill over" into Macedonia. This might take the form of a direct Serbian attack on Macedonia, or intensified repression by the Belgrade government of the Albanian majority in Kosovo, a previously autonomous area in Serbia that borders Macedonia. The latter could incite nearby Albania to come to their brothers in arms and/or a Kosovar uprising that could spur a large influx of refugees into Macedonia. Either event might unsettle the internal ethnic balance and destabilize the part-Albanian and fragile coalition government of the newly-independent, multiethnic and fledgling democracy. Its disintegration could also occur through subversion from the North. Ethnic Serbs in Macedonia were only two percent of the population and Milosevic had not claimed they were threatened as he had regarding the Serbs in Kosovo and Bosnia. Yet, the radical Serbian nationalist Vojislav Seselj looked to exploit the discontent of Macedonia's Serbs, and Serbian elements are believed to have assisted cells of Serbian nationalists in Macedonia.

In short, although independence had provoked no immediate adverse reaction from Serbia, the longer the Bosnian war continued, Macedonia increasingly worried that changes in the Serbs' fortune might prompt them to recapture Macedonia or cause it to fall apart from within.

The war in Bosnia thus focused the attention of U.S. and other governments to some extent on the wider region as well. In the fall 1992 they initiated several explicitly preventive initiatives. In late summer 1992, President Gligorov requested international observers to monitor the border with Serbia. In early fall, President Bush urged the Committee for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to place observer missions in Macedonia, Kosovo, and other still peaceful areas of rump Yugoslavia. The idea was to discourage the aggravation of ethnic tensions and to alert the international community to the earliest signs of conflict. The CSCE Council of Ministers (CoM) authorized the CSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission for Macedonia in September and gave it the job of monitoring the northern border. Its officials periodically visited Macedonia's leaders and neighboring capitals, including Belgrade, and paid visits where border incidents occurred, ensuring that their presence was known to local and international media.

Visiting UN headquarters in early November, Gligorov also requested the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force to monitor the border. The co-chairs of the Steering Committee of the ICFY, Lord David Owen and Thorward Stoltenberg, suggested a fact-finding team be sent. In accordance with the team's recommendations, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali proposed the deployment of a battalion of approximately 700 men as an extension of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia. Resolution 795 passed the Security Council with no opposition in December. The world's first multilateral preventive deployment was put in place in January, 1993, composed of 500 Canadians, who were replaced in February by 700 Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish troops. The force was organized into a separate command from UNPROFOR, with the name, United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in March, 1995. By far the largest international mission in the country, the military contingent was 1,050-persons strong at its height in 1996, having been supplemented by U.S. troops in 1993.

The deployment's mandate was to patrol the Macedonian side of the 240 kilometer-long Serbian and 180 km Albanian border, monitor and report developments that could threaten Macedonia, and "by its presence, deter such threats from any source, as well as help prevent clashes which could otherwise occur between external elements and Macedonian forces, thus helping to strengthen security and confidence in Macedonia." Troops were positioned at a string of temporary observation posts, from which small patrols are sent out. The instructions to post commanders were to report the occurrence of specified threatening events, but retreat from any significant attack, returning fire only in self-defense. Border patrols approached intruders in nonthreatening ways to inform them of the administrative line and request their return, which in most instances has occurred. The mission's civilian police supervised Macedonian police and civil authorities in border areas with large proportions of Serbs and Albanian minorities.

Although the deployment of the OSCE mission UNPREDEP prevented the unstable relations between Serbia and Macedonia from developing into a crisis that could escalating into violence, it did not succeed in stabilizing them entirely. As the war continued, there were further grounds for believing that changes in the Serbs' fortune might prompt them to recapture Macedonia or help it fall apart from within. FRY had not recognized the new state or agreed to an international border in place of the internal boundary. As late as 1994, Macedonia was still viewed in Belgrade as a seceding republic whose departure led it to economic disaster and to the risk of disintegration, due to the pressures from Albania and Bulgaria and the internal plotting of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Public comments by Serb leadership, combined with the fact that the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) had not recognized Macedonia or agreed to an official international border in place of the internal boundary, exacerbated Macedonia's fears. In November 1993, for example, in a press conference with Greek Foreign Minister Michael Papaconstantinou, Milosevic referred to Macedonia in tenuous terms and spoke of a confederation with Greece. As late as 1994, Macedonia was apparently still viewed in Belgrade as a secessionist republic whose departure led it to economic disaster and to the risk of disintegration, due to both internal and external pressures. The pro-regime Belgrade press and Serbian ultra-nationalists continued to see "South Serbia" as going through a trying transition on the way to eventual reunion. After the 1994 census, the Serbian press rejected the results by claiming Macedonia actually had ten times the number of Serbs recorded. Many Serbians still viewed Macedonians as having no distinct identity and their language as Bulgarian. Furthermore, the Serbian Church never recognized the Macedonian Orthodox archbishopric granted by Tito in 1967.

Despite the presence of a deterrent force, the behavior of Serbian border troops seemed to corroborate the notion of persisting Serbian designs on Macedonia. Small contingents of Serb forces would periodically penetrate the border, occupy a place for hours or days, and eventually retreat, but only after tensions sometimes arose and negotiations were required. In one instance, in June 1994, Serbian soldiers took over for several weeks a mountaintop in the northeast known as Hill 1703, which has an especially strategic vantage on Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria. Macedonia troops gathered in the area, but for awhile, the Serbs refused to leave or negotiate. Although the evidence is ambiguous as to whether or not the Serbs intended or were able to engage in more aggressive actions, clearly, Serb forces were at least testing the Macedonian government and the international peacekeeping force.

Conflict Abatement and Settlement

Although the Macedonia-FRY relationship remained uncertain and unstable from 1992 through 1995, it never reached the level of high tensions, low level violence, or open war. Aside from occasional border infractions, there were few instances of overt hostilities or even confrontation. Independence and the withdrawal of the JNA were negotiated bilaterally, yet deeper relations were not established because of the pressures of nationalists in Belgrade and pre-occupation with the Bosnia war. But neither did it enter anything like peaceful conflict through institutionalized bargaining and formal bi-lateral diplomacy.

Then, following the Bosnian war Macedonian-FRY relations began to reflect more normal inter-state relations, at least minimally. Following the signing of the Dayton Accords in 1995, the FRY recognized Macedonia and economic traffic was fully restored. The border issue was taken up by the Macedonian-FRY border commission, although it has proceeded very slowly because of Serb delays so an agreed boundary remains undecided. Macedonia was admitted to the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the Partnership for Peace, and began receiving IMF and World Bank loans.

The seemingly explosive situation in the Kosovo area added another pressure on Macedonia's territorial integrity and internal stability. The growing confrontation between Serbians and Albanians, particularly since the late 1980's (see the following narrative) potentially affected Macedonia because under Yugoslavia, Kosovo Albanians were tied through family, economics, and frequent travel to those in Macedonia. Many highly educated Albanians studied at Kosovo's Prishtina University. Were tensions to rise further there, masses of Albanian refugees might push into Macedonia and upset the ethnic Macedonian-Albanian balance. Thus, Kosovo's brethren Albanians in Macedonia and Albania might move through Macedonia against Serbia, possibly causing Serbia to attack.

Crisis

The escalation to civil war in Kosovo in 1998 rapidly increased the potential for destabilizing Macedonia that have been presented by Serbia directly and indirectly. For one thing, Macedonia has been put increasingly in the position of being an antagonist toward the rump Yugoslavia that is associated with the NATO policies. After the Macedonian government chose to recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state, having been offered economic aid, China vetoed the UN Security Council decision to renew the mandate of UNPREDEP when it came up for renewal in late 1998. The mission was thus terminated, but in its stead, troops from the NATO alliance replaced those from UNPREDEP who had been patrolling its borders. After the bombing of Serbia commenced in March, 1999, Serb troops captured three US soldiers along the border and are holding them as prisoners of war. Since then, more NATO have arrived. Demonstrations against the NATO presence have apparently been attended by ethnic Macedonians as well as Serbs.

Second, Macedonia's necessary reception of large numbers of Albanian refugees escaping the Kosovo conflict has not only placed on it a significant financial and logistical burden, but threatened to provoke its fragile internal ethnic Macedonian-Albanian modus vivendi. Macedonian farmers protested violently against the use of their land for refugee camps, for example, and the forced nighttime expulsion of thousands of refugees from the temporary Blace camp and their deportation to other countries not only took the international humanitarian organizations by surprise, it threatened to provoke reactions from the Albanian citizens in Macedonia and their leaders in the government coalition.

Consequently, although NATO has pledged protection of Macedonia from external attack, that war may yet undo the value of the preventive measures that have been taken quite deliberately and been moderately successful so far, due to its weight on the domestic political fabric on which Macedonia's survival as a state has relied.

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III. Ethnic Serbs in Kosovo, 1974 to 1999: From Ethnic Balancing to Civil War

Background Conditions

History increasingly bestowed on the area of Kosovo great symbolic importance for both Serbs and Albanians, resulting in their strong mutual claims to that territory. As with Macedonia, before 1946, the political status of Kosovo was decided largely by the shifting outcomes of recurrent conflict and competition among waxing and waning great historical empires. After a brief period of Serb rule in the 13th century, the Ottoman Empire gained control of the Balkan region. A battle in 1389 between the Serbs and the Turks in the "field of the Blackbirds" in Kosovo marked the end of the Serbian Empire, thus making Kosovo a hallmark of Serb identity and symbol of their resistance to outside domination.

In 1878, the Serbs revolted against the Ottoman Empire and expelled the Turks during the first Balkan War in 1912. But the Albanians living in the region, fearing partition among Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, began to agitate for independence. To organize an independence movement, the Albanians formed the League of Prizren in Kosovo. Because this and other events that began the Albanian national awakening took place in Kosovo, present-day Kosovo is seen as the origin place of the Albanian nation as a people. Thus, although the territory of present-day Albania received statehood in 1912, sizeable areas where ethnic Albanians lived remained under the jurisdiction of neighboring states, such as Kosovo in Serbia and the western areas in the Macedonian republic of Yugoslavia.

In 1918, with the end of World War I, the state of Yugoslavia was officially formed as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes out of portions of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. Thus, Kosovo was formally incorporated into Yugoslavia. But except for the a brief period during the Second World War when Kosovo was united with Albania under Italian control, Kosovo has been under Belgrade's jurisdiction and did not achieve status as a political and administrative entity until after World War II. In recent decades, high Albanian birthrates and immigration combined with the emigration of ethnic Serbs to increase the concentration of Albanians in the region. The 1981 census puts the Albanian community at almost 1.6 million, or 77% of the population, and ten years later, they had increased to over 1.9 million, or 82% of the population. Currently, ethnic Albanians comprise approximately 90%. Throughout this history, the cultural, linguistic, and religious differences between Kosovo's Serbs and Albanians (Kosovars) and the mutual claims of discrimination on both sides fed their respective nationalist sentiments.

Course of the Conflict

Pre-Existing Order

Following World War II, the consolidation of Communist rule in Yugoslavia under the anti-Nazi partisan leader Marshal Tito and the federal Yugoslav army he created inaugurated thirty-four years of a tenuous *modus vivendi* among Kosovars and Serbians in Kosovo under the Yugoslav central government. The 1946 Yugoslav constitution granted Kosovo the status of an Autonomous Region within the Republic of Serbia. The separate Serb Republic constitution also granted Kosovo a measure of self-rule, and the government in Belgrade relaxed much of its control over the region. Although Kosovo Albanian demanded greater autonomy and ultimate recognition as a republic, they did not challenge the legitimacy of the central government or the Republic of Serbia. In 1974, Yugoslavia adopted a new constitution that granted Kosovo the status of an Autonomous Province, which elevated the region to a status nearly equivalent to that of the republics. The new federal constitution also authorized Kosovo to adopt its own constitution. The Albanians were the third largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia, behind the Serbs and the Croats. But though Tito coopted the Albanian population with concessions such as increased participation in government and the use of national symbols such as the Albanian flag, they were not granted official “Republic” status, as that would imply the right to secession from Serbia.

Thus, as with the other ethnic groups in Yugoslavia,Tito thus sought to facilitate peaceful coexistence between the Kosovo Albanians and Serbians within Kosovo and between Kosovo and Serbia as a whole by means of policies that parcelled out constitutional authority and political control to these ethnic communities and their leaders. Yet Tito could allow such freedoms only to an extent that they did not risk antagonizing the Kosovo Serbs and the Serb government. While the Kosovo Albanians remained frustrated by their inability to achieve formal recognition as a republic, the Serbs deeply resented any concessions granted to the Albanians. Ultimately, the strategy caused resentment among both the Albanians and Serbs and created the potential for the escalation of the conflict upon the dissolution of the Yugoslav state .

Unstable Peace

Tito's death in 1980 set off a cycle of demonstrations by Kosovo Albanians and suppression by the Serb government in the early 1980's. Incidents arose of discrimination by the Albanians against the Serb minority in the territory. Beginning in 1987, a communist party official, Slobodan Milosevic, assumed leadership of the Serbian Socialist Party in part by playing upon Serb nationalist sentiments in order to rally support. In fact, possibly the single most divisive act for the break-up of the Yugoslav federation occurred in Kosovo in April, 1987, when a committed socialist, Slobodan Milosevic, embraced the Serb backlash being expressed at a huge Serb nationalist rally, televised to the nation, against the privileges being gained by the Albanians and other rising ethnic groups. Over the next two years, he and his clique assumed control of the Serbian Communist Party and most federal institutions. The disintegration of the Yugoslav communist state with a weak federal structure provided Milosevic with an opportunity to gain and consolidate power by acknowledging the deep-seated resentments of Serbs. They saw the state they had long sought to dominate begin to be challenged and to dissolve through the assertion of Albanian, Slovene, Croat, Macedonian and then Bosnian muslim ethnic nationalisms. The rampant inflation and severe economic decline that were facing Yugoslavia during the 1980's, and especially Serbia and Yugoslavia's poorer republics -- in part due to IMF austerity programs – provided fertile ground for Milosevic's nationalist rhetoric, which was aimed initially and primarily at the Kosovo Albanians. The rising Serb resentment of the authority enjoyed under Tito by the minority enclaves in Serbia, including Vojvodina and Sandjak as well as Kosovo, led the Serbs to demand the abrogation of their autonomy. In 1989, Milosevic officially revoked

Kosovo’s autonomous status and fired the local Albanian and Serb officials, substituting new ones who supported greater Serbian domination of Kosovo.

While Serbs were increasingly viewing the Kosovo’s demands for autonomy as illegitimate, the anti-Albanian statements and actions further undermined the Kosovar’s perception of the legitimacy of Serbia’s authority. Mass demonstrations by Kosovo Albanians in 1989 led Milosevic to declare a state of emergency and deploy Serb security forces in the area. A crack down on the marches and strikes in that year and early 1990 resulted in about 60 deaths. Under martial law, federal policy shut down Prishtina University and the media, completely took over the government, and began to push Albanian out of their jobs in the civil service, police, social services and schools. In counter-reaction to their political marginalization by the federal government, the Kosovo Albanians declared Kosovo an independent republic within the Yugoslav state in July, 1990. When Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the *de facto* leader of the self-declared Kosovo republic, Ibrahim Rugova, announced that the Albanians would not remain within the rump Yugoslav state. In 1992, the main Albanian political organization, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), elected its own parliament and named Rugova as president.

Recognizing the threat of increased violence under these circumstances and the reality of Serbian military superiority, Rugova called for a campaign of peaceful opposition. The Kosovo Albanians formed their own parallel government, economic, and social service systems, operating alongside those of the Serbian government. Neither the Serbs nor the Albanians recognized the state apparatus of the other as having legitimate authority. Thus, the peaceful, albeit tense, coexistence that had characterized the Tito years was replaced by a hostile coexistence. The LDK's program called for reclaiming their autonomy, which they have express as the right to their own republic or independence. Rugova has variously called for an international administration and UN protectorate

During the post-1989 period of communal social and political separation and unresolved constitutional issues, various internal and external efforts were made to reach some settlement. In May 1992, for example, the Serbian government invited representatives of the Albanian shadow parliament to Belgrade for talks on Kosovo's status. The Albanian leaders insisted, however, on a meeting at a neutral site under the auspices of the international community. Although this demand signalled the Albanians increasing effort to internationalize the conflict, Belgrade's insistence that the issue was an internal one and its formal authority over Kosovo dissuaded most international actors from involvement during this period. In August, the United Nations (UN) and the European Community (EC) set up the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY). But after initially focussing on Kosovo, its attention was subsumed by more pressing issues in the region. From 1992 through 1995, the war in Bosnia served to divert the attention of the international community largely away from Kosovo, with one important exception.

To buttress the CSCE mission in Kosovo, U.S. President George Bush issued a "Christmas warning" in December 1992 to Serbian President Milosevic against increased Serbian internal pressures in Kosovo. This stated that in the event of conflict caused by any Serbian action, the U.S. was prepared to use military force against Serbian troops in Kosovo or Serbia proper. The message clearly meant air strikes or some other military response. These warnings were repeated by President Clinton in March, 1993 and by the State Department that October.

Other international involvement came in the form of human rights monitoring or humanitarian assistance. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was among the first of the international organizations to address the human rights situation in Kosovo. In late 1992, CSCE observer missions were established in the three minority dominated areas in Serbia as well as Macedonia. Although Yugoslavia was then a member of the CSCE, Milosevic hindered the efforts of these groups by frequently refusing to grant visas to their employees and by restricting NGO access to Belgrade and Kosovo. In part as a reaction to the exclusion of Serbia from the CSCE stemming from the Bosnian war, in 1993, he declined to renew his country's permission for these missions, so they were terminated.

Although the international community was unprepared to undertake any preemptive military action at this time, the humanitarian aid, such as from Oxfam and the CRS, that offset the worst social effects of the crisis probably may have helped to keep the tension in Kosovo from becoming a popular rebellion. However, since it was provided by definition mainly to those who were suffering the most, and thus the ethnic Albanian community, this attention to human rights and provision of basic aid may also have encouraged the Kosovar political elite to continue and intensify their nationalist effort In any case, though sporadic violence occurred, the Kosovo Albanian's adherence to Rugova's peaceful policy prevented further escalation of the conflict.

Crisis

By 1996, Rugova and his policy of non-violent opposition were becoming increasingly discredited. The Kosovo Albanians had hoped to win international support for their cause through their use of peaceful means. But the fact that the November 1995 Dayton Accords accepted Croatian and Bosnian ethnically-defined borders achieved in battle, but failed to require Milosevic to address Kosovo human rights issues, was interpreted by many in the Kosovar political elite that Rugova's peaceful tactics were failing. This put pressure on the established LDK leadership to show the value of its strategy of peaceful parallelism. On his part, Milosevic's party was coming up for re-election in November, and he earnestly sought access to World Bank and IMF funds for Yugoslavia (removal of the "outer wall of sanctions").

Thus, in September, 1997, some progress appeared to have been made with the signing of an education agreement between Milosevic and Rugova. Facilitated by the Italian Roman Catholic NGO Communita di Sant'Egidio with support by the European Union (EU) and the United States, this agreement called for the re-opening of all levels of the Kosovo government schools to Albanian students and teachers, including the teacher training colleges and faculties of the University of Prishtina. This marked the first significant attempt by the international community to address the political sources of the Kosovo conflict. The U.S. and Europeans also negotiated to place cultural offices in Prishtina, which U.S. officials saw as a way to establish an official U.S. presence in Kosovo.

The view was that if new avenues of accommodation could be created around basic social and economic needs between the two separate communities, perhaps over time the larger political and constitutional issues might be addressed in a less confrontational atmosphere and with somewhat less perceived to be at stake. But though the hope was it could led to further agreements, the education plan itself never went into effect, as its joint Serb-Albanian implementation commission was fettered by unresolvable procedural issues. Thus, rather than alleviating the tensions and providing a precedent for future relations, the agreement may have served to further aggravate existing tensions. Expectations were raised and then let down, thus confirming the thesis of a failed strategy.

As a result of Rugova’s failure to achieve any substantial gains for the Albanians, internal opposition forces began to advocate a more assertive approach. The previously sporadic violence became increasingly frequent and systematic. The first planned attack by Kosovo Albanians took place in April 1996 when four coordinated attacks were carried out in separate locations, Stimlje, Pec, and Kosovska Mitrovica. Two Serb police officers were killed in the attacks and three more were wounded. An initially shadowy covert armed group, known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began to emerge and claim responsibility for further violent attacks, primarily aimed at Serb police forces, but also targeting Albanians loyal to the Serb administration. Reportedly, this clandestine organization has been raising money among the 700,000 Albanians abroad in order to buy arms. The internal instability in Albania in

1997 contributed to the Kosovo Albanian's shift to the use of targeted violence because large amounts of arms found their way across the border into the hands of the KLA. The activities of the KLA reflected how Kosovo Albanians were developing a well-organized force with the will and capability for carrying out systematic attacks. By late 1997, the KLA exercised virtual control of many rural areas of Kosovo.

War

Beginning in late February 1998, Serb forces responded to KLA actions with a campaign of intimidation, which by the summer was characterized by increasingly bolder attacks against Kosovo Albanian civilians and supposed KLA enclaves, which were met by KLA counter initiatives. The Serb crackdown was led by paramilitary police with support from army and regular forces. The Serb government considered the KLA a terrorist organization, a viewpoint which the United States seemed to support as well, due to a statement made by a State Department official describing the KLA as a terrorist group. Remarkably, the U.S. simply failed to activate the military threat that Presidents Bush and Clinton had issued in 1992 and 1993 against just such Serb military actions in Kosovo. But rather than intimidating the population of Kosovo, the Serb actions instead served to strengthen their resolve and desire for independence.

In short, while Kosovo Albanians had formerly sought republican status within Yugoslavia, they now demanded total independence on the basis of claiming a right to self-determination. The rump state of Yugoslavia under the dominance of Serbia has continued to insist on its rights to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Although the Bosnian war had turned Kosovo into a potential international issue, it was not until 1998, as the number of armed encounters, displaced persons and abuses of human rights increased, that the conflict began to be perceived as an international crisis rather than an internal matter. In early 1998, members of the Contact Group (consisting of France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States) indicated that Kosovo was a matter of high priority and set up working group to address the situation in Kosovo. NATO also expressed concern. Nonetheless, at this stage, internal divisiveness among the western powers and a continuing reluctance to take action beyond condemnation and appeals for dialogue hindered the development of a robust long-term political solution. It was not until the heightened level and the increasingly regularity and destruction of hostilities, exemplified by a particularly brutal Serb attack in Drenica, threatened to undermine the tenuous post-Dayton stability of the Balkans that the international community began to take a more active role.

As is common once a civil war has begun, the international community then made numerous attempts to steer the parties toward a political settlement. In March, 1998, the EU called for the convening of a peace conference in Paris, which would include participation by both parties, as well as the United States and Russia. This attempt proved unsuccessful until NATO threatened a bombing campaign in order to bring both sides to the negotiating table. In October 1998, U.S. envoy, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Milosevic reached an agreement calling for a ceasefire, reduction in the level of Serb forces in the region, and a commitment to formal negotiations between the Serbian government and the Kosovo Albanians. This arrangement was to be monitored by an unarmed OSCE mission.

The Kosovo Verification Mission, the OSCE’s largest observer mission to date, did take position through the area. But the October agreement proved to be merely a temporary measure, as KLA and Serb forces continued to engage in hostile acts in violation of the ceasefire. The western powers insistence on greater autonomy rather than independence for the Albanians offered the KLA little incentive to adhere to the agreement. In the face of the disintegration of the agreement, the international community again assembled the parties in an effort to broker a lasting solution.

The new agreement, developed in Rambouillet, France, called for the deployment of a NATO peacekeeping force in Serbia to monitor the situation. This proposal, although eventually agreed to by the Kosovo Albanians, met with resistance from the Serbian government who opposed the deployment of NATO troops on Yugoslav territory. Again the international community employed the threat of force against Serbia. In this instance Milosevic held his ground, causing NATO to launch a massive bombing campaign in March 1999. To date, this campaign, though increasingly destroying vital infra-structure in Belgrade and other major Serbian cities, failed to stop further ethnic cleansing of Kosovo by Serb armed forces or to force Milosevic to agree to a settlement of the war.

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